

Sunday, June 5, 2022: Pentecost; Graduation Sunday, Holy Communion

Message: "Shining in Darkness"

Scripture: Ephesians 5:6-15

Blurb: This Sunday is a great day: it's Holy Communion, it's Graduation Sunday, and it's Pentecost! We celebrate that God has given His Holy Spirit to live in us as His Light to shine in us and out through us! Pastor David will be using the object of a flashlight to help our graduates (and all of us) learn how God calls us to shine in the darkness!

[Recorded Worship Beginning]

WELCOME -Pastor David

Gather bread and juice to use later in the service.

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

"You have the Light; believe in the Light so that you might become people who walk in the Light." -John 12:36a

WORSHIP SONG -Prerecording

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Live Worship Beginning]

GATHERING SONG: *Set a Fire* -Sanctify [Begin in darkness]

WELCOME -Pastor David

Pentecost - light candles

Holy Communion - Open Communion

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

"You have the Light; believe in the Light so that you might become people who walk in the Light." -John 12:36a

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Sanctify

My Lighthouse

Act Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly

Cover the Earth

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Both Recorded & Live Worship]

RECOGNIZING GRADUATES:

Jacqueline Wyne, Forest Lake High School - Going to Century College fall 2022

Bible Verse from Confirmation:

“If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, ... there will be nothing that you can’t do.” -Matthew 17:20

Phoebe Karan, Associates Degree from University of Wisconsin–La Crosse

MESSAGE: “Shining in Darkness”

PP#1: Shining in Darkness

“You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord, so live your life as children of light.” -Ephesians 5:8

I. Introduction

A. Shining in Darkness

“You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord, so live your life as children of light.” -Ephesians 5:8

PP#2: *Image of a graduate worried about the state of our world, perhaps thinking about images of shootings, war, violence, racism, etc.*

B. Today we are honoring our graduates

1. And the joy and potential of graduation is being overshadowed
 - by horrific shootings the past few weeks
 - by war in our world
 - by violence among our own country’s people
 - by economic woes
 - by systemic and embedded sin that brings pain and division
2. Our graduates are launching into a world that seems scary and full of problems
 - And that’s exactly what we as a church want you to hear today!
 - Because we know that you—and all of us—are aware of our world
 - But we also have been investing in you the hope and Light of God
 - To bring healing, transformation, and change in our world
 - In short, as your church, we want to shout out: our world needs you!
 - You have the hope our world desperately needs

PP#3: *Image of a person looking like a light/lamp in a dark space*

3. But that hope comes when you choose to live differently
 - Embrace God’s Spirit, God’s Light in you
 - To shine in you, and to shine out of you
4. So, that means we must live differently than the world and its dark ways
 - I’m going to talk to you, perhaps very differently than you are hearing everywhere else

I am going to talk to you...

- Not about having, but about serving.
- Not about getting, but about giving.
- Not all about you, but about what you were born for!
- Not about being in charge of your life, but about surrendering your life.

I'm talking about graduating as a Christian!

PP#4: *Image for God's plan for your life, subtitled, Proverbs 14:12* "There is a way that seems right to a person, but the end of it leads to destruction."

B. God created you for a purpose, for a plan

1. God created you not to pursue whatever your heart desires, or whatever your immediate whim dictates...that's how the dark world operates
2. God created you to play a key role...not in YOUR plan, but in HIS

C. If you pursue your plan, you may indeed become successful, but you will not become meaningful

- BUT, if you follow God's plan, you may not become the grand success the world values—known among all your peers and able to obtain whatever you put your eye on—but you will find a centeredness and a wholeness that cannot come from whatever you try to accomplish
- Proverbs 14:12 "There is a way that seems right to a person, but the end of it leads to destruction."

PP#5: *Image of a flashlight*

II. Flashlight

A. Here I have a flashlight. It represents you: what God intends for you to be in our world

1. The flashlight does not serve itself. Shining a light doesn't help itself.
 - Rather, it is a tool, intended for the hand of the one holding it.
 - When it shines, it helps the one holding it, to find his way, or to find what he is looking for
2. God made you as a flashlight.
 - Your purpose is not to live for yourself, to do whatever you want, to have it all
 - God made you for the purpose of serving, of helping, of making a difference.
3. The world is a dark place, and in it people struggle to find their way.
 - Most people stumble around, tripping and falling, so focused on themselves and unable to see God's plan for them and for our world
4. God is Light (1 John 1:5)
 - “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.” Isaiah 9:2a
 - ...that chases away the darkness, that brings truth and rightness
 - ...that shows what is good and what is bad
 - And that lights the way that leads to abundant life...real living

PP#6-7: Ephesians 5:6-15 (CEB)

- 6 Nobody should deceive you with stupid ideas. God's anger comes down on those who are disobedient because of this kind of thing. 7 So you shouldn't have anything to do with them. 8 You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord, so live your life as children of

light. 9 Light produces fruit that consists of every sort of goodness, justice, and truth. 10 Therefore, test everything to see what's pleasing to the Lord, 11 and don't participate in the unfruitful actions of darkness. Instead, you should reveal the truth about them. 12 It's embarrassing to even talk about what certain persons do in secret. 13 But everything exposed to the light is revealed by the light. 14 Everything that is revealed by the light is light. Therefore, it says, Wake up, sleeper! Get up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. 15 So be careful to live your life wisely, not foolishly.

B. God made you as a flashlight; your purpose is to shine God's light into our world.

-Read Ephesians 5:6-15

1. God shines His light ON you, changing you and leading you into the light

2. Then God shines OUT OF you, changing the world around you, making a difference, through you

C. So when I turn on this flashlight, [turn flashlight on and shine it around, although it does not work]

the light that shines out represents the light of your life, God's light shining out through you. See the difference it makes?

D. What's wrong? The flashlight is not working! Hmmm. I better open it up to see what's going on

PP#8: *Image of a broken flashlight, or a flashlight that does not work*

III. I see the problem! Something is wrong with the power source! Let's take a look:

A. Light blockers:

-There's a bunch of stuff in here that is keeping this flashlight from working.

-It is filled with all kinds of stuff that looks exciting and wonderful, but it doesn't belong in here!

-Each of these things tells us about things that our culture says we should make our focus, give our lives for, give our futures for

-Maybe this'll be helpful for Jacqueline—and all of us!—on graduation, as we think about what we make the center of our lives: what we choose to live for

-Let's take a look at some of these.

PP#9: *Image of a cool convertible sports car*

B. Matchbox convertible - Adventure and Thrill, living the big life!

-A sweet ride, with the power under the hood, and the catch that turns the eye

-It's not about getting there...it's about HOW you get there!

-You are what you drive!

PP#10: *Image of earphones*

C. Ear Phones - My tastes and preferences - things always my way!

-We tend to live lives all about us, withdrawing into our own little worlds

-Choosing to hear only what we like, only what we want

-Tuning out, ignoring the rest

PP#11: *Image of luggage tag***D. Luggage Tag - Living Big, Extreme Experience**

- The whole world is mine, and all that it has to offer.
- We're not satisfied with the humdrum of daily life, let's push it up a notch.
- Like skateboarding? How about skate boarding down the Great Wall of China!
- Like rock climbing? How about The Matterhorn!
- Like parasailing? How about bungee jumping over Victoria Falls!
- We don't want to just experience life, we want to max it out!

PP#12: *Image of diamond earrings***E. Diamond earrings - status!**

- You look good, you've arrived
- Others are very impressed, and they try to be like you
- When you come in, everyone looks your way

PP#13: *Image of key for house in Hawaii***F. House Key, in Hawaii! - Big House w/comforts**

- And coming home at the end of the day to the pad that is exactly what I want.
- A big house, with everything I want in it, located in paradise.
- Imagine, driving your sweet ride to your sweet pad!
- Curb appeal that pops the eyes of your friends. Where everyone will want to hang out!

PP#14: *Image of golf tee - fun and leisure***G. Golf tee - Fun and Leisure**

- We want to do only those things that we like doing, not having to do chores and taking care of obligations, responsibility
- We want to watch TV, movies, play games. Consume our time with stuff that we find entertaining.
- Doing what we WANT, rather than doing what we OUGHT

PP#15: *Image of beer label - partying***H. Beer Label - Party & Fun**

- Living for the party, living for the fun
- Adults do this all the time... "living for the weekend"
- Many people find their lives boring or hard, and so alcohol helps them "live it up!"

PP#16: *Image of Paris Hilton perfume - brand label***I. Paris Hilton perfume / Brand Label - Popularity/Fitting In among your peers**

- Having to look cool and fitting in, being popular with the crowd.
- It is not something just for teens. Most adults live slavishly to the "fashion" king

PP#17: *Image of \$50 bill***J. \$50 Bill - Wealth**

- There is nothing that motivates like cold, hard cash.
- Imagine what this \$50 bill would buy! Imagine being flush with cash!
- Being in the driver's seat, having what I want, getting my way, getting the best

PP#18: *Image of student ID - college***K. College Student ID - Good education**

- A good education is the key to a life you want
- Choose a career that really pays, and is exactly what you dream of doing each day
- Find the right school, get good grades, launch your success!

PP#19: *Image of pay check***L. Pay Check / Good job - Success**

- Supporting your lavish lifestyle is a job that brings a paycheck with many digits
- No hourly wage for you. Get a job that pays the mortgage, all your bills, and leaves tons left over for playing and fun
- A good job, loving what you do, and enjoying more what it affords you to do after work!

PP#20: *Image of eye shadow - makeup***M. Sparkly Eye Shadow - Attractive and desirable**

- We have to look good, be seen as attractive, to make an impression
- We want to impress others, make them think we're something
- We want to turn heads as we walk by

PP#21: *Image of smart watch - phone***N. Smart Watch - Friends**

- Spend time with the people you love
- Who get you, who energize you and empower you
- Dedicate hours and hours on staying connected, working the relationships, being an influencer

PP#22: *Image of bouquet of roses with heart balloon***O. Heart balloon - From that special and cute boy!**

- Relationships, other people and physical pleasure are often treated selfishly
- Your romance serves your needs. You should have what you want, whenever you want it.
- Your relationships serve you, & if they don't meet your expectations, you get out and move on to the next one. Keep changing it up. Look for what you want, for what you like.
- God says save yourself for marriage. But God won't mind. How can something that feels so right be wrong?

PP#23: *Image of being/looking drained and empty, even when having worldly stuff*

IV. Each of these things, in and of themselves, is not bad. In fact some are very, very good.

- But the problem is that they do not give light!
- The world is WRONG in saying this is the good stuff!
- They are not bad, but they cannot produce good
- If they are at the center of your life, if they are your power, if they are your motivation, if they are what you are living for,
- You will find that not only will they no longer be good, but they do not give you inner power, and they will block your ability to live for God, to live the plan God has for you, and you will not fully live! You will not shine.
- Emptiness and meaninglessness will spread across you like the rest of the world

V. But notice, *even if* these things are not what you are living for, if they are not what fuels you [Put the flashlight back together and try to turn it on ... it does not work.]

- Even if these are not at the center of your attention and purpose for living
- Your light will still not shine
- You can be a good person, even helpful and kind and well liked
- But your light will still be dark
- You need something different inside

PP#24: *Image of the light of God shining out of a young woman*

VI. You can only shine when God is your power

A. You must first receive God's power in your life

- Take God into your heart
- Receive His Light, His Holy Spirit, in your life
- You do that by choosing Jesus: to live as His disciple
- He gives the Holy Spirit into you to live within you, to be your power source

C. I have here the battery that will make this flashlight shine.

- But I've put on it labels that describe the power that will make the light of our lives shine
 - They say, "God's Power," "The Light of Christ," "The Holy Spirit," "A New Heart."
- [Put the battery in the flashlight and turn it on.]

D. Only when you make this the power of your life, will you shine as you were created to do

PP#25: *Image of a graduate going forward in God's Light*

VII. Conclusion

A. As a graduate, you're hearing to go live your dream.

- You're told to look deep in side

B. I want to say, "Yes! Do that! Look deep inside."

Look inside and see what is your center, what powers you? What directs your dreams?

C. God created you for a reason, a purpose, a plan

- That plan is not to live the way that the world says you should, powered by what it has to offer, and tells you to follow your selfish desires
- Rather it is a purpose to make a difference in this dark world struggling with darkness, to live for something greater than yourself

D. God's plan is for you to be a flashlight in our dark world

- Remove all those things that try to take the center of your life, that try to be your power
- And place instead God's Spirit there, and to commit to live for Him

D. When you do, you will be able to shine

- And you will find all that you long for anyway
- You will find all the satisfaction that all these other things only promise
- Ephesians 5:8-9 says, "But now you are light in the Lord, so live your life as children of light. Light produces fruit that consists of every sort of goodness, justice, and truth."

VIII. As your graduation gift, I want to give you this flashlight

- May it remind you, as you go into your futures, that Jesus said, "You are the light of the world." Matt. 5:14
- The batteries I have labeled to remind you that your light shines only by God's power.
- When these batteries run out and you go to replace them, I hope you will see the labels and remember to continue to make God your power.
- And as you need to add charged batteries, I hope you will remember that you, too, need to recharge your life's batteries by reconnecting with God regularly.
- Ephesians 5:15 "So be careful to live your life wisely, not foolishly!"

IX. Congratulations! May you let your light shine!

Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION & OFFERING -Pastor David

Prayers of Confession

Words of Assurance

Introduction

Great Thanksgiving

Words of Institution

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Receiving of the Elements - two receiving lines

Offering in plates

Song: *Spirit of the Living God* -Sanctify

[Live Worship Only] CLOSING SONG: *We Are the Free* -Sanctify

ANNOUNCEMENTS -Pastor David

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

"You have the Light; believe in the Light so that you might become people who walk in the Light." -John 12:36a

BENEDICTION -Pastor David

POSTLUDE -Sanctify (live)