Zombie Christian
Are You Infected?

Wake up sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

Paul 60 A.D.

Hal Gaudet
WELCOME - We're glad you're here! For those of you who haven't been here the past couple of weeks we have been using our culture's fascination with zombies as our theme for this miniseries.

If you're new to “churchworld” and the whole God and Jesus thing, and are holding back on becoming a Christian, much of what we're going to talk about today will pertain to you and I hope you'll hang in there with me long enough to get the stuff that's relevant to where you might be in life.

Now if you are a Christian and have been here the past couple of weeks and have been applying the Apostle Paul's teaching from his letter to first century Christians in Ephesus, then you are ready for the next phase of our Zombie Christian teaching series. And if you missed one or both of the previous sessions, you can watch the videos online from the CornerstoneFamily.com website just click MESSAGES and you can even download the Bible teaching homework exercises from the same spot and you can be a "doer of the Word" and not just a "hearer" only.

Okay, in our first week - oh wait, before we get started each week we began with some zombie humor, so we've gotta have one for today. See if you've heard this one:

Do zombies eat popcorn with their fingers? No. They eat the fingers separately.
Review – In our first week we looked at a teaching that the Apostle Paul gave that addressed a “spiritual sickness” that was plaguing first century Christians and modern day Christians as well. And I labeled this SPIRITUAL sickness, the “Christian Zombie Virus” because it turns well meaning Christians into WANDERING, MINDLESS, UNFEELING, CONSUMING “ZOMBIE CHRISTIANS”. And it's largely responsible for the DECLINE of Christianity in the U.S. right now.

And based on Paul's teaching from Ephesians, we came up with a DESCRIPTION of a ZOMBIE CHRISTIAN that went like this:

| ZOMBIE CHRISTIANS wander through this life experiencing LITTLE PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION, INSPIRING FEW Christians to GROW SPIRITUALLY, and ATTRACTING FEW OUTSIDERS to RELATIONSHIP with Jesus Christ. |

So as INDIVIDUAL Christians, if we've become INFECTED with the Christian Zombie Virus, we're not CHANGING and TRANSFORMING and GROWING SPIRITUALLY ourselves and our lives don't APPEAR much different from the lives of people who are not Christians.

As far as our INFLUENCE on other Christians, our APATHETIC CONTAMINATED BRAND of CHRISTIANITY - DOESN'T CHALLENGE GROWTH in other LONG-TIME Christians; and it actually SETS a BAD EXAMPLE for Christians NEW to the faith.

And concerning people who are OUTSIDE the faith, and have not entered into relationship with Jesus Christ, Zombie Christians AREN'T SHINING as "BEACONS of HOPE" offering an ATTRACTIVE, HOPE-FILLED life that would appeal to those outside the faith. So we’re not making disciples as our Lord instructed.
Now in our last session, we learned how to TREAT ourselves against the “Christian Zombie Virus” so that we would be less of a "THREAT" to fellow Christians, and be able to move forward with our SPIRITUAL CALLING and live up to the life we were DESIGNED to live.

I hope you went through the BIBLICAL APPLICATION EXERCISES at HOME during some alone time with God and that you were able to address both some OUTER behavioral issues as well as some INNER thinking issues.

Remember from last week, we must address BOTH at the same time or else the Zombie Christian Virus cycle doesn't get sufficiently interrupted. However, if we WILL address both our OUTER behavior and INNER thinking as Paul instructed, a NEW cycle replaces the old diseased one.

*And if we diagram Paul's teaching from Ephesians 4, it could like this:*
What was once "UNattractional behavior" (remember it's UN-attractional because it does nothing to attract outsiders to faith in Christ) -- BUT when treated with the "antivirus" becomes "A-tractive" behavior.

And when we address our "futile thought processes" which we had prior to our relationship with Christ, and we intentionally swap those out with "Christ-based thinking", then a NEW cycle -- a spiritually HEALTHY cycle forms.

Our LIFESTYLES are more APPEALING to those outside the faith; our thought processes are based on CHRIST'S teachings and ways of life; our SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING and QUALITY of relationship with God is DEEPENED; and our heart's SENSITIVITY more easily picks up on the promptings of the Holy Spirit living in us. It's a new, healthy cycle.

Now there's one thing we've got to remember to do that we didn't talk about last week. We have to RE-TREAT ourselves for the Christian Zombie Virus. We will occasionally need BOOSTER shots as we still CARRY the Christian Zombie Virus even though we've treated ourselves against it. It can always grow strong again and the symptoms can suddenly begin to appear again without warning just as they first appeared. So stay alert and evaluate where you're at regularly.

So now for today, if we've treated ourselves against the Christian Zombie Virus, then we're ready for the NEXT step in our SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

A logical question follows that we'll want to grapple with this week and that question is this:
What does God want from me once I have stopped living like a Zombie Christian?

Paul offers some very CLEAR INSTRUCTION for Christians who have TAKEN RESPONSIBILITY for their spiritual condition and treated themselves against the Zombie Christian Virus.

Once we're LESS of a DANGER to FELLOW CHRISTIANS, and have STOPPED SCARING OFF NON-Christian population, we're ready to start LIVING UP TO our POTENTIAL and our CALLING as Jesus followers.

And we're gonna pick up Paul's teaching in Ephesians chapter 5 verse 8. Turn in your Bible to Ephesians 5:8. If you don't know where Ephesians is, use the Table of Contents in the beginning of your Bible - that's what it's there for.

Okay, Ephesians 5 verse 8 - Paul is teaching first century Christians and he says this:

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible--and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. 14 This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Ephesians 5:8-14 (TNIV)
Now this is a RICH PASSAGE full of things we could overlook if we don't pay close attention. Paul, under the inspiration of the Spirit carefully crafted what he taught first century Christians and his insight is EXTREMELY RELEVANT to how we are living out our Christianity today.

Okay, verse 8 chapter 5,

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. Ephesians 5:8 (TNIV)

Paul contrasts what all Christians' PASTS have in common - we were DARKNESS. All of us prior to trusting Christ as Savior and having the Holy Spirit move into us lived life in spiritual darkness - not able to grasp and understand spiritual things. BUT - Paul says - NOW we are LIGHT - in the Lord.

Based on that TRUTH - that FACT - LIVE as CHILDREN of LIGHT.

Paul tells Christians to MATCH UP their LIFESTYLE to the actual IDENTITY they have in Jesus Christ as a follower of him.

But notice the phrase Paul uses, "CHILDREN of LIGHT." Our entire identity as a "LIGHT in the Lord" is permanently and only ASSOCIATED with our spiritual REBIRTH as a CHILD of God through faith in Jesus.

In John chapter 3, Jesus taught that a person is BIRTHED into God's family when they understand that their SIN SEPARATES them from their Creator, and that ONLY by accepting GOD'S SOLUTION to their sin problem - JESUS' SACRIFICIAL DEATH - can they enter into relationship with God and live with God in heaven for eternity.
Only by BELIEVING that JESUS CHRIST was God's promised Messiah who would take the punishment for all peoples' sins by dying on the cross, can a person enjoy RELATIONSHIP with God as their heavenly FATHER and not just know OF him as their Creator.

And this spiritual REBIRTH as Jesus referred to it in John 3, permanently connects our IDENTITY as a Christian and as a "child of light" to our heavenly Father and his only Son, Jesus Christ.

As earthly children are to be SUBMISSIVE to their EARTHLY PARENTS, so too, we Christians are to be SUBMISSIVE to our HEAVENLY FATHER. There is no room for SELF-ELEVATING PRIDE because as a "CHILD of LIGHT", the very SOURCE of our BRIGHTNESS comes from Jesus Christ not from ourselves.

Living our lives as a "CHILD of light" also emphasizes the importance of CHILD-LIKE DEPENDENCE on MAINTAINING our CLOSENESS with our heavenly Father - just like young earthly children depend on their parents and stay close to them.

So this is every Christian's TRUE IDENTITY. Each person who has trusted in Jesus Christ has been spiritually REBORN and is a CHILD of LIGHT in their heavenly Father's family. And it's logical that Paul would use this term as Jesus was called the Light of the world in John 1. So like it or not, or, remember it or not, if you are a Christian, you are a "child of light."

Now as for just WHAT living as a "CHILD of LIGHT" looks like, Paul gives us a AERIAL VIEW - a generalized "flyover" of a couple of the characteristics of a "CHILD of LIGHT" lifestyle beginning in verse 9.

9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)  
Ephesians 5:9 (TNIV)
As CHILDREN of LIGHT, the stuff that is being PRODUCED out of our lives, the FRUIT that our lifestyles are made up of is "goodness", "righteousness", and "truth". Now "goodness" seems self explanatory; we seem to - without a bunch of Bible verses being quoted at us - know what's good and what isn't so good.

Now let's talk about a lifestyle that produces TRUTH and then we'll CIRCLE BACK and talk about righteousness. A lifestyle that shines with "TRUTH" means more than just "not lying".

A LIFE - BASED on the "TRUTH" - makes a STATEMENT that GOD'S WAYS are the BEST ways -- GOD'S WAYS are the RIGHT ways -- GOD'S WAYS are the ORIGINAL DESIGNED ways for living life.

Any "POSITIVES" that come out of a Christian's life are explained as having come from being in relationship with Christ.

And listen, this is CRITICAL - it is vitally important for our non-Christian friends, co-workers, family, and acquaintances to HEAR this from us and UNDERSTAND this about us - so that the "GOOD STUFF" that they see in our lives and observe about us doesn't get MINIMIZED in THEIR THINKING to where they conclude that we're just "NICE PEOPLE" or "LUCKY" or "FORTUNATE."

It MUST BE COMMUNICATED that any positives in our lives come directly from being in relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We have to ask God for CREATIVE WAYS, and BOLDNESS, and the RIGHT TIMING to share these things about ourselves so that the TRUTH about who we are and who God is - is COMMUNICATED. We've got to start TALKING about THE TRUTH.
Now, as for "RIGHTeousNESS", Paul also mentioned righteousness. What is "righteousness" as something being produced or shining out of our lives?

Dictionaries describe "righteous living" as "acting in accord with divine or moral law or virtue; free from guilt; morally right or justifiable." But even this definition can seem kind of general or vague.

So how is a Christian -- a child of light -- supposed to know if the "fruit of their shining light" is RIGHTeous or not? Well, there are numerous instructions in the New Testament on "righteously living the Christian life", but in this case Paul TELLS Christians HOW to go about making sure the fruit of their lives shines with righteousness. Verse 10:

10 and find out what pleases the Lord. Ephesians 5:10 (TNIV)

If we want to live a "righteous" life as a "CHILD of LIGHT", then you and I are going to have to "find out what pleases the Lord."

Paul tells EACH of us Christians to live as a CHILD of LIGHT, and that our lives should shine with goodness, righteousness, and truth. And while that will look similar for Christians as a whole, it will also look UNIQUE as it "shines" out of each of us as INDIVIDUALS.

Paul places the OWNERSHIP -- the RESPONSIBILITY for determining what pleases the Lord on EACH of US INDIVIDUALLY. He didn't say, "Pastors and teachers, you guys find out what pleases the Lord and then go tell all the Christians so they know how to let their lives shine."
Paul's instruction to individual Christians to "find out what pleases the Lord" is IMPORTANT for a COUPLE of REASONS.

FIRST, we're all at different places in our spiritual growth and maturity. How our lives "shine" is naturally going to look a little different from Christian to Christian as the Spirit does HIS work in each of us on an individual basis.

And SECONDLY, we love to make ourselves look better by making COMPARISONS of OUR lifestyle against someone else's lifestyle. And so we FLAUNT our so called "righteous fruit" our "righteous" life choices and aim them at other people either DIRECTLY by saying things to them or around them, or INDIRECTLY by gossiping.

But notice, Paul says the "fruit of our light" should consist of "righteousness", not "SELF-righteousness".

So by each CHILD of LIGHT being RESPONSIBLE for their OWN spiritual growth and determining what pleases the Lord, PRIDEFUL SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS and JUDGING are MINIMIZED -- while also allowing for INDIVIDUALIZED spiritual growth and maturity. I like that.

Now this does raise a question, how do I find out what pleases the Lord?

Seems like a no brainer, but I guess it has to be said; if I want to find out what pleases the Lord, I have to read his teachings that have been recorded in the Bible. Yup - we have to READ the BIBLE.
We have to remember our IDENTITIES as Christians -- we are Jesus followers. Jesus followers FAMILIARIZE themselves with the TEACHINGS and LIFESTYLE of Jesus to be able to COMMUNICATE and LIVE them out in their own lives. So again, the RESPONSIBILITY for finding out what pleases the Lord rests solely on EACH OF US as an individual "CHILD of LIGHT".

Okay, continuing on, Paul encourages Christians not to slip back into the Zombie Christian lifestyle in verse 11.

11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. Ephesians 5:11-12 (TNIV)

Paul says don't have anything to do with any kind of lifestyle that is in opposition to the FRUIT PRODUCING lifestyle of a CHILD of LIGHT because that's not who we are anymore.

A CHILD of LIGHT'S lifestyle should CONTRAST a "non-fruit-producing, dark lifestyle".

In other words, however each of us as individual Christians studies Jesus' teachings and determines what pleases him, and lives that out in our individual life choices and living styles, the "fruit" that SHINES out of the way we do life, should CONTRAST enough with the "no-fruit, dark lifestyle" of non-Christians so that there is a visible distinction.

The CONTRAST between the "light" lifestyle and the "dark" lifestyle should EXPOSE and REVEAL the EMPTINESS and FUTILITY of a life without relationship to the Creator.
And notice the follow up verse to our lives EXPOSING the EMPTINESS of the life without Christ. Paul says in verse 12,

12 It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 
Ephesians 5:12 (TNIV)

He says don't dwell on the fruitlessness of those who haven't trusted Christ. Don't even talk about it.

We're not to be running around shining a "holy flashlight" at non-Christians' living habits and lifestyle. Why should we expect non-reborn people to act reborn? We are simply to "LIVE as a CHILD of LIGHT" and let the "fruit" that "shines" out of our lives CONTRAST the EMPTY lifestyle of those without Christ. And the Spirit will do the rest if we are consistent with how WE represent the Savior we so frequently call Lord.

Living as "children of light" causes us to take RESPONSIBILITY for our spiritual growth, and the FRUIT that SHINES out of our lives should be a BEACON of HOPE ATTRACTING those without relationship with Christ to believe in him as their personal Savior which is WHAT God wants from each of us once we've stopped living like Zombie Christians.

So in answering the question we began with,

**What does God want from me once I have stopped living like a Zombie Christian?** *Here's what he wants:*

God wants each Christian to LIVE as a CHILD of LIGHT whose LIFE SHINES as a beacon of HOPE to people who are not yet in relationship with him.
God wants each Christian to LIVE as a CHILD of LIGHT whose LIFE SHINES as a beacon of HOPE to people who are not yet in relationship with him.

So that answers the question of WHAT God wants from us once we've stopped living like Zombie Christians.

But then Paul gives a principle that is the reason WHY God wants us to live as a child of light.

Paul shares a PRINCIPLE that explains how living the life of a CHILD of LIGHT can MULTIPLY Christianity in an exponential way. This principle that Paul talked about can be the solution to any decline of Christianity in any century.

Verse 13, here's the principle:

13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible--and everything that is illuminated BECOMES a LIGHT. 14 This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Ephesians 5:13-14 (TNIV)

Paul says that the LIFE that is EXPOSED as being without relationship with God, when that person is ILLUMINATED with the TRUTH of who Jesus is and what he did on the cross, and they ACCEPT that truth on a PERSONAL LEVEL and INVITE Christ into their life, that person who was once in darkness, that PERSON has now been LIT UP.

THEY are now a LIGHT - THEIR LIFE now begins to SHINE -- THEY are now living as a CHILD OF LIGHT.
THEY begin to live a LIFESTYLE that SHINES to others offering the same HOPE they saw shining toward them when they were still living in darkness.

And so Paul calls to both Christian and non-Christian alike, "Wake up sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Christians need to LIVE as CHILDREN of LIGHT letting their LIVES SHINE with bright hope for those without relationship with God.

And non-Christians need to SEE the hope for what it is: an OPPORTUNITY to EXPERIENCE RELATIONSHIP with GOD as more than just their Creator but as their heavenly Father through faith in Jesus Christ.

So what do we DO - what are some lifestyle practices that we can employ to help our lives "shine with the fruit of light"?

In your bulletin you will find our final at home exercise for this miniseries. And doing the homework is really what this is all about.

If you think God's going to work some miraculous change in you as a Christian because you patiently attended all 3 of these messages these past weeks and did nothing with what you heard, I'm sorry to tell you, you are probably still a Zombie Christian.

On the other hand if you HAVE been giving what you've been hearing and reading in the Bible passages a try in your life, you should feel a little inspired because you sense God's at work in your life.
Okay, so let's walk through this week's at home exercises.

**Home Exercise Warm Up**

*Pre-Exercise Reality Check* - If you're not sure if you are living as a child of light, just ask yourself, who was the last person I had a direct hand in leading to relationship with Jesus Christ? If it's been a while (or never), then let's get busy. Christians, we can leverage the connections we already have and work within the rhythms of life we are already in the midst of. God has already positioned us in the lives of specific people not in relationship with him that he intends for us to influence for him.

*Pre-"Shining" Reminder* - As we get to know the people we're already around, friendships form, trust builds, and they'll share real needs. As individual Christians (or groups of Christians) help meet the needs of non-Christians we have a connection with, we must be careful to COMMUNICATE that we are following Christ's example of SERVING others and this is *WHY* we are happy to help and serve our friends and neighbors. How and when we choose to communicate this will vary, but it must be COMMUNICATED so that the help we offer is understood to be more than just "social work" but that it is because Christ has so sacrificially served us.

**3 Home Exercises to Live Out in the Weeks and Months Ahead**
1. **WHO Children of Light Shine For** - MAKE a LIST of *non-Christians* and *disconnected-Christians* you know that you already have some association with either *relationally* or *geographically*. Try to think of all areas of your life. (Examples: family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, relatives, team mates, class mates, other parents whose kids are on same teams, boards or committees you co-serve on, organizations you belong to with others, social media network platforms i.e. Facebook, twitter, blog sites etc.)

2. **WAYS a Child of Light Can Shine** Live life STRATEGICALLY and OPENLY. We must live as "children of light" - *shining our light for and in front of others* - not hiding our relationships with Christ. Take advantage of opportunities to be a shining example of a hope-filled lifestyle.

Be *intentional* - participate in or even host some of the following as ways of getting to know others in the locale God has you living out your life right now.

Sit with and make conversation with another parent at your child's sporting event; have your home Bible study group host a block party; invite some friends or neighbors to a barbecue; set a dinner or lunch get-together with another couple; offer to help a friend or neighbor with something they could really use the help with; others?

Remember, the Father SENT his Son and Jesus likewise SENDS us to go to those still not in relationship with him (John 20:21). They are all around us but they are not coming to us, we must go to them. Let your light shine - live as a child of light, not as a zombie Christian.
3. The LIGHT a Child of Light Shines - COMMUNICATE WHY the Good News Is GOOD. Being able to tell Jesus' story and how you entered into relationship with Christ is extremely important. But it is also important for each of us to be able to tell non-Christians we are connected to WHY the good news is "GOOD" for THEM specifically. This requires we really get to know the people around us. Here are some questions to help us better tell our story and the story of Jesus specifically for them.

a. The Bible teaches that God wants to be in relationship with the people he created. What separates all people from having a relationship with God?

b. Who first told you about Jesus’ story?

c. What is your understanding of who Jesus was and why he came into the world?

d. How old were you, and what was going on in your life at the time you entered into relationship with Christ?

e. How did you enter into relationship with Jesus Christ?

f. What is Jesus Christ currently changing in you?

g. What is going on in the life of the person you are talking to about Christ that could use some hope, resolution, justice, healing or other quality that relationship with Christ brings to a person's life?

h. How would you explain to this person how they can enter into relationship with Jesus Christ?

i. What would you recommend this person do NEXT in their spiritual journey once inviting Christ into their life? (come to the home Bible study you are a part of; come to a church service; take a Starting Point study together with you; other?)
Okay, as we close out this Zombie Christian miniseries I’d like to talk to us Christians just for a moment. Christians, have you been "living as a child of light"?

Some of us know we have not - you don't need any bulletin hand out with probing questions to tell you you haven't been living up to your calling as a Christian. Fair enough. On the other hand, some of us have been trying to live as "children of light" but we haven't been seeing a lot of results and might just need some EXTRA help from the Lord.

So here's what we're going to do this morning. We're going to have an old fashioned prayer time - right in church - go figure.

In a minute I'm going to invite us as a church family to come down to the platform and just crowd around and I will lead us in prayer and you can pray in your hearts for where you're at as far as living as a child of light. Whether you are living as a child of light or not, I think it would serve us well to invite God's help into each of our life situations this morning.

Now for those of you who would say you're not a Christian, when all of us Christian types come down to the front to pray, I'd like you to just come with them to the front of the auditorium too - don't worry, you can blend right in with the crowd so you won't feel singled out. But I want to pray with you guys too. And when I pray for you during our prayer time, I'd like the Christians down here at the front to pray with me - for you in their hearts.

Prayer / Dismiss – Let’s go live as children of light!