

Imitating Our Father

Ephesians 5:1-14

Pastor John Miller

I want to read Ephesians 5:1 to begin. Paul says, “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children,” the idea is that you are the children of God, now follow God. The word “follow” is the word mimic or imitators. It’s the only place in the Bible where that word is used. Be mimics or imitators of God as you are His dear children.

Have you ever seen your children mimic you? Maybe your daughters (we have three girls) put on Mom’s high heels or they would do their hair or put on a big dress, get a purse, and make like they’re going out. Maybe they like to shop and get their little shopping cart and put things into it. Maybe a little boy wants to mimic Dad and gets a work belt with his play hammer and saw, or maybe he has a toy lawnmower. They like to mimic their parents. Sometimes they actually mimic our sins, though, it’s kind of a frightening thing. Somebody said, “It’s a frightening thing to see your sins on two little legs walking around.” How true that is.

In this verse tonight, we are actually commanded or exhorted to mimic God our Father. As we are the children of God, we are to follow, or as I said the word is “mimic,” our Father who is in Heaven. William Barclay called this the highest standard in the world. I don’t know that I’d ever really thought of it in that way, but think of how lofty this standard is. Paul is telling us as the people of God, as the children of God, to live like God. He’s actually saying, when he uses the word “walk,” and we’re in the section of the walk of the believer, that we should live like God. Now, that’s a pretty high standard, a pretty holy calling, but that’s what Paul is actually doing at this point. He’s telling us that we are to live like God. It’s a standard that is beyond our human ability to fulfill. How can we as mere human beings be Godlike or live like God.

We’re going to see in Ephesians 5:18 that Paul tells us that we need to be, “...filled with the,” Holy “Spirit.” When we look at that next Wednesday night, it’s obvious that the way to live Godlike is through the power of the Holy Spirit. We cannot do it in our own strength, our own resources, or in our own ability, we need to rely upon the Holy Spirit to be living like God.

When we were born again, we became partakers of the divine nature. That doesn’t mean we become gods, but it means that we can be like God in that He gives us His Spirit and enables us to live like Him, think like Him, and to act like Him. It’s interesting that there are two categories to what is known as the attributes of God. When we speak of the attributes of God, we’re saying that which is true about God or that which can be attributed to God. That’s where we get the word “attributes,” it’s attributed to God’s nature and character. They are in two categories: communicable attributes and uncommunicable attributes. In other words, there are attributes of God that He can communicate to us that we can demonstrate as He saves us by His Spirit, indwells and fills us, and we can be Godlike—not gods, but like God—in our behavior.

Then, there’s the uncommunicable attributes that we cannot possess. None of us are omnipresent, omnipotent, or omniscient. I’ve met people that think they know everything, but

none of us are omniscient or know everything. We cannot have those aspects of God's nature or attributes; but God is also love, God is holy, God is gracious, God is merciful, and God is kind. Those are the communicable attributes. Those are the attributes of God that He wants to give to us by His Holy Spirit. As we allow the Spirit to take control of our lives and walk in obedience to His Word, that process of sanctification means that we're being made more like Jesus Christ. Whether it's God the Father or God the Holy Spirit or God the Son, it doesn't matter, we're being made into the image of Jesus Christ. That's the process of sanctification. Those communicable attributes can be demonstrated in our lives.

Paul points to two aspects of God's nature or attributes that we should imitate or that we should mimic. There are two divisions, two attributes. Write them down. The first is that God is love, so we should be loving or walk in love. This is verses 1-7. If I didn't mention it, we're going to go down to verse 14. We've stopped in kind of an awkward place, but in verses 2-4 we see that we are to walk in love. Verse 1 is the plea, "Be ye therefore followers," or mimics or imitators, "of God, as dear children," so God is our Father, we are the children of God, so we should be Godlike or mimic Him in His love.

In verse 2, we have the pattern or model that is found in Jesus Christ. Paul says, "And walk in love," there's the statement, "as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. 3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them."

This entire section is still the walk of the believer, and when it uses the word "walk" in verse 2, it's talking about your manner of living. The walk speaks of progression, so your sanctification, your Christian life—how you live out your Christian life. You're to walk in love. The Greek word "love," again is the word *agape* or *agape* love, that is, God's love.

Back in Ephesians 4:1, we were to, "...walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." That "worthy" walk, as I pointed out, meant to weigh the same as. Remember that? There was a scale with Jesus on one side and we're on the other. We are to be weighing the same as Jesus Christ, so we are to be heavy-weight Christians. We are to meet the standard of living Christlike. In Ephesians 4:17, Paul again said, "...that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk," that was the negative. We are to, "...walk worthy," but don't walk like the Gentiles or the unbelievers. It's very similar to what he's going to say again tonight in the text we just read.

We come to Ephesians 5:2, where we have tonight's theme, "...walk in love," and again down in verse 8, "...walk as...light." That's the second attribute of God that we're to walk in. The Christian's life should be characterized with a continual walking in the atmosphere of love as dear children. You've heard me say, trying to be a little humorous but really trying to be serious,

that if you're a Christian, you have to demonstrate love. It's the birthmark of the believer, and there are no such things as Christians who are not loving Christians. "I'm a Christian, but I'm not one of the loving kind. There's the Christians that love and the Christians that don't love, I'm kind of the non-loving Christian." That's an oxymoron. The birthmark of the true believer is love. Jesus actually said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," not that you have bumper stickers on your car, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," and "...as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." That's the birthmark of the believer. This is the section of walking in love.

The question I want to ask and pull from the text is: How are we to walk in love? What does walking in love look like? Let me give you three practical ways we walk in love. This is not exhaustive, but I want to point them out in our text. Go back with me to Ephesians 4:32. When we're walking in love, we are forgiving one another. Paul says, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." I want you to notice, "...as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

What could be more Godlike or Christlike than being forgiving? That's why whenever you have a husband and wife that are both believers—they both have the Holy Spirit, they're both walking in the Spirit—they're going to learn to be forgiving one another. If you don't learn to be forgiving in marriage, your marriage isn't going to survive very long, right? If you're not gracious, tenderhearted, and forgiving one another, you're not going to survive. If you really love the individual, you will forgive them; and if you're really in love with that other individual, you will actually repent of your sins and ask them to forgive you as God as well. I just wanted to point that out as the first mark of a loving believer is that they are willing and ready to forgive others, "...even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." If you've experienced the forgiveness of God, how can you then not be forgiving of others?

Secondly, walking in love means that you are a giving individual, Ephesians 5:2. Paul says, "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us," again, he's showing what Christ has done in loving us, "and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." He's describing the death of Christ on the cross, His giving of Himself as a sacrifice for us. How can we as believers come to the cross and be forgiven and not be forgiving? How can we as believers come to the cross and see the sacrifice that Jesus made in giving Himself to die for us and then not giving ourselves to others in sacrificial service? If anybody should be forgiving, it's a believer. If anyone should be sacrificially giving to others, it should be a believer.

I love this verse because it speaks about Him giving Himself, so His death was voluntary; He gave Himself as a sacrifice, it was a substitutionary death; and He gave Himself as a "...sweet-smelling savour." What's that all about? In the Old Testament, they would often offer a lamb, a bullock, or a goat as an offering. They would actually start the fire underneath the lamb, and it would be what's called a "burnt sacrifice." If you put a lamb on an altar, or a goat or bullock, and it had fire underneath, the odor begins to ascend to Heaven. It's kind of like a barbecue.

Have you ever been in your backyard barbecuing your hotdogs and hamburgers...that's cool, that's fine...then, your neighbor strikes up his barbecue and he's got T-bone steaks on there. All of the sudden you're kind of like, "These hot dogs don't look so great anymore." SNIFF! The wind starts blowing over the fence and you're kind of whiffing. I'm sharing this because I remember this happened to me years ago. I was in the backyard, on my pastoral salary at that time, feeding my big family. We got hot dogs and hamburgers. I remember the neighbors were barbecuing steak, and I was just, "Oh man! Lord, I've served You all these years, why am I eating hot dogs?" SNIFF! I'm kidding, but I'm not kidding. It just smelled so good. I felt like running around and knocking on the door saying, "Hey! What's going on back in your yard," you know. It smelled so good!

When they would offer their sacrifice, and it would be a burnt sacrifice which conveyed the meaning of total surrender, total consecration, commitment to God, it would actually be called a savour to God. Symbolically, God was smelling that sacrifice. The nostrils...which God doesn't have a nose and God doesn't smell but just so that the idea is conveyed to us, God would smell that sacrifice. It uses that concept there, "...sweetsmelling savour," to God. They had burnt sacrifices where the odor would arise to the Lord. Jesus gave Himself for us, "...as Christ... hath given himself for us," He loved us, that's the motive, take note of that, so we should be motivated by love, "and hath given himself for us," that's the pattern or the model. Jesus did not die primarily just to be an example of sacrificial love.

There's a liberal, modern kind of view today that the Cross of Christ was not a substitutionary atonement for sin but just a model or example of sacrifice. People see the cross and think we should give ourselves to others, but they're missing the heart of the Cross in that it was an atonement, a sacrifice, but also a giving, loving sacrifice, so we should give ourselves in sacrificial service to others, even to those who aren't believers. Write down Matthew 5:44-46 where Jesus says, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" He's basically saying, "Be like your Father."

God makes the sun to rise on the just and the unjust. God causes the rain to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous. When the rain comes down, even the heathen farmer gets the benefit from God of the rain. Wouldn't it be funny if when the rain came down, it only landed in Christian farmers' fields? When you're driving down the road and see a field all dry you say, "That's a heathen, it's all dead." It doesn't happen like that. I've seen people curse, mock, ridicule, and blaspheme God and then go out and breathe and get sunshine and fresh air. That was a gift from God. God didn't strike them dead. God shows mercy to them. Jesus actually uses that idea of we should be like our Father in Heaven and show goodness and mercy even to the unrighteous. Now, we're not to be partakers of their sin, but we're to love even the unlovely or the unrighteous. Someone put it in a poem:

Yes, others, Lord, yes, others,

Let this my motto be;

Help me to live for others,

That I may live like Thee.

We need to be like Jesus in giving ourselves.

I want you to note that the text then takes a little turn and starts to focus on the negative. True love, and this is an important principle, not only is positive but is also negative. True love is not only what you do, it's demonstrated by what you don't do. We get this idea of kind of a mushy, we used to call it "sloppy agape," where people just think we're to love, love, love, love, love everybody; but that doesn't mean that we don't stand for righteousness and make a distinction on what is sinful or wrong. There's things that we need to neglect or avoid, would be the better statement, we need to abstain from. In verses 3-7, I think it's interesting, Paul starts with the plea to love—as God loves us, to walk in love, the pattern, verse 2—and then tells us what to abstain or flee from in verses 3-7. If we are walking in love, we will abstain from sins that dishonor God and are detrimental to ourselves and to others.

Paul turns these verses from sacrificial love to self-indulgent lust. Paul names six sins that are the opposite of love. It's always a challenge to preach texts like this. In many of the epistles, the Bible contains lists of sins. Very rarely will a preacher pick that for a text, you'll pass over those, but we're going through Ephesians covering every chapter and verse, so buckle your seatbelts. We get a list of sins that we are to avoid. We not only get what we're to do, but we get to what we're not to do; and many times the Holy Spirit can really shine a light into our hearts. This is what we're to be lovingly abstaining from, and he names six sins that are the opposite of love.

I've seen government ads, and I'll just throw this out, on tv for the acceptance of same-sex marriage. In the ad they say, "Love is love," and show same-sex couples on the screen, "why can't we just love one another." To the world, we think, Yeah, that sounds so good, and It's so awesome. We should just all love one another, but we're going to find tonight that every one of these sins, and you can check me out if you think I'm wrong, are in the category of sexual immorality. Love is not always love if it's outside of God's holy, righteous standards. It's turned into lust.

The Greek language they had several words for love. They had eros, phileo, and agape. Eros is an erotic love, a sexual love that only wanted to get, and it's not used in the New Testament. So many times when the world says, "Well, they love one another," or "We love one another," or "Let's just let love be love," they're talking about lust. If it was in the Greek language, it would actually be eros. It's not agape, God's love.

I want you to follow with me as we look at this list of sins in this section. As I said, there are six

of them. The first is fornication, verse 3, “But,” here’s the contrast, “fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.” The first one on the top of the list is the word *porneia* where we get our word pornographic from. It’s used in the New Testament as a general term for sexual immorality. In our culture today, we are much like the Greco-Roman culture of Paul’s day. Our culture today has no distinction for sexual immorality—anything goes. In God’s economy, in God’s design, who actually thought of sex and created sexual desires, God designed how it should be used and enjoyed in the covenant relationship of marriage. The word *porneia*, fornication, is used for any kind of sexual immorality.

The only sanctified—God-designed, God-given—place for sexual activity is in the covenant relationship of marriage. I’ve said that a thousand times, I’m saying it a thousand and one. It’s probably two thousand. It’s the only place you can engage in sexual conduct—in the covenant relationship of marriage. “Well, we love one another.” “Well, we’re going to get married.” “Well, we had to live together because we couldn’t afford two houses and couldn’t pay the rent or mortgage so…” You’re going to dishonor God and do what is not loving in God’s standards?

Even in the church, talking like that, what I’m talking about is biblical, it’s based on God’s Word, would many times be considered unloving, “Oh, that’s not very loving.” Again, I remind you that love has both the positive and the negative. If you really love someone, you’re going to respect them and want to love and obey God first, right? We should fear God, want to honor God, want to obey God, and not want to live by our lustful desires. There’s nothing more lovely than loving God and loving others. Marriage is a divine institution. Sexual intimacy is created for the marriage relationship and is not to be experienced outside. Premarital sex, we use the word fornication; extramarital sex, we use the word adultery; and any other form of sex, other than the heterosexual husband and wife relationship, is *porneia*. It’s sexual immorality.

Ephesus was a sexually perverted city. They had the Temple of Diana with actually their pagan sacred prostitutes. It was part of their pagan worship. These Gentiles got saved in that culture, and Paul wants them to understand that we’re to come out from the world and not to be like them. Today, we’re not to be living like the world around us. Write down 1 Thessalonians 4:3. We’re going to get it on Sunday morning. Paul says, “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication,” sexual immorality. The English translation has fornication.

The second sin that we’re to avoid practicing love is uncleanness, verse 3. This is a reference to all unclean acts, that being sexual or immoral. It includes obscene pictures, books, movies or music. Again, it’s a general term for uncleanness.

The third word, verse 3, is covetousness. Isn’t it interesting that Paul, still in context, is dealing with sexual immorality and uses the word covetousness. That’s the desire for sexual pleasure outside the will of God in a way that you want something that’s not yours in the will of God. Write down the tenth commandment, “Thou shalt not covet.” What’s on the top of the list in that commandment? “...thy neighbour’s wife.” He doesn’t say, “thy neighbour’s donkey, goat, or

camel,” it’s in the list, but on the top of the list is, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife.” We call it a fling or an affair or a love relationship or a chemistry thing or whatever it might be, God calls it covetousness, which is a form of idolatry. “...let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.” Notice that statement in verse 3. The word saint, sanctified, and holy are all from the same root word, so you are saints. You are to be sanctified, you are to be living holy. You’re not to be involved in sexual immorality.

Notice, verse 4, Paul uses the word “filthiness.” It denotes obscene, shameless, immoral conduct. Fifthly, “...foolish talking.” Again, that “foolish talking” is in the context of sexual immorality. From the Greek word translated “foolish,” we get our word moron or moronic. This is talking flippantly and moronically jokingly about sexual immorality. It doesn’t take me saying much to convince you how Hollywood plays to this kind of moronic, foolish jesting—innuendos, double meanings, making jokes about something that is holy, created by God, foolish talking. Then he mentions jesting there in verse 4, which is coarse jesting, as in unclean jokes, speech with veiled innuendos or double meanings. In verse 4, he says, “...which are not convenient,” in the King James Bible or the NIV translates that, “...which are out of place,” for the true believer.

I love what John R. Stott said. He said, “All God’s gifts, including sex, are subjects for thanksgiving, rather than for joking. To joke about them is bound to degrade them; to thank God for them is the way to preserve their worth as the blessing of a loving Creator.” That’s so true. We should not be engaged in these kind of filthy jokes that are so prevalent in our culture today.

I want you to note, verses 5-7, Paul gives us two reasons to abstain from these sins. We have the sins to avoid, and he graciously gives us the reason or the rationale behind it. In verse 5, you will not inherit the Kingdom of God if you practice these sins, and verse 6, you will experience God’s wrath. The Bible is very clear that if you habitually practice sexual immorality, that you will not go to Heaven, you’re not living in the Kingdom of God, you will not inherit the Kingdom of God, and that you will be experiencing God’s wrath. Look at the first in verse 5, you will not inherit the Kingdom of God. He says, “For this ye know,” that was something they were fully aware of and I think we know it as well today, “that no whoremonger,” in the English translation, that is, again, pornos, where we get our word pornography, “nor unclean person,” which is again sexual immorality, “nor covetous man,” he’s kind of repeating what he’s already said, “who is an idolater,” those who live for this kind of sexual immoral pleasure are idolaters, they’ve substituted that for God, “hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”

I want you to understand that this is not saying that if you have fallen into sexual immorality... you have repented of your sins, God has forgiven you, and you’ve been born again and are walking with the Lord. Just because you’ve stumbled or fallen into sexual immorality doesn’t mean God won’t forgive or restore you, but whatever you sow to you’re going to reap—the scars and the consequences of your sinful behavior can remain. What he’s not saying here is that if you’ve committed sexual immorality, you’ll never go to Heaven. That’s not what the Bible is saying.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians he said, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified,” so thank God for the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses from all sins. Thank God for 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” This is not intended to be a club to beat you over the head and say, “Well, if you’ve ever sinned in this area, you’re not going to get to go to Heaven. You might as well forget it.” Remember when Jesus encountered the woman in adultery in John 8, and He finally says, “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” He forgave her, but He says, “Go and live a life of holiness and righteousness. Don’t go back into your sinful lifestyle.”

What it is saying that if it’s an habitual practice and habit of your life, then you are not born again, you’re not regenerated, you’re not a child of God. Even David fell into adultery but repented and was forgiven. If you’re doing it constantly, continually, habitually, and it’s the habit of your life, and openly in some cases thinking, I’m a Christian, but it’s okay, notice he’ll go on to say, “Let no man deceive you.” People say, “Oh, but God is love; God is merciful; God is gracious. God will forgive me.” Yes, He will, but God is also righteous and holy. If you’re practicing—intentionally, willingly, habitually—this kind of sin, and you’re professing to be a believer, then the Bible says that you’re not going to inherit the Kingdom of God.

Notice also, you will experience God’s wrath. Now, I didn’t make this up. I didn’t write this text. I’m just trying to faithfully expound what the Scriptures say, “Let no man deceive you,” and there’s so much deception going on today. “Well, God is love. God made you that way. God will forgive you. Just go ahead and do whatever you want.” Don’t let any false teachers deceive you with, notice again, “...vain,” or empty “words: for because of these things,” the sins we just read about, “cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” This is not the true children of God, these are those who are walking in disobedience to God.

In verse 7, Paul closes this first section by saying, “Be not ye therefore partakers with them.” Another way to say that is basically: don’t live like that. As you read this sinful list, you’re not to walk, live, or conduct your life that way.

Now, the second section, and we won’t spend as much time on it, is verses 8-14 where we now have the second attribute of God of which we’re to mimic or follow; that is, God is not only love, but—write it down—God is light, so “...walk as children of light.” God is love, walk in love; God is light, walk in light in the true holiness of God. Light has two figurative aspects in the Bible. The first is intellectual, which speaks of the truth; and the second is moral, which speaks of righteousness and holiness. That’s the sense in which this light and dark concept is being used in this passage. Here Paul is speaking of moral aspect of light, and we’re to walk in holiness.

Again, if you’re taking notes, four things, rapid fire, verse 8, we have the contrast. Paul says, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord,” so this is how you should walk, “walk as children of light.” There’s the contrast. Before you were saved, you were in darkness, you were living in darkness. Now, you’ve been translated into the Kingdom of God, you’re walking in light, so walk in the light. The child of God is a child of light, and he is not to

be walking in darkness at all.

Secondly, notice the characteristics of this walking in darkness, verses 9-10, "(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 10 Proving," or showing or revealing, "what is acceptable," or pleasing "unto the Lord." In verse 8 is the contrast. Verses 9-10 are the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit (as I said, we're going to be looking at being filled with the Spirit in verse 18) produces goodness, righteousness, and truth. Goodness comes from the idea of Godlikeness. One of the highest compliments you can ever say about a Christian is they are good in this sense, meaning they are Godlike. They are a good person. Then, the righteousness means that they're living an obedient life unto God, keeping His Word; and truth means that they're not practicing any lies but following sincerity and truth. There's no duplicity or hypocrisy. Again, this is all the fruit of the Spirit produced in our lives.

Notice, then, verses 11-13, the command. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Again, Paul mentions the concept of darkness of the unbeliever. You're not to have any fellowship with them. The word "fellowship" is the Greek word *koinonia*. It means joint participation. You have nothing in common. When you become a Christian, you find out that you're not really comfortable around the worldly crowd anymore. You don't want to listen to their jokes.

I mentioned being a young believer the other day in my sermon on Sunday and the challenge of not being ashamed of Jesus. I remember very distinctly when I just had gotten saved and was still around my sin buddies, they wanted to cuss, swear, and tell filthy jokes with sexual statements and innuendos. It grieved the Holy Spirit in my heart. I knew that I could no longer hang around them. Either they got saved and changed the way they talked or I hit the road and found some believers whose words were gracious, kind, and upbuilding. I know that it's challenging when you're at work and you work around unbelievers and they say things you don't want to hear, tell jokes you don't want to hear. Sometimes they know you're a Christian and wait until you leave the room, "Let the light go out of the office, then we can tell our dirty, dark jokes," or sometimes they're telling a joke and the Christian walks in, "Ohh, let's wait until the Christian leaves before we tell the joke," and that's a good thing that they're convicted by that, but you'll find out you have no *koinonia* with them. You're not to even participate with them. It's a shame even to speak of those things, he says, which they talk about in darkness. Light actually produces good fruit, and light enables us to discriminate between righteousness and unrighteousness. Light exposes what is evil, and it's living before God's eyes not hiding anything.

Notice verse 13, your light will manifest their darkness. It closes in verse 14, "Wherefore he saith," we're not sure where he saith. Good Bible scholars, and that certainly doesn't include me, think most likely that this is a reference to Isaiah 60:1, so if you want to make a note of that and check it out, that's a very good possibility, but we can't find this exact statement other than Isaiah 60:1 is very close. It says, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee." That's probably the right guess that this is where he's quoting. He says, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

A few years ago I was preaching this same verse and I read, "Awake thou that sleepest," and I kid you not, there was someone sleeping in the front row. It was so hard for me not to ask someone, "Could you wake this dude up?" I've often wanted to stop and say, "Hey, someone go wake that guy up, he's sleeping right now." He probably needs to sleep, so just let him sleep. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." He's quoting, most likely, and I say we can't know for certain, Isaiah 60:1. The question is, and I've preached this verse a thousand times over many years and I don't know, but the question is whether he's referring to awakening out of your spiritual dead state of unregeneration to be saved, so he's speaking to unbelievers, or if he's speaking to believers telling them to wake up spiritually. That's probably the best interpretation. Both can be biblical concepts, and I've actually used it both ways, but when he says, "Awake, thou that sleepest," he's probably saying, "Christian, wake up!"

God is commonly sending these messages to us, "Wake up! Put on the armor of righteousness." "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Don't walk in the darkness. Don't walk in sexual immorality. Don't walk in sinful lust and selfishness. Wake up, believer. He's probably talking to Christians, but he could also have application to unbelievers in that he speaks of, "...arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." When we are unsaved, we are dead in trespasses and sins. Again, I think both are applicable to us tonight. So, wake up out of your stupor and walk in love; wake up out of your spiritual lethargy, and walk in holiness and true righteousness.

There are all kinds of practical implications of that kind of a life. If you want to have a blessed life, walk in love, walk in holiness and true righteousness. You sow to the flesh, you'll of the flesh reap corruption. If you sow to the Spirit, you'll of the Spirit reap life everlasting. God forgives our sins. God is gracious and merciful, but you're foolish to say, "Well, I want to do what I want to do, and I'm going to disobey God and live a sinful life." Well, then, you're going to have heartache and misery. But if you obey God because you love Him, you fear the Lord, God will bless your life, guide your life, and your life will be fruitful. Whether you're a believer or an unbeliever, it's time to wake up and not sin. It's time to come out of your dead state, "...and Christ shall give thee light." It's time to come out of the darkness and walk in the light. Amen? Let's pray.