

## **The Redemption of Space and Time (The Spotlight in Me)**

Ephesians 5:8-16

# 23 in our series from Ephesians

May 12, 2013

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### **Prayer**

Father thank you for this morning, Thank you for our mothers on Mother's day. I certainly thank you for my mom. Lord God help us to see how you have revealed yourself in the things you've made, even our moms. Shine your light on us today. We need your redemption. I know as we preach this sermon, no one will fully understand, but I pray that you would help us believe your Word as we continue to preach on what we preached last Sunday, the Light. We can't comprehend the Light, but you are the Light, and you can comprehend us. Do that this morning we pray, In Jesus' name, Amen.

This week's sermon is really a continuation of last week's sermon.

Ephesians 5:8

*"At one time you were darkness but now you are light in the Lord."*

We talked about the idea that God, who is Light, doesn't make dark, and yet He makes space and time for dark. Just as, God who is Love, does not make not love, and yet He makes space and time for us, and our darkness, and lack of love.

We talked of how we each cast a shadow in the light, how we each create a shadow self, a self created with our own will, our own self-centered dreams, but God creates a new self with His will and His dreams. His dreams are called reality.

Ephesians 5:14 Paul wrote:

*"Awake, o sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."*

Have you ever tried to wake someone from a deep and dreamy sleep? Unless you hate them, you do it gently, right? Invading their dream world with the real world can just about kill them.

When you dream your own dreams, you are in total control. Your mind manufactures its own reality.

When someone wakes you, their reality invades your reality and annihilates your illusions.

If they love you, they'll whisper in the hope that their voice will enter your dream and be incorporated in your dream and gradually wake you from your private reality, wake you as you freely surrender your shadow reality to their reality, a common reality.

If you trust that voice and receive that word you're waking will be a delight...but if you don't...if you're startled, well, you could have a heart attack.

One summer night, about twenty-six years ago, I was leading a church camp with my best friend Dave, when Dave got news that his bride wanted a divorce. Together, through the night we drove from Santa Cruz to LA. So Dave could try to save his marriage. After I dropped Dave off, I drove to my apartment, where my bride lay sleeping, dreaming her dreams, at three in the morning. At that time in her life, her fears often got the best of her, and her dreams would become nightmares. We lived in a rather dangerous part of LA, and when I was gone she felt vulnerable and naked. She also felt empty; she wanted to have children, and it wasn't working; her womb felt empty and void.

I was her husband, bound in a covenant. I was to cover her and fill her place of shame with myself and my seed. I hope that doesn't bother you. Paul is going to talk about it quite a lot in just a few more verses. I was her husband and she was my bride, like Christ is our husband, and we, the Church, are his Bride. <sup>1</sup>

Well, I just remember standing at the door wanting nothing more than to cover her and fill her with myself, knowing that there was nothing she wanted more, than to be covered and filled by me, but she was asleep in a dream (her own dream.)

Trying to be so quiet, I accidentally jiggled the lock, and from the bedroom I heard the sound of absolute terror: "Is somebody there? Oh my God! Oh my God!" Her dreams had turned into a waking nightmare, for in that instant, she realized that whoever was at the door had absolute control and so she believed that she was about to be raped. In that instant, I so wished I could have entered her dreams and whispered to her: "Sweetheart I will never rape you. I am your husband, but if it be your will, then I will to make love to you: "So awake, o sleeper, rise from the dead, and I will give you light and life."

Some of you wonder why Jesus doesn't just (boom!) show up in all His glory... Well, maybe He'd prefer that you surrender control because He's just not into taking control. Maybe He's whispering to you right now...

Ephesians 5:8-16

*... at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in [consists in] all that is good and right and true), and try to discern [and show, and discover] what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful [filth] even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. [enlighten you, epiphany you, give you light]" Look carefully [well] then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time [literally: "redeeming the time"], because the days are evil.*

*"Redeem the time because the days are evil."*

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<sup>1</sup> He is the *Eschatos* Adam and we are His Eve but we've all been tempted and seized control so we cover our shame and hide our nakedness from our Husband, who is Light. In our dark dreams we've forgotten who He is or maybe we never understood in the first place.

The word translated “redeem” is only used four times in Scripture, and all by the Apostle Paul.

In Colossians, we are also told to “redeem the time.”

In Galatians Paul used the word twice, explaining how Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us,

“For cursed is anyone who hangs on a tree.” Galatians 3:13

On the tree, He bore the pain of our shadow man and gave birth to the true man.

There He redeemed us Galatians 4:5 and sent His Spirit into our dark hearts crying: “abba–daddy–father.”

*“Redeem the time because the days are evil.”*

As we said last time, evil is an absence not a substance, a nothing that infects the something, a desecration upon creation. Evil is like a parasite.

There can be no evil apart from “the Good.”

God is good, but God didn’t make evil.

God didn’t make evil anymore than light makes the dark.

Darkness is an absence of light (visible light.)

Evil is an absence of God, who is Light.

But God isn’t just visible light.

God is Light and Love.

God is “I AM that I AM.”

Evil is darkness. Evil is not Love. Evil is “I AM *not*.”  
Evil is that which God does not will.

Evil is a nothing. Nothing and yet that nothing is a horrid something with which we battle. Ephesians 6:12 “principalities and powers, the *cosmokratoras*, cosmic rulers of darkness, the spiritual host of evil in heavenly places. Evil is that which God does not will.

So God didn’t create darkness,

But He created space and time for darkness.

God didn’t create evil,

But He created space and time for evil,  
Like He created space and time for me...  
Even to will that which He does not will.

Genesis 1:1

*“ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form (chaos) and void (empty) and darkness was upon the face of Tehown (the deep.) The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters, the chaos, the deep, and God said, “Let there be light.”*

John tells us: “God is Light,” and “Jesus is the light of the Cosmos.”  
So when God said, “Let there be light,” He was saying, “Let there be Me in the not me...the nothing.”

So before God could create out of nothing or in nothing,  
He had to make space for nothing...because God is the ultimate something.  
God is "I AM that I AM."

So you see, the Big Bang was  
Not an explosion of somethingness in the nothingness  
but an explosion of nothingness in the somethingness,

Not an explosion of fullness in the emptiness,  
but an explosion of emptiness in the fullness,

Not an explosion of light in the darkness  
but an explosion of darkness in the light. For God is Light!

Human words and concepts utterly fail us at this point; prepositions don't work because they assume space and time, but before space and time...

God *IS* all there IS. Light is. "I AM" am or is. Like this:



So the Big Bang was like an explosion of "not God" in God; "Nothing" in the Something, "darkness" in Light, like this:



See? Creation must have hurt God. Space and time...hurt God...

Like a wound in God.

You know we are created at a wound in Jesus' side, in Adam's side (*Eschatos* Adam's side.) We are created at a wound in His side as he hung on a tree, bleeding light into the darkest night.

Creation must have hurt God like a wound in God or a *womb* in God.

Aram Harotian wrote something really beautiful:

*In the beginning God." That's it. Before space was made there was only God. Not some dark cold nothingness, but Light and Life itself, and what did God do at the beginning? He made space; He made space within Himself for others to be. The very act of creation itself was sacrificial. God made space for others to exist.*

Space and time are a wound in God, and if you're a mom, you've felt that would.

You made space in your life for children.

You made space in your life for pain.

But you made space in hope.

Hope that one day your children would return your love in freedom. Your womb is like that wound in God. But you don't need a womb to feel that wound. Just love someone and you make space for that someone, space for them to will what you do not will, you make space for pain.

Well, God made a void.

He made space and time...and then into the darkness He spoke His Word, and His Word is Light.

He is "the Light of the world."

And He is the "promised Seed."

He is how God creates.

380,000 years into the Big Bang, as we measure time, according to physicists, the Cosmos was infused with light. God said, "Let there be light" (the light of the Cosmos.) And in that light...floats our world.

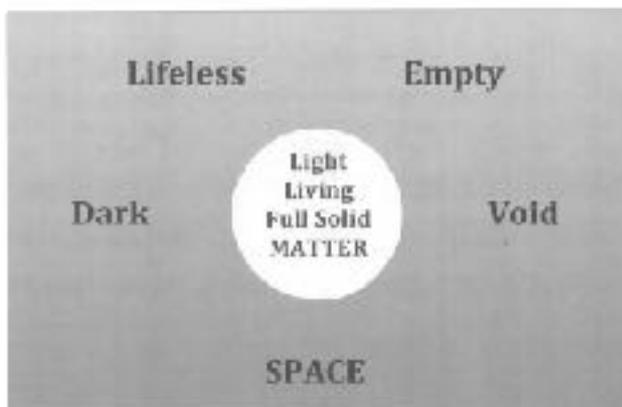


Do you see the light?

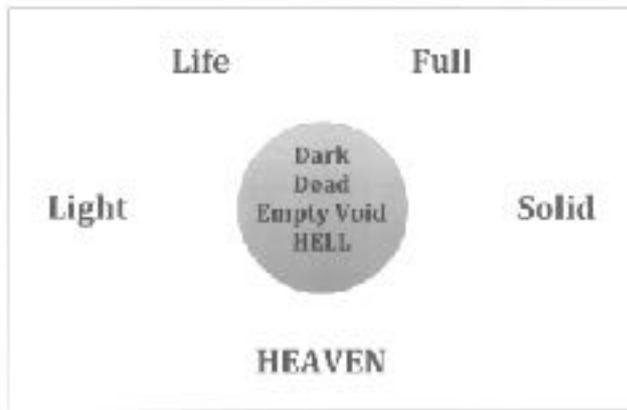
This is kind of crazy, but you usually don't see the Light so much as you see other things by the light.

What we think of as dark empty space is actually full of light. It's just that there's no matter for it to bounce off of, and what looks like light is actually the edge of the dark. Darkness is in the depths of the earth, *Tehown*, the deep.

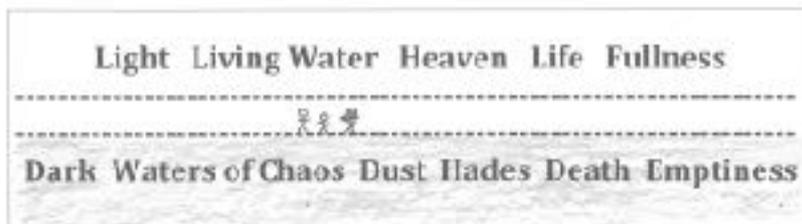
We think space is dark, lifeless, empty and void, and earth is light, living, full, and solid like this:



But maybe space is light; life, full, and solid like heaven.  
And the earth is dark, dead empty, and void, as hell:



In the cosmology of Scripture we live between light and dark, in the firmament between the water of Life above and waters of chaos below, between Light and dark, Heaven and hell, Life and death, full and empty.



It's interesting that the worldview of our ancestors, just a few hundred years ago, made hell as big as heaven, but if the world is round, hell is like a bubble of dark nothingness floating in a sea of Light; the sin of this world is like a wound in the Light.

Well, we exist on the skin of that dark bubble.



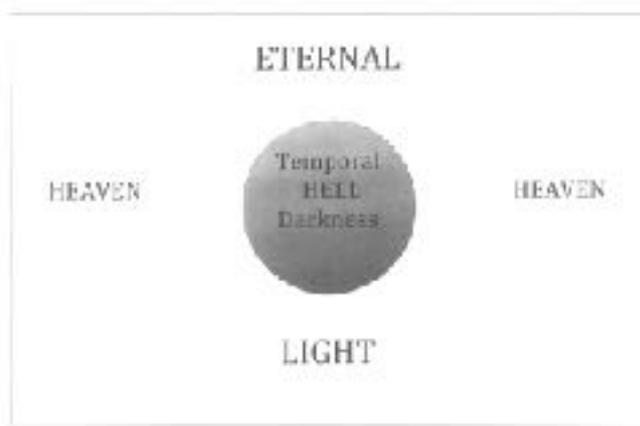
People say that the cosmology of Scripture is absurd: To think the heavens are full, and this world is empty...or that Spirit is eternal and matter is temporal. They say, "We've been to the heavens, and they're empty."

I find it fascinating that the discovery of the Higgs boson particle reveals that outer space is very much not empty.

And quantum mechanics indicates that it may be far more full than matter. They call it the “energy of the vacuum.” Professor William Tiller of Stanford states, that current theories now indicate, the amount of latent energy in the empty space of one hydrogen atom is a trillion times greater than the energy in all the mass (or matter) of all the planets and stars out to 20 billion light years away.

I don't know how true that is, but maybe Scripture is *right*...  
And the things we think are empty are often quite full,  
And the things we think are full are often profoundly empty.  
So you can be full of yourself and profoundly empty.

In Scripture, the depths of the earth are empty of Light and Love; it's called hades or hell, but one day, a great day, the earth will be filled and flooded with the glory of God and God is Light, and check this out, one more fascinating tidbit:



Light is eternal, and darkness is temporal...so hell is temporal. (It may last for all time, but time will end.) This earth will be flooded with eternal light and fire. This old earth will be transformed into a new heaven and new earth, a world without end because it's full of the End, Jesus, the Light is the Beginning and End.

John writes, “I saw a new heaven and new earth, and the sea, (*Tehown* was in “the sea”) was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” She has “the glory of God.” Rev. 21:11 “And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb...and there will be no night there.” Revelation 21:23-25

You see? The Light doesn't just shine on her; the light shines from within her.

So, she casts no shadow.

In time, we are like that old Jerusalem and her shadow.

In eternity, we are the New Jerusalem.

In time, we are the old man.

In eternity, we are the New Man.

The old man casts a shadow. Yet the old man is surrounded by Light. “In Him we live and move and have our being.” The old man is like a dark bubble in the Light. You see, the shadow the old man casts is inside himself.



Like the shadow that is the depths of the earth... *Tehown*

As Paul wrote: "At one time, you were darkness..." But Paul already wrote: "He (Jesus the light of the world) descended into the depths of the earth...that he might fill all things." "At one time you were darkness but NOW you are light in the Lord." For the Lord is Light in you!

When we surrender:  
Our darkness to the Light,  
Our lies to the Truth,  
Our judgments to His Judgment,  
Our shame to His Grace,  
Our death to His Life,  
Our chaos to The Logos,  
Our emptiness to the fullness of God,  
Our self to Jesus...then our old man is annihilated, and the eternal man is created or revealed in his place.  
The same shape...but no longer empty...now full.  
No longer dark now light,  
    No longer temporal but eternal,  
        No longer evil now good,  
            No longer dead but now alive,  
                No longer alone but in love...the image of God.

We are the New Jerusalem.  
We are the Bride of Christ.  
Scripture says, "The Jerusalem above is our mother."  
So this should make your head spin, but...  
We give birth to ourselves (our new selves.) You are pregnant with your new self.  
We give birth to each other.  
We give birth to Christ in others. (Jesus called us "His mother.")  
We give birth to the fruit of Light:  
Love, joy, peace, patience, faith, hope, love... everything good and true.  
When we surrender our darkness to the Light...  
    We give birth to Life...because the Light is our Husband.



I'm not saying that a womb is evil. I'm saying that refusing to surrender your womb to your Husband, who has bound Himself to you in the eternal covenant of grace, at the price of His own body and blood shed on the tree in the heart of darkness, *is* evil.

The womb is not evil; space and time is not evil.

The emptiness and longing that you feel is not evil, but Bride of Christ refusing to surrender your womb to the Great Bridegroom is evil. In other words, refusing to surrender your space and time to the Great Bridegroom is sin.

People wonder why Jesus is so concerned with bad sex. It's because He's so passionate about righteous sex. It's a picture of creation, all of creation. And it's through, you, Eve that the last Adam longs to create. The Prince of Darkness wants you to cover your shame with shame and fill your emptiness with emptiness. While the Lord whispers in to your fallen and deluded dreams, "Awake o sleeper, rise from the dead, and I will give you light." "I will fill you with Light and Life."

Well, God created space, and God created time, and physicists say they're really one thing space-time. So He fills space AND He fills time.

In Ephesians 1:10 Paul wrote that there is a plan for the "fullness of time."

A plan, not simply to "wrap things up" in time,  
but to fill all empty time with meaning. And Jesus is the meaning.

A plan to fill all dark time with Light. And Jesus is the Light.

A plan to fill all sinful and evil time with Grace. Jesus is God's Grace.

Jesus fills all temporality with eternity.

So Paul writes: "At one time, you were darkness but NOW... (Now is the point where eternity touches temporality, where we decide or agree with God's decision.) NOW you are light in the Lord.

Then He writes, "Redeem the time for the days are evil."  
"The days?" What days? The plural days...the days of time.

In the last chapter of Zechariah, (14:7-9) Zechariah prophesies: “And there shall be a unique day... (In the KJV “one day,” in the RSV “a continuous day:” one continuous, unique day.) which is known to the Lord, neither day or night...(I think that means no passage of time) but at evening time there shall be light.” On that day, living waters will flow out of Jerusalem...and the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one.”

The “days are evil” but that “one unique eternal day” is good.

In Genesis 1, God created all things in six days.

On the seventh day he rested for “everything was good.”

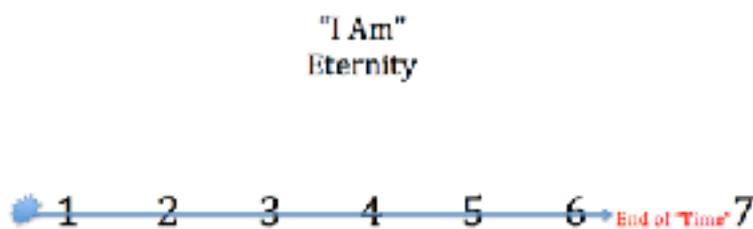
The seventh day is Holy; no evening is mentioned on the seventh day.

On the seventh day, there is no evil.

On the seventh day, creation is finished.

On the sixth day, creation is not yet finished; there is still darkness and so “the days” (plural) must be evil...even though they contain the good that’s being spoken into the evil.

If you take Scripture at its word, you’ll see that we’re still being created in time and not everything is good. And so the history of time, beginning to end must look like this:

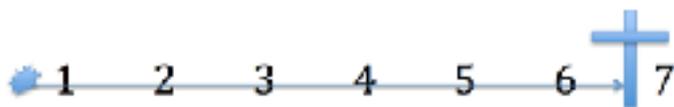


The six days are in time, and the seventh day must be eternal. So if you “feel” temporal, maybe it’s the sixth day. And to the extent you have eternal life, it’s the seventh day.

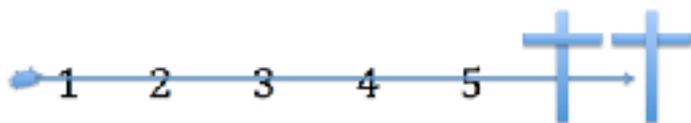
People with a modern mindset think that’s crazy, but recent cosmology reveals that the Cosmos is about 14 billion years old from the standpoint of the earth. Due to relativity and time dilation, it must be about six days old from the standpoint of creation, when matter was first formed. It was at the end of the sixth day of the week that Jesus, the Light, hung on a tree and cried, “It is finished.”



It must also have been the end of the sixth day of creation. Paul says, “We’ve come to the end of the ages in Christ.”



Or you could say the “end of the ages” comes to us in Christ at His tree.



Whatever the case, we Christians believe that the boundary between “space-time” and eternity is a tree called the cross.

There God redeems us from the curse by becoming a curse for us on the tree.

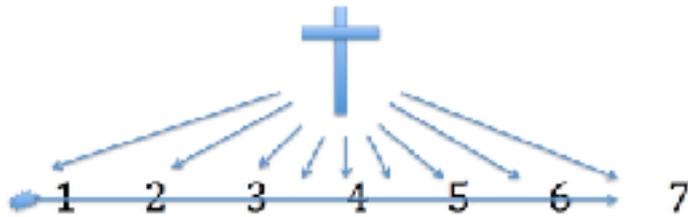
There God gives us His Life.

There the light penetrates our darkness and bears the fruit of Life.

There the tree of knowledge becomes the tree of Life.

You know a tree mixes Light from heaven with the dust of this earth and produces fruit that is life!

Well, on the tree, the Light of the world bore the sins of the world and invaded the world, all space and time with Himself.



In the Revelation, He unwraps the scroll and gives meaning to all time, the days of time: seven seals, seven trumpets, seven thunders, seven bowls; at seven everything is new and He cries, "Behold, I make all things new." He redeems time with Himself. And Paul writes, "Redeem the time, for the days are evil."

Well, *you* can't redeem time, but maybe you can surrender your time to the Redeemer. By the power of the Spirit, you His Bride, can speak the words at the end of the Revelation, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

You can invite Him to fill all your space and all your time, at this point in time, NOW. Because He has already accomplished it in eternity.

I don't think I even began to believe that until one day several years ago, praying for a friend. This friend had come to Susan and me for help. She shared some horrid "pictures" from her past. (Demons had attached themselves to these places of darkness and shame. I'll tell you about one: In one memory, her mother dressed her like an angel on Halloween. She had always dreamed of being an angel, but that night her father came home, saw the costume, grew furious and took her to a meeting where she was stripped and ritually molested. It was all she could do to tell me because of the shame.

At one point, as we prayed, she had a vision of Jesus and she cried out, "Jesus hold me," and He wouldn't hold her. He said, "You have to give me the pictures." In her mind, she was literally clutching these pictures to herself. I prayed, "Jesus would you show her who she is?" (I figured she wasn't those pictures.) Jesus told her, "Those pictures are part of who you are." I wondered, "Is this really Jesus?" I thought: "Surely those pictures are not who she truly is; those pictures are darkness and not light." I wanted Jesus to annihilate those pictures and my friend did too, but he would not annihilate them; in fact, He framed them after He in-lightened them.

One by one, in this vision, my friend would hand a picture to Jesus, and with each one, she'd have another vision. Jesus, the Light, would appear in each picture. He'd annihilate

the shadows and give each picture new meaning. He'd finish each picture with a revelation of His Love. Each picture was like Good Friday transformed into Easter. Like the greatest evil, the crucifixion of Christ transformed into the greatest good: the sacrifice of Christ. Darkness was transformed into light, bearing the fruit of Light as my friend would begin weeping in gratitude crying: "Thank you, thank you Jesus."

Jesus would then take that picture, (that piece of space and time) put it in a frame and hand it back to her finished. "It is finished."

When Jesus entered the last picture, he entered as a warrior. He went to the wretched table where my friend had been abused, picked her up, held her, dressed her in His white robe—His angel outfit. He sat her on His lap and told her how hard He fought for her and then He said, "You are and will always be my little angel." As she told me this, I said, "Look He is holding you and He's telling you who you are." Jesus said to her, "Your pictures are my pictures."

You see? It's who *they* are.

Where evil has told her she's a whore, Jesus reveals she's His Bride.

Where evil has called her mother or death, Jesus revealed she is mother of the living.

Where evil has told her she's worthless, the Prince of Glory reveals she's worth His body and blood. Romans 9:26 "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"

Where she was darkness, she is eternal light in the Lord.

You see Jesus fills all of her space and all of her time, and it becomes all of Their space, and all of Their time. <sup>2</sup> My friend looked at me with tears in her eyes and said, "How do you think it makes God feel when we're ashamed of those pictures?" I said, "I guess that means we're ashamed of Him." Don't be ashamed of the Jesus that hangs on your cross, in your space and time.

Jesus fills all your space and all your time; that's why He created all your space and all your time.

So you don't have to hate your space and time, just the emptiness that fills your space and time.

Don't hate your space and time; surrender your space and time.

To "redeem the time" is to surrender your time to the Redeemer. In prayer, in the now;  
You can surrender guilt in the past and it becomes a story of Grace,  
You can surrender fear for the future, and it becomes Faith and Hope,  
You can surrender the present moment, and it becomes the obedience of Love.

Then on that day you will see that all your space and time has become the Kingdom of Heaven, it's eternal, but..

If you hide your shame and cover your fears,

If you take refuge in the dream of your own control,

That you are your own savior, creator, and redeemer.

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<sup>2</sup> Julian of Norwich wrote: "His love never allows our time to be lost."

If you cling to darkness, and lies, and illusions...  
You cling to hell.

And here's the rub:

Jesus won't rape you.

He won't fill you...until you ask Him to.

Jesus won't rape you,

But He is romancing you,

All the time.

That's why He made space and time. So THE LIGHT could shine in your darkness.

Light is eternal,

Light is judgment,

Light is alive.

But this is what our dark hearts have not suspected:

The Light is our friend and more than a friend; The Light is our Lover.

You were made from the Light and for the Light.

Your greatest desire is to be filled with the Light.

The problem is that you're dreaming your own dreams and your dreams are dark with shame and fear. <sup>3</sup>

Well, as I was saying it was 3 am, my keys jiggled the lock, and out of the darkness I heard my bride "Who is it? Oh my God, Oh my God..." My heart broke for her; I said, "Honey it's me," and she knew my voice. I think you know your Bridegroom's voice. He is the Word spoken into your dreams. I mean even now, He's speaking to you: He's the beauty in every sunset, the rhythm in every song, the truth in every statement. He is the Light; surrender to the Light.

I said, "Honey, honey it's me," and then she hugged me like she'd never hugged me before and then I hugged her like I'd never hugged her before and her personal nightmare turned into one of our greatest memories. I said, "I won't rape you, but if you will...I will to make love to you." I covered her and filled her, and she bore the fruit we call Jonathan.

Would you close your eyes? It's dark this world is dark, it's dark and you've been dreaming your own dreams. You've been living your own life, according to your own will, and there's a sound at the door, and you realize it's Judgment Day. I truly believe, that right now, you have been placed before the throne of God and the Judgment seat of Christ. And you are not in control. He is in complete and absolute control, and so you brace yourself...expecting to be violated. Now open your eyes and watch what happens.

## **Communion**

He takes bread and breaks it saying, "This is my body given to you. He takes the cup saying, "This cup is the covenant (you see? He forms a covenant Bride) in my blood." Eat it. Drink it. You see what He's asking you? He's asking: "Would you let me fill you...all of you?"

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<sup>3</sup> Karl Barth wrote:

Will there never be an end to all our ceaseless talk about the delay of Christ's coming? The End of which the New Testament speaks is no temporal event...what delays the end is not Christ's coming, but our awakening.

## **Prayer**

Just say these things with me in your heart:

Lord Jesus I give you my past. I give you all those places where I've hated myself, where I've been ashamed of myself, where I've dreamed my own dreams of darkness. I give you my past, my future, and my fears about how I'm going to make it, and pay for things; I give you my fears.

I give you the present; I give you right now. Jesus I invite you to fill all my space and time. Turn my shame into your glory. Turn my future into courage. Turn my now into obedience of love given to the Father. Thank you that your desire is to hold all of me. Father it's in Jesus' name that we give you praise.

[We sing "Shine Jesus Shine."] "Shine Jesus shine fill this land with the Father's glory. Blaze Spirit blaze set our hearts on fire. Flow river flow flood the nations with grace and mercy. Send forth your Word, Lord, and let there be light."

## **Benediction**

Do you know what that is? That's God's dream. What's another word for God's dream? Reality. You are agreeing with the dreams of God. He's romancing you and it will happen because it has happened; it's eternal.

So I can say this to you church. Happy Mother's Day because you give birth to Light in this dark world, and it's conceived in your place of shame. That's where we encounter God's grace and bear the fruit of life. We'll talk more about that in the weeks to come.

Paul said, "Whatever is exposed to the light becomes light."

God is good.

He does not fail.

His gospel is great.

Believe the gospel in Jesus' name.

*Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.*