

**“The Shining Light of Christ”  
Ephesians 5:11-14**

*Introduction:*

1. College students across our land have reached the end of the fall term. That means a couple things. First, they head for home, for “much needed rest”. (Yeah, right—I went to college, too!) Second, soon they will receive their marks for the fall term. So I thought, let’s grade ourselves on the five purposes of the church. (We have talked about these in the past, and plan to address them again soon.)

Purpose	Grade for FBCNT	Grade for Me
Exalting the Lord		
Edifying other believers		
Encouraging others		
Equipping others to serve		
Evangelizing the lost		

*Apply:* How will you help FBCNT and yourself improve each grade in the next term? We’ll return to this later.

2. Today, we will focus on the last mentioned purpose, since this text speaks to it. Here is a way to build better relationships that will last forever!

*Exposition:*

I. A desolate picture of fallen humanity. 5:11-12

A. People live in what is fruitless—in what has no lasting benefit.

1. The people of this world think that they are really gaining something by the sinful pursuit of worldly riches, pleasure and fame.

*Illustration:* Undoubtedly, sin seduces with its pleasures (Heb 11:25-26). They entice with the suggestion of happiness. But they must be refused.

2. The Lord has a different evaluation (Mk 8:36-37). This is the constant human dilemma. Should I live for the few years of earthly existence? Or is there something more after life, and is it better than what I could get now?

*Apply:* The living God says, “Look at the bottom line.”

B. People live in what is shameful.

1. Shame comes from guilt, as we learn from the fall of Adam and Eve.

2. People can do what is shameful without feeling shame (1 Tm 4:2; Ti 1:15). However, that does not lessen the shamefulness of their sins.

3. Apart from grace, we can expect people to increase shameful activity. See 2 Tm 3:1-5, 12-13.

*Apply:* We should **sense** the tragic condition of the lost around us. As Schaeffer said, “If you understand, weep.”

II. A deep burden for fallen humanity. 5:13-14

*Comment:* Last week we saw that the Lord always wants us to remember what we used to be. This subject provides another reason that is important. Too often Christians have been tempted to think or even say something like, “Well, if the worldly person wants to live in such shameful ways, that’s their problem! Let them experience God’s wrath.” Certainly, we should repudiate

such an attitude and get down on our knees and repent if we have it. What if God had allowed you to live in such shameful ways? “But for the grace of God, there go I.”

A. A sense of our responsibility—we must expose their “deeds of darkness”.

1. Every Christian has been sent by the Lord Jesus Christ to make disciples (Mt 28:18-20). Since we are children of light, we must shine as lights in the world. You are the light of the world. (Maybe if we repeat this enough, “two or three of us” might take it seriously!)

*Apply:* What is one of the **purposes** of this church? It is to spread the light of the gospel of Christ. You and I must evangelize—tell the good news of Jesus our Savior to others! This is not optional. You and I must do it. So, learn what to say and how to say it.

2. The chief way to expose their deeds of darkness is simply by being a light and giving out the light of the gospel.

*Illustration:* I have been in some settings in which “Christians” have thought they should expose people by being God’s **deputies**—going around condemning people with the law or moral standards. I don’t think that is our job. We are living among people that are condemned already. God’s wrath is about to fall on them! Therefore, I think that we would be better to be God’s **defense attorneys**. Go tell your family members and friends, “The Lord has a warrant out for your arrest. He’s coming after you! But I have a surefire way of escape for you and God’s wrath will never touch you. It is the blood and righteousness of the risen Christ!”

B. A sense of urgency

1. Their hopeless condition should grip our minds. 5:6; cf. 2 Cor 5:11

2. Christ’s love should then compel our emotions. 2 Cor 5:14

3. Then we should willingly persuade them. 2 Cor 5:20

*Apply:* It is time we get involved in God’s **entire** program. I think we have been strong in **edifying** believers and **encouraging** one another. We strive to **exalt** the Lord, though we still need to grow in this area. We are making progress in **equipping** people for service. But our glaring weakness is **evangelizing** the lost. All the leadership of this church realizes this weak spot, and God giving us grace, we will strive to correct it without letting go any of the other four purposes.

### III. A dazzling Light for fallen humanity. 5:14

*Comment:* It is hard to know exactly what, if any, Biblical text Paul refers to. It might be Is 60:1, though there are also similarities with Is 26:19; 51:17; 52:1. It might be a summary statement of all of them. Perhaps he is referring to an ancient hymn based on one of those texts.

A. Christ meets people where they are: sleeping, dead and darkness itself.

1. Human religions involve the hard work of worshippers to reform themselves and to win God’s favor.

2. Christianity is the Lord coming to fallen and ruined humanity. To use an illustration of Jesus, it is the Shepherd seeking lost sheep.

B. Christ addresses people as responsible agents. “Wake up... rise...”

1. We should not infer from these commands that people ruined by sin have the necessary ability to respond. Terms like “dead in sin” and slaves to sin” deny such ability in lost sinners.

2. Instead, these commands serve to highlight the depth of human inability and drive the sinner to the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Illustration:* Jesus told the paralyzed man to stand up and walk. Surely he had no ability in himself to obey. But it wasn’t a question of the man’s ability but of Christ’s divine ability.

*Comment:* When Christ is calling sinners through the gospel, the requisite power to repent and believe the gospel is found in the call of grace, not in the sinner. This supplies hope for us to evangelize. “They won’t listen to me!” However, they might hear Christ’s voice. If they are his sheep, they will hear his voice.

C. Christ is able to shine on them and so meet their real needs.

1. His light gives life. Jn 8:12
2. His light gives knowledge of the glory of God. 2 Cor 4:6
3. His light provides a relationship with the living God. 1 Pt 2:9-10

*Apply:* Has Christ shined in your heart? With all the lights of the holiday season, what a senseless tragedy it would be for you to continue to walk in darkness. “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”