

## Sermon – Port Macquarie – Walk in the Light of Christ:

### Ephesians 5:11-21 & John 6:51-58

Have you ever been to Jenolan Caves or similar when on holidays. How did you react when after entering the cave the Guide turned off all the lights? Were you afraid or bewildered, was there a sense of being lost or confined?

When I was a bit younger I was involved in the scouting movement as a venturer Leader and one weekend the group of ventures that I was involved with went caving at a place called Bungonia Gorge which is near Goulburn. The cave had not been developed for the tourist trade and so was rough, steep and had no lighting. We were approximately 200 meters below the surface and the only light was the head lamp that each of us wore. It was quite eerie when all lights were off and you were restricted to where you stood and because of the uneven ground in the cave you dared not move.

However when the Guide or one of us turned on the lights the beauty of the formations in the cave were revealed as were those that are broken & damaged.

Just before our reading from Ephesians Paul writes in verse 8: *“For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light”* and in verse 11 for our reading today: *“Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.”*

Paul is pointing out that if we are to live as people of God then we need to shine the light of Christ on our lives and the life of our church to reveal not only the good but also the bad, the sin, so that we can be transformed and be renewed in our minds. Just as the light transforms the caves into an awe inspiring experience so shining the light of Christ on our lives transforms our life experience.

So what is this light of Christ and where do we find it?

In John's Gospel Verses 1 – 5 we read; *“I, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”*

In our Gospel from today Jesus says in verse 51: *“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”*

From this we can see that the word and the bread which came down from heaven are one and the same and they are in Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God. Therefore we need to expose ourselves to this bread, this word that came down from heaven. Now I know we have heard a lot over the last few weeks about the bread of heaven, but the good thing about this bread is that it will not go mouldy nor will it become stale for it is new every morning.

However Jesus says that we need to eat this bread which he says in verse 52 is also his flesh. By making this statement Jesus is asking are you prepared to have his light shine on your life so that your sinful nature can be exposed plus are you willing to share in the suffering that Jesus experienced, the rejection of family and many of his friends.

For that is what can happen when you make changes to your life and live as part of God's kingdom and its standards and not as part of the world and its standards, when you let the light of Christ shine in your heart.

Jesus also pointed out that the bread that he gives is also his flesh, or put another way his body and his blood. This appears to be a gruesome thought but what Jesus is really pointing out that it is all about faith in him. When you eat and drink something it becomes part of you and your body draws strength and nourishment from it and it is the same when we show our faith in Jesus and eat and drink of the food that he brings, his word and his message of salvation.

So how far are you and I willing to go with Jesus? Are we prepared to go all the way with him and share in his way of life or are we just in it for a free feed? Are we like the 5000 following Jesus for what we can get or are we following Jesus for we are seeking our true Messiah? Jesus says verse 55 that "they who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them."

So if we say that we feed on the spiritual food that Jesus brings and that will nourish our souls and allow the light of Jesus into our hearts then Jesus says he will abide in us.

For as we read in verse 51 the bread of heaven is living bread so when you consume Christ he becomes part and parcel of who you are. He energizes you to do his work. Jesus also contrasts himself with bread that molds or water that stagnates. The bread and water of this world becomes dangerously toxic over time. However, our Lord is fresh and new each day.

The bread of our Lord is empowering. It not only can fill the heart, but it can also lead the recipient to overflow into actions of love. As was said of Francis of Assisi; "It is in giving that we receive." By accepting the sacrifice of our Lord, we are empowered to love through the Holy Spirit and that is the cup that never empties and the bread that never molds.

Also the bread of our Lord is always just enough for the day's journey. He gives us exactly what we need and exactly what we can handle for the day ahead. It is often our lack of confidence in him, or the shadows in our lives that makes us ask for more.

In verses 53 we have a warning that if we do not eat of his body and drink of his blood, in other words have no faith in him, then we have no life in us. If we have no faith in him we still walk in spiritual darkness. So if we say that we believe in Jesus yet keep unforgiveness, anger, jealousy and false living as part of our life then our faith is empty and we still walk in darkness.

To help us on our faith journey with Jesus gave us what we call the Lord's Supper where we remember his life, death and resurrection of our behalf. Yet in 1 Corinthians 11 - <sup>27</sup> *whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord.* <sup>28</sup> *Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup.* <sup>29</sup> *for all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves."*

To be right with God we need to partake of the bread from heaven daily for the bread as we see back in verse 51 gives life, and gives life to the full. For as we read in John 7 verse 38 "he who believes in me, as the scripture said," from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water."

Thus for those who walk in the light of the Lord and who eat of the bread he brings, his word, and are truly obedient there is great reward for in verse 54 Jesus promises to raise them up on the last day. In other words he will help us to stand in the court of God if our obedience matches our claim that he is Lord of our life for without Christ we will not be able to tolerate the final day – the Day of Judgment. However, if we share his death – his body – and drink his suffering – blood; in other words put our total trust in him, and walk in his light, then we will hear the words of Christ in the face of death: "This ones with me!"

When will this happen? The gospel tells us, on the last day. What last day, the day we depart this life, the most extreme day of our lives and if we understand this totally then we would not waste time in gossip or the sport scores but go all out to offers Christ's hand to all we meet, with the same fervent passion of John the Baptist, Paul, and our Lord.

In a few weeks time we will be involved in the back to church and J A A L outreach programs and thus will have an ideal opportunity to share the light of Christ with others, but why wait until then for the lost are out there now and need Jesus today.

People in Christ's day divided the day up into watches, and Jesus likens the last day to the last watch, that time between 0400am & 0600am, that time when the enemy is likely to attack because as any one who has been on

guard duty will tell you it is the time when our senses are the dullest, especially if it has been a quiet time on duty, yet we need to be fully alert at the time. The enemy knows that we can slacken off in these last hours of duty and is ready to pounce.

However this time of day can also be the most beautiful time of the day as we watch the colours of a new dawn. Thus we need to be alert and to keep watch, for we know not when the last day will be, it maybe today, and we need to be ready,

For it is sleep our enemy desires, our dullness and comfort, he wants us contentedly slumbering in the deep repose of inactivity. I believe we will be able to tell the time is near when those who shout; "Awake, awake the enemy is near," are drowned out by those who shout; "Shut up, we need our beauty sleep."

You may laugh but I hear it in our churches with statements such as, leave things as they are, we like the way we have done it for the last 20 years etc

Therefore let us not be lulled into comfortable Christianity— for there is no such thing—instead let the "last watch" find us in expectation of our Lord's dawning moment.

Let the light of Christ be turned on in you and me by putting our total trust in him - Jesus, partaking of the living bread he gives through his body and blood in abundance so that we can share it with others. Let us be alert and ready for Jesus return and as Paul says in verse 18bff; *but be filled with the spirit speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*", so that we will hear him say "this one is with me" and be raised up on the last day for all eternity.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Rev Micheal Perrott.

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