

No Secrets! All Exposed Ephesians 5: 8-14 (ESV)

Saint Marks United Methodist Church, Charleston, WV

4th Sunday of Lent (March 26,) 2017

⁸for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible,¹⁴for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Pat Gallagher told me that throughout his career in public relations he has oft repeated the rule: Don't do what you don't want to see Fanny Seiller write about on the front page of the Charleston Gazette.

It's kind of like what Paul is saying here, in this warning to the new converts in Ephesus.

I didn't quite realize just how powerful this was until once, about 30 years ago, and I was lobbying in the state capitol against the expansion of legalized gambling. I was a lay person, and the chair of the Peace with Justice Division of the Board of Church and Society.

This woman came up to me and said, „You want to know about “so-and-so“ who was leading the fight for expanded gambling. Before he got into “such and such“ relationships he was diametrically opposed to it.

And she took me down into the basement of the building to a little office she had. (I have no idea how a reporter from the Gazette had her own office in the capitol building, but I went like going to the dungeon dwellings of a little troll. She rummaged around until she found a letter from

this leader in the House of Delegates and pulled out a photocopy of a letter that he had written to a voter about the danger of gambling.

That letter was then referenced in my little book on “Why Ums Don’t Gamble.” 4,000 copies of that illustration of the corrupting influence of gambling on politics were distributed to all UM delegates in WV Annual Conference and to those in Western Pennsylvania UM AC, and to a gathering of delegates to a national conference on the evils of gambling.

It did not ultimately prevent him from later becoming a federal judge, but I was simply amazed at the resources of this woman to pull out all kinds of secrets people thought were hidden.

Remember the Fanny Seillor Rule: **Don’t do what you don’t want to see Fanny Seiller write about on the front page of the Charleston Gazette.**

There is also an even more personal and powerful rule: **If you don’t want your spouse to know about it, then there’s something wrong with it. Don’t do it.**

I used to advise clients, “Think of the invisible family law judge collecting evidence, and make sure you do things in the privacy of your home that would make you look good in court. How many times it resulted in reconciliation, when the person would secretly do nice things that only the Family Court Judge might see. Their good conduct changed their hearts!

Is God Trustworthy? was the question asked last week. **This week,** it boils down to **“Do you believe it makes a difference to God?”**

It's why we confess unto God, during morning prayer ***what God already knows.***

It's going to come out.

Think of all the politicians whose sordid affairs have come out in the long run.

It gives me faith in government today. No group of people can ever keep a secret for very long, that is not found out.

It's not just the apostle Saint Paul here, but also [what Jesus said as well](#): [Matthew 10:26](#) **“for nothing is covered that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known.”** (cf. Luke 12:2) If we are worried about [Fanny Seillor](#) or the [Family Law Judge](#) or [Congressional inquiries](#), then [what makes us think that we can dupe God?](#)

Back to that question: **“Do you believe it makes a difference to God?”** “But preacher, I thought that God forgives.”

Yes, but God, the God of mercy is also the God of Justice. How does that fit together? Smarter people than me have wrestled with it.

[Here's my idea](#): I am forgiven. **AND** Everything that is covered up will be revealed. [Daily Video Time for eternity](#).

And here's [my other idea](#): I don't want to do something that I know will hurt the people I love. Because it hurts me. And if I do not want to hurt the people I love, then certainly I don't want to slap God in the face.

My sisters and brothers, we are forgiven people.

In this season of Lent, going up to Easter in which Jesus showed just how much God loves us, we can know this. We can KNOW THIS. So let's make our lives a suitable response to that.

I had a woman in an adult membership class, on the final day, when I was giving a tour of the church building, who asked me, "But, Monty, I'm still not sure that I have done what I need to do in order to be saved." And I responded to her: "Listen. Assume that you are saved. Quit worrying about it, and just start acting like you are saved."

Nothing is hidden. All is exposed. You are forgiven and saved. Now start acting like it.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.