

# Don't Join a Church Your Children Want to Go to

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**Bible Text:** Ephesians 5:11-14  
**Preached on:** Sunday, May 6, 2018

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Well, grab your Bibles and let's go to Ephesians, back to Ephesians on Sunday night. We're in chapter 5 and I'm going to actually relook at some verses and bring you this exhortation from this exposition as the Apostle Paul, you know, as soon as Paul preached and was able to get a small local church established in these regions of the known world, Ephesus being one of them, of course he stayed in Ephesus three years, but no more did he turn his back and do something else until he found out that the enemy had raised up false doctrine, false teaching, worldly concepts of what Christianity was and began to infiltrate the church. Things like Judaism where the Jews would say, "Okay, we embrace Christ but we're going to hang onto the law and that's the only way you can be a true Christian. You've got to come to Jesus through the law." So Paul had to combat the Judaizers. We see that in the book of Galatians. I'm sure there is some of that in the church at Ephesus. It wasn't just in one Gentile city. We see that spirit being attacked just thoroughly in the book of Hebrews. Then there were things like Gnosticism. Gnosticism was the idea that there are a few elitists who had the word from God on what truth was and they also had developed a formula whereby you could indulge in sin and it's all by grace anyway. This is part of the reason Paul wrote to the Corinthians onetime and said some are turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. They think the grace of God means you just give in to sin. So you've got to understand that in this day as hard as it may be to believe, immoralities and promiscuity and perversion was worse than our day right now and so it didn't take long for those in those sins who were somehow connected to the church, wanted to embrace and bring into the church some notion of how Christianity can be still Christianity but we can still kind of go soft on sin, we can still kind of embrace some things. It's all grace anyway. We don't have to worry about this stuff. So we find the Apostle Paul following up his work in these churches with these epistles, these writings, these books he wrote to the churches, and he will regularly attack those notions. He tries to beat those false doctrines back out of the church.

Now one thing we learn is that the challenges and the wars and the struggles of the early church – now listen to me – are identical to the challenges and the struggles and the wars we have in the contemporary church. Now the names have changed but the precepts and the ideas behind them are all the same. So Paul obviously is dealing with notions that have crept into the church that some of these sins of their former lives are not all that bad; certainly there were false professors in the churches trying to propagate these things and so Paul just comes in here and just wham, tries to push it back down to where it belongs.

So look at Ephesians 5. We're in this practical side of the book after he laid that beautiful glorious doctrinal section where he dealt with the sovereign grace of God in saving us, now he's talking about how we should live if we really believe these doctrines and are a true church. Let's begin in verse 11 of chapter 5. He says,

11 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them [it has the idea of reproof, exposing and reproof]; 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. 14 For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you."

So no doubt about it, there were teachings, there was a spirit of accommodation, there was a spirit of let's be wise, let's don't offend too many people, let's don't be too harsh about some of these things, and then Paul comes in here and says, "Are you kidding me, go light on these sins? Are you kidding me, back up on calling a spade a spade? No," he says, "not at all." He said, "Not only are you not to participate in these things, I want you to expose them and rebuke them." Strong stuff.

It was 30ish years ago and I've told you this a time or two before when I took our entire staff to a conference in Shockoe Springs, the Baptist Assembly down there because this brilliant unbelievably successful pastor was going to teach us how to do church. He was going to help us. His name was Rick Warren. Have you ever heard of Rick Warren? "The Purpose Driven Life," purpose driven this and that. By the way, what happened to all that stuff? You don't see those books around much anymore. Churches aren't studying it anymore. Do you know why? Because it wasn't solid. Our ministry here at Grace Life Church will have validity 500 years from now. Do you know why? It's biblical. Because the Bible – now listen – solid biblical ministry is cross-cultural and cross-generational. It doesn't matter. Any time. It's just like today, I pick up a lot of the old Baptist and the old Puritan books that are 300-400-500 years old and I am helped by them. Do you know why? They are biblical. The Bible always works but these guys come up with all these new clever man-invented ways to do things and get people saved. By the way, God saves people today the same way he saved people yesterday, the same way he saved people a month ago, the same way he saved people 10 years ago and 20 years ago and 200 years ago and 2,000 years ago. The truth hasn't changed and like Spurgeon used to say, if God's not going to win them with the truth, he's sure not going to win them with a lie. So what we have is we have people building huge congregations of unregenerate people and they have to use gimmicks to keep them entertained and amused and interested.

Anyway, Rick Warren was teaching this conference at Shockoe Springs and I took the whole staff down there. I wasn't real sure we were going to like it but I thought, "Let's hear what he's got to say." And it wasn't an hour or two, three hours into it at the most, when he made the classic statement that was really his banner that he waved as to how we're going to build the church in this modern era. Of course, Rick Warren is old-

fashioned now. He's a fuddy-duddy fundamentalist almost today compared to what they are doing in churches but in that day, he was kind of out there and here was his banner, here's exactly, I might miss a word or two, this is exactly what he said, though, in essence: stop telling people they are sinners; stop emphasizing the doctrine of sin; people know they are sinners already, they need just to be given hope. That was his message and Southern Baptists just swallowed it hook, line and sinker, and about the same time, you had a man named Bill Hybels at Willow Creek Church in Chicago and he was doing the same kind of stuff. We're talking tens of thousands of people coming to, I wouldn't call it coming to church, I'd call it coming to a weekly religious service event, and that's what they call church now. Church now means you go to some event on Sunday. But that's not a church. That's like meeting your wife for dinner once a week and calling it a marriage, but there's a little bit more to it than that, amen? A little bit more involvement than that.

So this spirit, brothers and sisters, has just gained steam and gained steam. Now listen to me: the overwhelming majority of us embrace the Reformed of faith as it's called, the doctrine of divine sovereignty, and now Satan has found a way to widely influence the Reformed movement as many Reformed guys are embracing more and more pragmatic, culturally relevant stuff that really sells and really gets people excited, but what happens, give it a decade or two or three and that stuff goes up like a rocket and it comes down like a rock. It just doesn't last. It doesn't work.

So Paul is dealing with this 2,000 years ago in the church at Ephesus. People wanted him, not necessarily Paul particularly but they wanted the churches to cut some corners, go light on certain doctrines, don't be so harsh on things. You've got to understand, if you held to a strong doctrine of biblical moral purity, you were an abrasive, brash, cutting rebuke to a culture like Ephesus where the major aspect, I might say, of Ephesians culture was the Temple of Diana where men went and had sexual relations with prostitutes to worship their god. That's the centerpiece of the city and so there was every influence, there was every pressure to back up because these sins would so easily get into those who professed to be Christians and it was just uncomfortable to deal with them. So what does Paul do? He says, verse 11, not only "Don't participate in these deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them."

Now, a couple of verses I want to put up on the screen, or I think Tim got them up. I kind of got them late to him but I said God gave them to me late so I couldn't give them to you early. Isaiah 3:12. We've looked at this before. "O My people! Their oppressors are children, And women rule over them. O My people! Those who guide you lead you astray And confuse the direction of your paths." As Israel rebelled against God, God said, "You're going to be led by people." I don't think it necessarily means children were leading them and women were necessarily in the positions of leadership, what it means is the men who lead you are so weak, so wishy-washy, so unprincipled it's as if immature children and carnal, unregenerate, silly women are ruling your country, which means you're just all over the place. I mean, as Jesus said, he said, "You people of Israel, you're like the children who come up and they say play us a dirge so you play them a sad song, and they like about two stanzas of that and then they say, no, we don't like that, let's sing a happy song. Then you'll sing a happy song. In other words, they don't know what they

want. Instead of mature, solid, principled leadership, you're going to have to deal with the wishy-washy, unprincipled, ever-changing whims of immature childlike leaders or silly, unregenerate, emotion-led, women leaders."

Now ladies, don't get upset with your pastor, get upset with God. He said it this way. As a fact, he uses the phrase "silly women" in 2 Timothy 3:6. Have you got that one, Tim? "For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses." That means they have a sinful heart and they are functioning their emotions and they are here, there and everywhere. I can give you a good illustration. Now I'm not talking about principled women. God has given us a church full of good, steadfast, upright, principled ladies in this church and I could go to them and count on them to give me good, wise advice, but ladies, you are the exception. Why is it that you can have hundreds of thousands, if not millions of women, and I don't mean to be gross or crude, who dress up in suits designed to look like the female sex organ and march in Washington? If that's not a display of unprincipled, silly women weighed down by sin, nothing is. Are you listening to me? And if you interviewed these women, it's been proven, if you interviewed these women marching and asked them why they are marching, they are not really sure why. I mean, they've got everything given to them, free abortions, free whatever you want pretty much is there, it's just led on by unprincipled silly impulse.

Now what I'm saying is God says that's what happens when a nation leaves God and that's the same type thing happens when a church loses God. Now they will use a lot of Bible verses and they will talk about a lot of things but when you analyze what they're doing, that's why I talk to you about churches that we keep finding them reinventing themselves every five to seven years. I've been here almost four decades in this area and it has just been amazing as I watch churches, "Now there is this new thing that happens in this church and all these great things are happening." I thought, "What happened to the new thing they started six years ago? And what about the new thing they started six to eight years before that?" It's just that, "We are going to chase this. Hey, we're going to chase this. And hey, this is the cool thing, now we're going to do this." By the way, there's a devolution, there is a descending track that they're on because what they're doing is more and more and more abominable. It's so bad, it's so off-track, no longer can I call them seeker-friendly churches or man-centered churches which is an oxymoron, those simply don't go together. I have to agree with John MacArthur. John MacArthur said he's decided just to call them non-churches. They are just not churches. They are religious. They throw some stuff around like they are churches but they are just so off-track biblically speaking, they are not even to be called churches.

So instead of trending in that direction of accommodating sin and going light on sin and helping people feel comfortable, the apostle writes to the church at Ephesus and says, "I want you to be a shocking, startling, exposing influence on the people of the world and anybody in your church that may be going down this road." Have you ever come to church and listened to me preach and you got shocked? Did I say something that was kind of shocking to your system, kind of startled you a little bit? If not, I probably need to repent because I'm going to be honest with you, when I'm studying this in my study, it

shocks me sometimes. It kind of rattles me back to spiritual sobriety, let's say, spiritual alertness and keenness, and that's why we need the word of God. Can I get an amen right there? That's why we need it. You can't trust you. Don't trust your heart. Don't trust how you feel. That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard, "Well, just follow your heart." Your heart is wicked. You ought to go to hell because of your heart. You can't trust your heart. My stars, that's something an immature child would do or an unchristian, silly, unprincipled woman would do, they will trust their heart. "Well, in my heart I just don't feel like God would be like that." I don't care what your heart feels like God would be like. God is not going to submit to your stinking heart, your cheating heart. God's not impressed with your heart. Do you know who God is impressed with? God is only impressed when he looks in the mirror. Are you hearing me? He's only impressed when he looks in the mirror because that's the only true, righteous and holy one there is, is himself. I love that about God, he can be full of himself and not be egotistical. He's full of himself and he's not arrogant. It's just right to be that way because he's God.

Well, when I preached this years ago, I called this section "Shock and Awe" because that's what he's saying here, "I want you to be an instrument whereby the wickedness, the compromise, the carnality, the trends of the culture you're in that often gets in the church, I want you to shock them by exposing the light of truth on them." That was a military doctrine. Do you remember that, shock and awe? It was a military doctrine and it occurred or it began in March, 2003 in the battle of Iraq. It wasn't much of a battle, was it? The conquering of Iraq, whatever it was, and the point was that we would come in there with such force. It was also called Rapid Dominance, overwhelming power and spectacular use of force so that people would be shocked and in awe and they would just be exhausted and give up. For example, the war planners planned to launch 800 cruise missiles in the first 48 hours, one missile every four minutes, and they wanted to destroy everything that sustained life and made life livable so when our troops hit the ground, they were shocked, they were ready to say, "Hey, we give up."

I'll never forget the story of they had those trenches all across I guess it was the battlefield, or whatever military word you call it, but those Iraqi soldiers were in all those trenches and we were just blanketing the place with bombs. It was just unbelievable to watch the video of it. Then when our troops went in there, they overwhelmingly surrendered. I'll never forget, there was one guy from Chicago, he had been over there visiting relatives and they made him get in the army and he had been hiding in that ditch in he said, "I'm so glad y'all are here. I didn't want to be in the army. I didn't want to fight. I just got stuck in this foxhole." I just thought that was funny. You might not think it's funny at all, but you know, who would have thought there was a guy hiding in the ditch from Chicago as we are bombing all those things, but that's the kind of leadership they had over there.

So literally they would come in and in a matter of a few days the people were physically, emotionally, psychologically exhausted. It was shock and awe, and you know, when you bring the Gospel to bear on a person of the world, that's literally what happens. I can remember so distinctly as the Spirit of God using the word of God began to expose my sin and who I was and how I stood before this Triune holy God, and I'm telling you to

this day it shocks me. Does it shock you? It's shocking how wanton we are before this holy God, and that's why I tongue-in-cheek entitled this "Don't Go to a Church Your Children Want to Go to." They don't want to go a church that teaches this. Your children want to go to the church that is fun, exciting. I would say don't even go to a church that your silly wife wants to go to, if she's a silly wife. Now if she is a principled wife, certainly, but if she's a silly worldly wife... Look, if you look at churches today and see what's happening and what everybody is talking about, what everybody is raving about, when I look at what they are doing, it looks exactly like they are designing church life to appeal to immature children and silly unprincipled women. I had better add one more to that: effeminate men, spiritually effeminate men, men who aren't men, men who are acting like men but they are just effeminate spiritually speaking, have no backbone, no principles, no conviction. Sometimes a man has got to stand up and look at his wife and say, "Baby, I love you, I'd give my life for you, but here's what we're going to do. This is what the Bible says and this is what we're going to do. Now you can kick and scream and do whatever you're going to do but this is what we're going to do."

I remember seeing a family come to our church month after month after month after month, and that daddy got those babies dressed and he brought those babies to church and he came to church with those babies by himself because his wife wouldn't come and sit under my preaching, but he said, "It's the truth. It's right and that's where we're going." Then one day she started coming, and after coming several weeks, I noticed as I preached the word, she would start sitting up on her pew and leaning forward and listening, then one day I baptized her and she became a prominent faithful member of this church, a great witness for Christ.

Well, if we're going to bring the truth to bear in a culture like Ephesus, in a culture like ours, and when these things keep creeping into the church, we're going to have to accept that it's going to be a shocking revelation to them when we bring the true truth to bear, and then when they come after they get over the shock of their condemnation, and as they get over the shock of how they stand before this Triune holy God, then the awe comes in when they see that this God loves me. Instead of crushing me, he crushed his Son for me. Then they are in total awe that God would save a wretch like themselves. That's why John Newton, the captain of the slave ship, wrote the song. "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me." John Newton said, "I was shocked at the depth of my sin and now I am in awe at the glory of this saving God." That's exactly where Paul is coming to here in Ephesus.

Well, let's talk about the shock aspect of it as he again says in verse 11, "Don't participate in the wickedness that your culture is known for, don't soft pedal it, don't say, 'Well, you know, I don't have an opinion on that,'" he said, "Even reprove it." Reprove it. Have you ever heard this phrase, now listen to this phrase, I know you've heard it: I'd rather light a candle than curse the darkness. I'd rather light a candle than curse the darkness but, you know, personally I'd rather do that myself. It's not comfortable to deal with the darkness. It's not easy calling the darkness darkness. It's not easy revealing that evil is evil. It's not easy to call sin sin. It's not just a walk in the park to accurately expose the filthiness and the ugliness and the darkness of sin but that's what he's saying here.

Now, I will grant you that most of the verbalization of that is from your pastors. They should be pronouncing it. They should be proclaiming it but you should be affirming it and be a pep rally or an encouragement to them to keep on keeping on. "Don't let us fall into these things, pastor, but instead even reprove these things." I mean, which one of you feels comfortable about confronting a coworker regarding stealing or regarding adultery? Or young people, which one of you wants to confront your classmate who cheats on a test? Or which one of you wants to confront a friend who is committing fornication or adultery? And you're not going to tell them, "Hey, don't do this, this is bad for you." That's a lie from hell. That's not the Gospel. That's not the truth of the Bible. You're not telling them to stop sinning because sin is bad for them, sin is bad for them but you're primarily telling them to stop sinning because sin is against God and he's going to judge you for it. His holy character is offended and you have to answer to this God. You're talking about is that an easy message to bear in our culture? No, it's not. It wasn't an easy message to bear in the Ephesian culture either and I think that's why Paul had to state it this way. They were tending toward accommodation.

I expect you men to be matured and I expect you to be biblically and spiritually principled. I would expect if you visit a church somewhere that you can get through the Bible verses they are using to where you would begin to say, "Where is the doctrine of sin here? Where is the doctrine of the holiness of God and the just wrath and the deep way God is offended by our sin and our wickedness? Where are those teachings?" Now I'm going to tell you why I say to the men, because ladies, God made you different and long live the difference, amen? You are more emotional and you'll be more drawn to the sweetness, the kindness, the caring, the compassion, the concern for people. It looks so good but you're not helping someone if you don't tell them the truth. You're lying to them. Listen, without a weighty dealing with the doctrine of sin in your preaching, you are not preaching the Gospel. I don't care how many people you baptize. I don't care how many thousands are coming. I don't care how exciting people are. I don't care how many crocodile tears they cry. If they have not come to the realization of the shocking reality of their sin before a holy God, you are not preaching the Gospel and that's why we have millions and millions and millions of people on Southern Baptist church rolls and many of them don't even come to church but they have been pronounced saved by somebody because they walked down an aisle, they jumped through some hoops, they had some emotions.

Let me say this to you: Satan is the master counterfeiter. Satan can phenomenally counterfeit every aspect of the work of grace in the saving of a soul. He can counterfeit the conviction of sin. He can counterfeit the remorsefulness of sin. He can counterfeit genuine repentance where it's not true repentance. He can counterfeit faith in Christ. He can give you a counterfeit joy and assurance. The one thing I think he has real trouble with counterfeiting is this: a long-standing love and devotion to a true church. That's why I've told you over and over again, t-i-m-e tends to expose the reality of things. But he's a master at counterfeiting these things. You say, "Pastor, if Satan can counterfeit all of that, then how do I know?" Here's one way you can know: when you're pastor faithfully preaches to you the hard truths of Scripture, there is something in your heart that says,

"Yes and amen. Yes and amen. Yes and amen. I agree with that. I know that's right. It's difficult at times, there is a part of me that would like to go to happy church, there is a part of me that would like to go to fun church, but I know this is right and I need to raise my children where they are going to know the truth and not be taught a lie that sounds like the truth."

So these things are shocking and they are difficult so we just have this temptation just to kind of overlook the darkness, act like evil is not really evil, and just be this wholesome light. We'd just rather light a candle than to curse the darkness but that's what we have become today as Christians, we have become Christians who have some silly little niche or some silly little approach that sounds cute and clever and insightful, but it's just biblically unsound. But God says we are God's light, we are his light in the world, so let's avoid dealing with the darkness. Let's avoid addressing the darkness, we would say. Let's avoid exposing the darkness. Let's avoid revealing the filthy evil that's in the darkness and let's just light a candle rather than curse the darkness. It sounds good, it's just unbiblical. It's not the Gospel. It's interesting when, you remember that tower fell on those people in Jerusalem and some people came to Jesus and, "Jesus, did you hear about those people that the tower fell on them?" And Jesus said, "Yeah, and every one of you will perish the same way if you don't repent." Woo, shocking but it was the truth. It was shocking.

Well, the Scriptures strongly teach that we should light a candle and be light but it also gives us the other side, we must address the darkness. In verse 11 again, "even expose it." That means to convince by evidence. It means to shine true light upon the sin so that they will see they are sinners and that it will reveal the character of their sin and it will make them aware that they are guilty and polluted and corrupt before God. That's not fun but it's right and it's true. Paul calls it the unfruitful deeds of darkness, evil works which spring out of darkness. Darkness, I think here, has the idea of those who are ignorant of the truth; they are unregenerate in heart; their minds and emotions are still thinking in darkness.

So summarizing, we are to expose, we are to reprove the sins that spring forth from a dark heart, the unregenerate heart, and this will be shocking to a lot of people. You can't fathom the number of faithful churchgoing Christians who will rebuke you if you do this, thinking they are righteous and you're out of line. This is the age that we're in but it's the age Paul and the Ephesian church was in. But this is going to be shocking but if there is any hope of being converted, they need to be shocked to the reality of their sin before God. If having the truth of their sinfulness exposed, that is the guilt and the pollution of their hearts and lives, if this does not shock them, they cannot be savingly converted.

So back to the shortsighted and unbalanced and unbiblical phrase, "I'd rather light a candle than curse the darkness," perhaps it's best to better understand what happens when you light a candle. When you light a candle, things are exposed as they are, so in reality you are bringing a shock. When you become God's light in this world, you become the very nature of conversion. You become a reproof, an exposor of evil. If our life as God's light does not expose and confront the darkness, then your candle is out. It's missing.

Now, let me say a couple of things about this before I give you a couple of Scripture examples and I want to be balanced here. God has not called you to be John the Baptist. There is only one of those. God hasn't called you to be Jeff Noblit, so don't go into work tomorrow, don't go into school tomorrow grabbing people and shaking them and screaming in their face, but as things come up and as situations occur, you should be ready to give an answer. You should be ready to state the truth even if it is shocking.

And many times, my Ana Claire is here and when she played ball up at Chattanooga, Ana Claire did not get in people faces, she wasn't preachy. She waited for God to open doors to share Gospel witness but it was just very common for a coach to do something that was really out of line and then they would go to Ana Claire and say, "Ana Claire, I'm sorry." And Ana Claire was like, "What have I got to do with this?" We all should have the same kind of experience. Our lives should be such that there is a light to it and that there is an exposure of the wrong when they are around us for a period of time. There should be a sense of that.

Now we do see this strongly in the ministries, of course, of John the Baptist as he called the Pharisees and the Sadducees a brood of vipers. Boy, you can't get far more shocking and insulting than calling a bunch of Jews a bunch of snakes, and that's what he did. Jesus when he gave the eight woes in Matthew 23, Jesus when he cleansed the temple, Jesus when he dealt with the woman at the well, he was compassionate but he dealt with their sin in a clear and pointed and even shocking way. The woman caught in adultery, the same way.

So when Paul says in verse 11 here, "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness," he means don't be a co-participant. Don't be an associate with these. Now we know when we go out in the world, the Bible tells us we do have to associate with immoral people. I mean, you have to buy and sell and trade. We live in this world. That has to happen, but you don't pick up and run with them. And businessmen, you've got to be wise and careful. I'm not saying God says you can't have a business deal or even to be in some forms of partnership with people who may not be of strong Christian character, but I am saying be careful. Be wise and be prayerful because you can't compromise on the truth, and if issues come up, you've got to speak the truth. Just be prepared. "If it costs me a business deal, it costs me a business deal but I've got to be honest about the truth as God reveals it in his word."

One of the ways that makes communicating the truth in our world today a lot easier is you always can give a true word about your own evil wretched soul that Jesus has saved. When you humble yourself and say, "You know," again when I was being interviewed by that sociology professor and, you know, he had this super simplistic view of what Christianity was and asked me how I could have my convictions, I said, "Sir, I want you to know something, I'm the worst sinner I know so when I denounce those sins, I'm not saying they are the only sinners, I know I'm a repenting sinner. I'm a sinner God has had to save." So that's a good way to always include, people love to hear about how bad you are. Now don't go into specific detail of your past life and all the gory details but

generally you can say, "I've grasped and I accept the wickedness of my soul before this holy God," and then expose what they are if that's where the conversation is leading.

So we want to be an exposer. This means show the true character of sin and evil and, again, the consciousness of guilt and pollution in their lives, and that is the byproduct of becoming the light, to be an exposer of darkness and to the deeds of darkness. This will very likely get you some persecution. Jesus did say, "Take up your cross and follow me." And I want to say to you as your pastor on this day, if you're not willing to do that, then come and see the elders and we will dismiss you from membership. You cannot be a Christian in this world without some cross bearing. There will be some people who ridicule you. There will be some people who sneer at you. There will be some people who mock you. There will be some people and what's going to be real painful for you kids at school, I know it would be super painful, the lies, the twisting, the scheming to put you in a bad light. That's all cross bearing and we are all called to do it. Now, don't go out there trying to look for it. It will find you. Don't go out there being obnoxious. Don't go out there trying to prove a point. You just be real. Cross bearing will come up when God wants it to come up. Remember what Amos said in Amos 5:10, "They hate him who reproves in the gate and they abhor him who speaks with integrity." That's cross bearing.

Now, in verse 12 he is saying here, "Bring that shocking reality to them of what sin really is and how dark it is and how vile it is and the evil that it is before this holy God." It is bad for people. You do tell them sin is going to hurt you but that's secondary, the main thing is how it offends God. You have to be God-centered. Then verse 12 says, "for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret." Disgraceful means it is so thoroughly inappropriate. These are things that they do. These are things that they rejoice in. These are things that they revel in. These are things that they embrace. These are things that they celebrate. So we are not talking about a brother or sister who is struggling with a sin, we all struggle with some sin, we are talking about the culture or an attitude where we are actually embracing and openly promoting this evil, and certainly that's our culture today. And we don't need to get into conversations about the details about it or the gory details, as a matter of fact, even in dealing with church discipline issues, there is no good ever bringing out the details of immoralities and corruption. It's just wrong. We don't need to go there. So these things ought to be exposed for what they are but not the morbid details and the corrupt details of what people do in their wickedness.

This was, goodness this was back in the 1960s, Dr. Vance Havner used to say, he would say, "I used to say the culture is going to the dogs but I can't say that anymore out of respect for dogs." I mean, I do know in this day in the first century, the Greek and the Roman men were involved in such wickedness that they kept having to reinvent words or create words to describe the sexual immoralities and perversions they gave themselves over to. That's the kind of culture and that's the kind of culture you and I are living in, and the details should never even be spoken about. It's completely disgraceful and we should say that it is.

So our speech should be the kind of speech that states that these things are disgraceful, states that these things are condemned, states that these things are contrary to the holiness of God. These things are like the darkness, they spring out of darkness. These are things that are committed mostly in the darkness. And you know things have fallen bad when now they bring this stuff out in the light. I don't think you grasp what a vile evil it was for President Barack Obama to put the rainbow colors on the White House to celebrate the wickedness and the perversions of homosexuality. We've come out of the darkness. We are so brazen we are out in the light. Some of us go to movie theaters regularly and watch things in movie theaters that when I was a boy would have been hard-core pornography. It's just everywhere.

Let me give you three thoughts as you say, "How as a Christian am I to be this instrument, this light that shocks people with the truth about how sinful sin is?" Let me just give you three thoughts: your words. Be careful there. Be prayerful and wise. Don't be a nuisance. Don't be haughty but there is a time to say what's right even in the public square. Your words, secondly, your walk. Your walk should be upright. They should know by watching you for a while that you're striving to be a real Christian and walk with God. Your words, your walk, thirdly, your church. You should belong to a church that the community knows, "Those people are striving to be pleasing to the Lord. Those people are serious about the moral standards of God."

I do not know and it doesn't happen a lot but it grieves my heart deeply when I hear of an individual or a family in our church, they leave our church and they go to one of these non-churches, churches or so-called churches that can't even record the last time they dealt with a sin issue in the congregation. My friend, a church that has no accountability and no aspect of discipline is not a church. At least there should be a decent effort to strive toward and maintain a standard of right conduct in the family. Amen? Now let me say the whole balance in case you're new: any time a church member struggles with sin and they have a heart of humility and they are trying, then we put our arms around them and love them and shepherd them. Amen? This is not about beating people up. It's not about embarrassing people. It's about being a decent witness for Jesus Christ in the world, being a light in the world. And where you belong as a church, in a church, makes a statement about whether or not you're going to encourage, accommodate the evil deeds of darkness, or whether or not you're going to be one who is purposing to expose them. The Scriptures don't give you an option, you're supposed to be exposing them.

Well, that's more of the shock about this thing, now the awe and I'll not be long here but the awe of bringing people from the shock into the awe that Christ will save them, that Christ will forgive them, that Christ loves sinners, that Christ's death can make all of us grievously unholy ones, can give us a standing of justness and holiness before this God. It's like, my goodness, I'm just in shock at how wicked I am and I'm overwhelmed in awe at the love and the grace of God for me, this wicked one. That's where we want them to be. It's the awareness of and the receiving of God's love and mercy through Jesus Christ. So using the military illustration, we are the missiles that deliver the payload which God uses, the Spirit uses to bring this shock and awe to bear in people's hearts and minds. We bring the light of God's truth and it exposes the hearts, it exposes the deeds of men, it

reveals their true character, it produces guilt and it makes them feel the weight of their pollution.

We had a family, this is many many years ago and Pam talked to this lady in town one time. Many times she said, "I just had to leave, I was so tired of leaving church feeling bad." I don't want you to leave church feeling bad, I want you to leave church in awe that God would forgive a wretch like you. I want you to leave church overjoyed that the grace of God cleanses even you. You see, she was hung up on her own righteousness and when you are hung up on focusing on yourself, you're going to always leave church, a true church, feeling bad. But if you focus on what Jesus has done for wretches like you and me, you're going to leave church feeling good, I mean feeling real good. This light of God, this Gospel truth has such great power, it reveals a shocking reality to sinners but it also transforms them to the light.

Verse 13, "But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light." It's kind of a difficult verse to translate but what he's saying is they are exposed by the light of the truth and then they are transformed and they become visible light. At one time there was no visible light of God in their lives, then the light of God has hit them by your witness, by your words, but your life, by the preaching of the Gospel, and then the Gospel with the power of the Spirit changed them to where they became now a part of the light. They become a visible reality of this light of God because they are now saved and born again.

So if God through the work of the Spirit exposes a man's heart, he's also going to transform that man's heart into the image of Christ. He gives him a new heart. Christ comes to live inside of him and so he is now visible light. So there are two sides of the same coin. The Spirit of God is not going to convict you and shock you if he's not going to also bring you to faith in Jesus Christ so you will be in awe of the grace of God that saves you. So we must bring this light to bear on all who are ignorant, on all who are participating in the deeds of darkness. We must be missiles of shock and awe in this world so let's don't be caught up in the kind of church life that immature children would like. Let's be principled, mature men of God and know the truth that we need for us and for our families.

Just a few thoughts and I'll close. Support. Support preaching that bears a holy indignation against darkness. Support that kind of preaching. Be careful when you read books. Be careful when you follow people online. Be careful when you read these blogs. I'm telling you, listen to me, listen to your pastor: there is a subtle, deceptive, manipulative ploy of the enemy to say a lot of the right things to get you sucked in and if you're not careful, you'll be coddling the darkness with a lot of religious words wrapped all around it. And one of the things to be looking for is where is, there are two parts, two sides to this coin: where is the doctrine on the holiness of God and where is the doctrine on the sinfulness of man? If those are not central and weighty, get away from it. Are you hearing what I'm telling you? If we don't get God right and sin right, nothing else matters. "Oh, but..." I hear it all the time, "Oh, but they are so sweet. Oh, they are so caring." It

doesn't matter. It just doesn't matter. Satan would love for you to be sweet and caring and giving and loving and helping everybody if you'll just help people go to hell.

Support preaching that bears the truth of the holy indignation of God against sin. When you bear this light that brings shock and awe always bear it with humility. We covered that earlier. Always be humble. Always have a tone, very clear, very clear about what the darkness is, very clear about how sin offends a holy God, very clear about the wrath of God that should be against all men who are not forgiven, but very clear about how you are just a sinner saved by grace.

I'll never forget Dr. Roy Beeman, Dr. Roy Beeman was a Kentucky boy, just a country boy, but he was a genius. I mean, he was just a genius. God just gave him a brain that's about four times the capacity of any of our brains. He worked in 32 languages. On his vacations, he would like to go to museums and just study. I like going to museums but on a different level than Dr. Beeman. And I'll never forget, there is this brilliant scholar, you would go in his office and literally he would have stacks of paper of his research and his work and his writings just all, I mean, really two and three and four foot tall, I mean just a colossal mess. He really was the absent-minded professor kind of guy and Dr. Beeman would stand before us in our classroom in graduate school and almost if not once a day, two or three times a day, he would just stop and say, "Brothers, I'm just a sinner saved by grace." You see, he never got over it. The awe was still there in all of his brilliance. Can you imagine a guy that can sit down and discuss with you 32 different languages and talk with you out of 32 different languages? He could do that. But I'll never forget Dr. Roy Beeman saying, "I'm just a sinner saved by grace." So we all are.

So bear the light with true humility. Another thought and we've already covered this: don't try to be shocking, just try to be light. It will have enough shock in it. You try to make it shocking and you're going to mess up every time. Just be real. Remember the true shock value is dependent upon the Holy Spirit. It's not your ability to enunciate, it's not your ability to be clever acute or creative or manipulative or all of that stuff. The Spirit of God must use the truth of God or they will never be in shock over their sin before God. It's dependent upon the Holy Spirit.

Remember, prayer is the key to God using our witness. Ask God to use you. When you get up in the morning say, "God, open a door for me today. Use me in somebody's life today." We've been kind of talking to a couple of three church members. Brother Matt and I were talking before the service, it has just been an unusual number of people who seem open to the things of God lately. Just bumping into people in town and other places. There just seems to be an openness and when the Spirit for of God goes before you, it's still shocking but they receive the shock better. They are welcoming of the truth and not resisting it.

Be determined to be that light and remember that we are just instruments in the hands of a sovereign God. So we are not going to be looking for a way to make the truths of Christianity and the Gospel of Jesus Christ acceptable and comfortable to this dark world. This Gospel has a confrontational nature to it. You can just forget it and, look, every time

I wish to God, I wish to God, now think about this, now listen to me and think about that, think about if every pulpit in America or you listen to me next Sunday, the guy got up to that pulpit, opened that Bible and thundered an expository sermon straight from the word of God without fear or apology, you wouldn't have to worry about the Republicans or the Democrats or the Supreme Court. You wouldn't have to worry. If the churches were solid, we'd be in great shape as a country. But I'm telling you, true, unashamed, unapologetic preaching of the word is rare. It's just rare and I thank you for your convictions and your heart and your steadfastness on it because there is no way I could have lasted doing it without your help in it. So thank you for that. But let's don't grow comfortable in the darkness as Paul told the church at Ephesus, even expose it and reprove it and help them come to light.