Ephesians 5: 8-14 Hiding things and lack of light stunt growth

Begin by playing a game. Give people two words that they cannot speak and then have a conversation with them. If they say either of the words then give them a forfeit (nothing too awful!).

How easy was it to have a flowing conversation while thinking of words that you could not say?

How can we apply this to the passage in Ephesians? Paul is writing in the context of encouraging to the Christian believers to be imitators of God – to behave like His dearly loved children.

With regard to the darkness in the world, meaning sin, Paul re-enforces that they who accept Jesus are now in His light, seeing sin clearly when meditating on the life of Christ.

Paul says not to have anything to do with the deeds of darkness, and rather expose them.

Does this mean to expose our own evil deeds?

That may be simpler to do if the sins are the ones we consider to be shameless – but even that is a lie. All sin will keep us from being in true relationship with God. Sin could be summed up as turning away from being obedient to what God requires of us.

But I am sure you know what I mean – if I say that I walked passed someone who I thought needed a word of encouragement, but I was late for something, then we can think that is sinful, but content perhaps to share that. A one off event that of course could be justified.

What about if the sin was a battle with addiction? Alcohol, drugs, or pornography? What if I continually thieved things. What if I was consumed by hatred for something or someone? These are perhaps considered more shameful in our human eyes. Either because of what it is, or because it is pattern of something that is not easily justified (in our own eyes).

But if we are trying to struggle with no support, then it will cause a barrier between all our relationships.

Like the game we played, always having to think about what we say in case we let slip something of what we are hiding, because we are ashamed.

We need to allow the light to shine on these things. Perhaps we would not want to stand at the front of a church and confess this to everyone – but we should seek out someone who we trust to confide in.

That way, a curtain of shame and secrecy is removed. The light can shine in.

Paul has spoken of “fruit of the light”. Imagine a plant. If it is robbed of sunshine it struggles. If it survives at all then it will be weak and spindly. We also need the light of Jesus in the whole of our lives.

The other side of that coin is whether we are able to be the one that someone confides in. To be helpful and not judgemental. Whichever side we are of that coin, we need Jesus to help us, to be our guiding light.

But it could also be read that we shine the light on the sins of others. This is something we need to be extremely sensitive about, and fully rely on the Holy Spirit to give us direction of what to say, when to say it, and how to say it. If you are aware of someone who needs help and to hear a hard truth, pray! Pray for an opportunity to be presented to you, and be constantly alert to recognising that opportunity.

It is also a call to bring justice. We can see so much sin in the world, in leadership and authority.

Perhaps we need to consider, as individuals and as a church, how we can help to be voices in the lives of those who need to be called to bring justice.

As we give that consideration, we are going to prepare and come to the Lord’s Table to share communion, with the theme of justice at the centre.