

## Live As Children of Light

 **Exposing the darkness (vv.8-12)**

 **Embracing the light (vv.13-14)**

In the name of Jesus, the Light of the world, dear lights of the world:

Is anyone really surprised that Randy Moss was traded by the Vikings? You don't have to know the position he played or anything about football. You don't even need to know what "NFL" stands for. It would not be necessary to go back over sports reports of recent years to hear the commentators bemoaning Moss' "lack of class." All you need would be a thirty-second video of his mock "moon job" after scoring a touchdown in the game against the Packers. *Minnesota* Vikings represent Minnesota even when we're just talking about feelings. Besides, if Minnesotans really cared about their image, we'd have to scrub the funny faces off some of our fans. Coming or going, Randy Moss probably didn't cost the state much at all. And role models can be provided by God-fearing parents teaching their children at home. Disciplined children just shake their heads at the stupidity of such things.

God, however, does have a reputation to uphold. The price is high when we fail. Bearing His Name directly reflects on God's reputation. Whether we live in His holy image can either be a blessing to eternal souls or a curse. This is very important when the Holy Spirit says: **Live As Children of Light.**

 **Exposing the darkness (vv.8-12)**

*"For you were once darkness...."* That does not say, "You were living in the dark," as if intellectually deficient or just naïve. It says, *"You were...darkness."* And translating, *"You were once darkness,"* might leave the wrong impression too. It's not a matter of *"sometimes darkness"* (KJV) and sometimes not. It's not a spot of darkness like the shadow of a cloud sweeping across the prairie. The original Greek means, "Pick a spot, any spot from your past. No matter when and no matter what anyone else may have thought of you, without Jesus Christ, here, there and everywhere, *"You were darkness."*

Do you realize what this means about our natural abilities? It's not what one comedian called, "Senile hairs that grow out of dark places and forget why they are there." Spiritual darkness can only produce *"the fruitless deeds of darkness."* And the Lord's Apostle Paul here makes it clear that we're still not fully free from this *darkness*. Just look back at the verses (5:1-7) before our text and ask yourself: Do you *"live a life of love"*? That would mean you never get angry at God and are always thinking fondly of Him with all your heart and soul and mind with an unconditional love for God that never questions and never doubts His power, His concern or His unlimited ability to help. If you ever thought God was too busy for you or that someone else like the pastor might do a better job of praying for you, you already lost to the *darkness*. Does your *"life of love"* translate into helpfulness and generosity toward your neighbors especially the ones who have no use for you? Otherwise, every sunrise and rain fall proves only loveless *"darkness"* on your side compared to God's. *"You were once darkness...."*

And we haven't even talked about *"sexual immorality."* Do you sometimes forget that God does see what goes on behind closed doors? That He does know where your TV clicker or your web browser takes your eyes and heart? What is this *"impurity"* that gets our hearts pumping so fast just seeing someone else sin, even if we don't do it ourselves? What about this *"greed"* that keeps putting our own pleasures and desires before God's work and our neighbor's need? *"Greed"* is idolatry because it makes money your idol. Whatever has hold of your heart, that is your god. Maybe it's your relationships being more important than your relationship with God. Maybe it's your love for friends more than God that shows up in *"obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place."* It may be a morbid lack

of “*thanksgiving*” to God for your husband, your wife, your children or parents, your job, your schooling, the food on your plate, your tiny house or the mansion God has prepared for you in heaven.

Shine the light of God’s truth on us and we stand exposed far worse than Randy Moss or the Packers fans that kept disgusting him. Truth be known, we have not lived as **Children of Light** because we’ve act like homeless beggars far from God. In this sin-darkened world we load down our backpack with hurt, pile in more angry words, leave behind the righteousness God gave us in Christ, and stumble headlong into the *darkness* where the disobedient try to hide in their shame. And then we wonder why we’re so often tired and discouraged, fearful of life and more so of death. By nature we don’t want God’s light **Exposing the darkness**. Good heavens! By nature we don’t even want God’s light.

### **Embracing the light (vv.13-14)**

We prove it as Americans who like the idea that every church has it’s own interpretation. This leaves room for us to believe whatever we want. The mole can keep chewing the roots off the flowers no matter what the owner thinks. The rat can keep spreading disease even if the builder goes after him with baseball bats and poison. Americans can keep doing whatever they want because maybe we think God’s **light** is too big to embrace, as in, “I just don’t understand the Bible.” Like bugs, we flee the light.

For example, what citizen of Minnesota would say it’s okay to waste taxpayer dollars? All political parties trumpet an end to government waste. So did our former governor when he campaigned against Herman the German high on the hill overlooking New Ulm, Minnesota. One of our retired Martin Luther College professors who had been elected Mayor of New Ulm, heard about Jesse Ventura’s rant. Instead of raging back in the darkness, Professor Emeritus – Mayor Arnold Koelpin invited Governor Ventura to Oktober Fest. Together they climbed the tall stairs to the dome of Herman’s monument. From there they could see the entire town and river valley stretching to the horizon. In the golden sunlight Jesse admitted he had thought the \$400,000 restoration was for some small chunk of iron rusting away on a hill. Once the lights went on in his head, he became one of New Ulm’s strongest supporters.

Fortunately for us in our spiritual blindness, God does not wait for us to try to find the light on our own. He knows that the world’s religious leaders are nothing but more blind souls leading the blind. He does not want His children following loud talkers, self-proclaimed gurus, and university or Hollywood elites whose “light” is nothing but *darkness*. Well-meaning and sincere as some may be, no human can lead the way out of the cave crumbling over us because all of us are blind by nature and lost in sin.

***“But everything exposed by the light becomes visible.”*** That’s why God sent His Son into the darkest backwaters of Galilee where gloom and depression ruined everything day and night. On a hill where perhaps thousands watched and listened, Jesus told His disciples: ***“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*** (Matthew 5:14-16 NIV)

“Oh, Pastor, we heard that in Bible Class a few weeks ago. We already know we’re supposed to do good deeds to help people come to church. We’ll just yawn again, wipe our eyes and wonder when we can get out for coffee and cookies.” Demonstrating again how we still deliverance from God.

We’ve lost pastors who took this too lightly and in the privacy of their own Internet connection lost connection with Christ and their congregation as well. So, ***“wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*** **Live As Children of Light – Exposing the darkness and Embracing the light** of God’s holy Word in your own heart and life. Jesus’ top three disciples fell asleep in the midst of His sufferings. May He never leave us to our own devices, dark as they are. May our gracious God keep calling us out of the *darkness* of sin and unbelief into the glorious light of His truth where we can willingly praise God day after day with our lips and our lives. May Christ shine on us in all the glory of God’s goodness and His full, free fellowship of life in the light. In **Christ** alone we **Live!** Amen.