

Wake Up for the Walk of Your Life

Thomas Robinson, *Ephesians – Growing Up Into Christ 19*, August 11, 2013

Ephesians 5:13-21

¹³ When anything is **exposed by the light**, it becomes visible, for what truly becomes visible is **light itself**. ¹⁴ Therefore it says,

*“Awake, You sleeper, and rise from among the dead,
and the Messiah will shine on you.”*

¹⁵ Watch accurately then **how you walk**, not as **unwise** but as **wise**,

¹⁶ making the **best use of the time**, because the days are evil.

¹⁷ Therefore don't become **unthinking**, but **learn to grasp what the will of the Lord is**.

¹⁸ And do not get **drunk** with wine, for that is **dissipation**, but be **filled with the Spirit**,

¹⁹ talking with each other in **psalms** and **hymns** and **spiritual songs**,

singing and **making melody to the Lord** with your heart,

²⁰ **giving thanks always and for everything**

in the name of our **Lord Jesus Christ** to **God the Father**.

Ephesians 5:1-2, 8, 10

¹ Become, therefore, **imitators of God** as **beloved children**.² And **walk in love**, as **Christ loved us** and **gave himself up for us**...⁸ For at one time **you were darkness**, but now **you are light** in the **Lord**. **Walk as children of light** ...¹⁰ as you discover **what is pleasing to the Lord**.

Isaiah 26:19; 60:1-5 (Cf. Isa. 52:1; Psa. 80:17-19)

^{26:19} **Your dead shall live**; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, **awake and sing for joy!**

For your dew is a dew of **light**, and the earth will give birth to the dead.

^{60:1} **Arise, shine, for your light has come**, and **the glory of the LORD has risen upon you**...² **The LORD will arise upon you**, and his glory will appear over you.³ And **nations shall come to your light**...⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult.

2 Corinthians 4:6

⁶ For God, who said, *“Let light shine out of darkness,”* has **shone in our hearts** to give the **light** of the knowledge of **the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**.

Romans 6:3-4

³ Do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized into Christ Jesus** were **baptized into his death**?

⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as **Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father**, we too might **walk in newness of life**.

Psalms 108:1-4

¹ My heart is steadfast, O God! **I will sing and make melody with all my being!** ² **Awake, O harp and lyre!** I will **awake the dawn!** ³ I will **give thanks** to you, O LORD, among **the peoples**; I will **sing praises** to you among **the nations**. ⁴ For **your steadfast love** is higher than the heavens.

Colossians 3:16-17

¹⁶ Let the **word of Christ** dwell in you richly, **teaching** and **admonishing** one another in all **wisdom**, singing **psalms** and **hymns** and **spiritual songs**, with **thankfulness** in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, **do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving **thanks to God the Father** through him.

Waking Up to a Bright Dawn

Paul has been helping us readers to see our life in Christ as a response to what God has done in Jesus – a choice, a style that expresses a new identity – a way we walk through the world, confident, generous, surrounded by God's self-giving love, which we can only imitate.

The joy of this walk arises from a sense of having awakened from a deathly sleep in a society marked by immorality and greed to see the world in a new way. This waking up was not just some new personal ideas but grew from Jesus' actual resurrection, which revealed a new reality about the world, God, and ourselves. It had meaning for this life and eternity.

“Awake, You sleeper!” A poem or song that captured what happens in baptism. With Jesus they died to one world (Rom 6:3-4), but that world was itself dark. Now dawn has broken! Jesus the Messiah himself is the brilliant light that awakened them to new life, the light by which they could see everything else. Things looked different in the brilliance of God's love seen in Jesus' incarnation, teaching, service, healing, self-giving death, and resurrection.

Buying Time; Gaining Insight

Paul wants us to see that this walk is an active process of watching and learning (growing up into Christ). Don't be foolish. Don't turn your brain off! Think! Who are you? What choices are you making? Do they fit the reality you now see in the light of Jesus? Will they last?

That's what God's will is, what pleases him. God wants you to learn to see that reality, step by step, as you grow. You become a mature human being – understanding, choosing, acting. Think about time flowing past inexorably. Ancient wisdom often portrayed the days of life as full of trouble and soon gone (Psa 90:10). Jesus' resurrection turns that inexorable loss into seasons, opportunities that can last. You can buy the moment by living/building/serving/creating/ working for the kingdom of God. *“In the Lord your labor is not in vain”* (1Cor 15:58).

Watch accurately how we use our time. My use of time shows who I am. Am I using every opportunity to build for the kingdom in my work, relationships, teaching opportunities, service to others, reconciling, healing brokenness, strengthening the weak, etc.?

Paul includes drunkenness as a vivid example of how people often fill their lives with things that waste and destroy life. Think! You have one life. Learn to fill it with what lasts.

Poetry, Music, and Gratitude

When the life of the God of the universe comes into our life, it must make a difference. To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with that vibrant life. Paul's generation had no New Testament or church hymnal. They had to create the poetry, the music, the stories to express this new dawn of life. They drew on all the resources of scripture and traditions of worship, but still their experience demanded new expression: *“Awake, You sleeper!”*

What has happened in Jesus fills all kinds of expression: proclamation, narrative, history, etc. But in our worship, poetry and music and symbol come together to allow our deepest sense of renewal, joy, and thanksgiving to flow out. Our lives/hearts are put back on course.

We are given words, stories, to articulate our feelings and judge accurately our choices. Again and again we remember the very concrete, self-giving love of Jesus that makes us who we are. And we are thankful! That gratitude is the light of Jesus shining into our lives. It illuminates everything so that generosity, confidence, forgiveness, and love can fill us.