

March 15th, 2026 The Fourth Sunday in Lent Ephesians 5:8-14

The words of our text are not written to all people but to God's believer. They are written to you and to me specifically. They remind us of the change that is taking place in our life because of God's gift of faith. This gift of faith comes to us from none other than the God who made the heavens and the earth. The Apostle Paul describes in Corinthians: **"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 CORINTHIANS 4:6). Our gift of faith is precious --Our gift of faith is important--Our gift of faith comes from the Creator.**

What are you and I or any believer to do with that great, precious gift of faith that God has given to us? In our text the Lord encourages **us to let God's Son shine.** In other words as we live our lives in a sin-darkened world, the Lord encourages us to let God's light really shine in order to dispel the darkness.

Ephesus was a major, metropolitan area and trade center, Paul spent a long time there. Because of the length of time that Paul stayed in Ephesus, we are told that a whole region heard about the message of the Savior.

Today's text began by saying: **"For you were once darkness."** The Ephesians had lived in a city that was very dark with sin. Ephesus was a big sprawling metropolitan trade center where **the people indulged themselves in every kind of sin imaginable.** Now because the light of the glory of God had come to these people, their lives were changed. He says: **"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord."** In other words, they had now seen the light. These believers knew the difference between what was wrong and dark and what was light and good.

Christ had brought them into the light through the Word of Truth. Rather than finding out what pleased them, they were going to find out what pleased the Lord. It would be a challenge, because these new believers, like everyone else around them, had grown up pleasing themselves, not worrying about anyone else or anything else. Now they were to please the Lord.

In case they did not know how to please the Lord, Paul tells them how to do that. He writes: **"for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth."** Paul uses those terms in a very spiritual sense. Goodness is not just plain being good, but it is the moral excellence that comes from knowing God. That is Christian goodness. Paul wanted them to learn the righteousness that comes from and through and by God alone. This is the righteousness that saves. **To learn those things that please the Lord, because Christ has brought them into the light.** At the very end of our text it says: **And Christ will shine on you.** With those words the Apostle Paul reminded these believers of the purpose of Christ's light.

John tells us: **"I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness" (JOHN 12:46).** Today, you and I sit in the light of the knowledge of salvation. It is a gift to us through faith from the Holy Spirit. Christ wants his light of faith to shine on us and in us and around us. God's word reminds us that the light of faith—of the knowledge of salvation—is precious because it is God's divine gift to each one of us.

During Lent we see just how much Jesus did so that we are able to bask in this divine light. We observe and hear and study Jesus' passion, His sufferings and His final death on the cross.

Then we rejoice also in the resurrection of Christ the Lord. All these events remind us how helpless and weak we are. It reminds us how much the darkness of sin has control of this world. Colossians says: **"For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (COLOSSIANS 1:13,14).** Christ has brought us into his light, snatching us from the dominion of darkness, snatching us from the grip of Satan, the power of death and even the snare of sin itself.

God has brought us into the light so that we might let his light shine. That is what the Lord encourages us to do. This is not always easy, because the world is not looking for the light of Christ. **The world is looking for our light, or the world is looking at its own light—which is really darkness.** So we are to reflect the light of the glory of God which is a light in our hearts through faith. In Matthew the Lord says: **"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (MATTHEW 5:16).**

The believers in Ephesus were in the minority. The rest of the world was going on around them worshiping the false gods. Paul pointed out the truth was that their false gods were dark and the God Jehovah,

Jesus, was light. This would be very bad for the businesses making and selling idols. So Paul has to remind these believers to keep going ahead and walk in the path of light and put behind them those deeds of darkness.

He describes this for us: **“Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness”**. He wanted to remind them that their former life was fruitless. It was empty. They were to put behind them the deeds of darkness and walk down the path of light and righteousness.

They were to be encouraged that the light would expose the darkness. The light would keep them out of the dark. Paul writes: **“for it is light that makes everything visible”**. The Lord God, himself aroused them from their sleep by giving them the light and letting his free gift of divine grace is planted and then flourish in their lives.

Paul said to avoid those fruitless deeds of darkness and he describes such deeds: **“For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.”** There were many who did secret sins behind closed doors. In the cover of darkness people do all kinds of things thinking they get away with sin.

In our day and age it seems as if there is no sin that is too shameful to speak about. Instead, those dark, secret, shameful sins are brought out into the open, and our society suffers. **The worst part is the shameful things are now being accepted. These sins are still sins of darkness. They are still sin!** Just because you or society has accepted or legalized sinful acts or accepted such actions does not make them righteous. Today, it is all the more important that we let God’s Son shine, that every believer boldly walks in God’s divine light.

How are we going to overcome the sin in this world? How is any believer going to overcome the darkness that seems to be enveloping our whole nation? **We must stay true to His Word.** As God’s children and children of light are to live as children of light we can be positive about those things that are good and right.

Not only should we point out sin, but we also need to point out God’s grace and forgiveness. The Lord then encourages us all the more to let God’s Son shine. **The same Lord who created the heavens and the earth, makes this light shine in our hearts.** Isaiah says: **“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you....Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn” (ISAIAH 60:1,3).** God’s word will always be victorious. It has already been victorious in our lives. God’s word has changed us from people of darkness into children of light. God’s word and God’s Son keeps us in the light rather than walking in the darkness. God’s Son shines in our hearts so that we might let God’s Son shine in our lives for others so see. Amen.