

Having considered vv14-15 this morning, we come this evening to v16—this morning I suggested this verse serves as a practical application of the previous verses—that is, having made a simple declaration in v14a, a twofold illustration in vv14b-15, our Savior then provides a practical conclusion in v16—to put this more theological—having stated the indicative, our Savior now adds an imperative...

The indicative is found in v14 and describes what WE ARE—"You are the light of the world"—the imperative is found in v16 and describes what we are TO DO—"Let your lights so shine"—these two go together and always in this order...

[1] We can only be what we have been made—it's very important to notice the order our Savior puts these—before telling us to BE LIGHT, He first tells us we ARE LIGHT—in other words, before we can shine as light we have to be made light—shining as lights does not make us lights, we shine as lights because we are lights—put another way—the Lord commands what He graciously provides—He isn't like Pharaoh, commanded to make bricks without straw...

And this is a very important principle—every command of God in Holy Scripture, presupposes the provision of grace to obey it—some of you will remember the short prayer of Augustine, that in some ways started the Pelagian Controversy—"Grant what You command, and command what You will"—it is the first part of this pray that Pelagius objected to...

[2] We've been made something for the purpose of doing something—why have we been made the light of the world, but for the purpose of being lights to the world—dear friends, we are not made lights merely for our own benefit—Christ has saved us, He's made us lights, SO THAT, we will be lights—this is the reason we are left in this world...

There's been a resurgence of Calvinistic or Reformed doctrine in the last 10 or 15 yrs—this is a good thing—and there has also been a resurgence of Christ-centered preaching in the last 10 or 15 yrs—and again this is a good thing—but the problem is, at times people love to hear about what Christ has done FOR US (and oh brethren I too love this), but we are less excited about hearing what we are to do FOR CHRIST—both have their place...

I. A Practical Conclusion—v16

A. How are we to let our lights shine?

1. Here we find our Savior wasn't content with saying—"you are the light of the world"—but then exhorts them to be light...
2. Because you are the light of the world—there is no other light in addition to the truth deposited in the church...
3. Because you are the light of the world—"Let your light so shine before men"—let it shine in a certain way...
4. [1] Personally—this is where we must begin—our Savior's exhortation includes every single true Christian...
5. Now—to be fair—many of the early commentators, limit this exhortation to the original disciples of Christ...
6. And I agree, this was the original audience—but I trust we all agree, that ultimately, He had His church in mind...
7. The church as a whole is the light of the world (v14)—YOU collectively—there the pronoun YOU is plural...
8. But in v16 the pronoun is singular—"Let your light so shine"—that is, YOU as an individual and personal Christian...

9. Yes, the church as a whole is the light of the world—there is a communal dimension to our shining in the world...
10. As we come together, as we interact among ourselves, we are to testify to the world around us—of the Light...
11. But—we must leave here on Sunday night, resolved to let our lights shine, in every dark place we will walk...
12. Thus—every Christian present is to let their light shine—regardless, who you are, and regardless how young...
13. Every single one of us—pastors, deacons, and every member—men, women, teenagers, and young boys and girls...
14. [2] Purposefully—that is—we are to live in such a way, so as to purposefully point people to the glory of God...
15. All that we do and say is to be in Jesus name—it's to be done as Christians, intentionally for the glory of Christ...
16. Everything we do, we do as Christians—we are NOT merely nice people, but we are distinctly Christian people...
17. Now—obviously our Savior is not exhorting us to grandstand, or perform our works to draw attention to ourselves...
18. But by shining our lights "purposefully" or "intentionally" Christian I mean, we draw attention to Christ Himself...
19. John Broadus—"He does not say 'may glorify you,' for the good works of God's children are all due to Him, and hence the beholders ought not to praise them, but to glory their Father..."
20. Thus I suggest that we act in such a way as to make evident our good deeds are the result of our Christian faith...
21. For example—let's say you are in line at the grocery store and you begin a conversation with the lady behind you...
22. You notice she has a young child, and only a few items, so you let her go ahead of you—this is a good work...
23. But in an attempt to be purposeful about your actions, you might say—"The Scripture says, children are a gift from the Lord..."
24. Thus its an attempt, without sounding artificial, to purposefully color our works with a flavor of true religion...
25. [3] Pervasively—by this I mean—our lights must shine all the time and in every place—they never cease shining...
26. Being lights that shine is NOT merely a part of our existence, but is the very purpose for our existence—we have been made lights to shine...
27. A city that doesn't shine or a lamp that fails to light a room is useless—it fails to do the very thing it was made for (Matt.5:13)...
28. 1Pet.2:9—"You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light..."
29. [a] In the home—husbands, wives, parents, children, siblings—"Let your light so shine before men"—family members...
30. 1Pet.3:1-3—"Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear..."
31. [b] In work or school—display integrity, diligence, and honor—"Let your light so shine before men"—at work and school...
32. Tit.2:9-10—"Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things..."
33. [c] In the neighborhood—manifest orderliness, generosity, love, and patience—"Let your light so shine before men..."
34. Now—here let me ask you a question—how many unsaved neighbors do you know enough that they might see your good deeds...

35. I suggest that this command of our Savior, implies that we labor to foster friendships with the unsaved around us...
36. This is necessarily implied from the fact, that Christians are light in the world—they are IN but not OF this world...
37. JC Ryle—"A candle is not lighted in order to be hidden and concealed, but to be set on a candlestick and used. Religious light is not given to a man for himself alone, but for the benefit of others. We are to try to spread and diffuse our knowledge. We are to display to others the precious treasure that we have found, and persuade them to seek it for themselves. We are to tell them of the good news that we have heard, and endeavor to encourage them to believe it and value it themselves..."
38. Obs.1—Christians must ensure their lights burn bright—this is implied in v16—"Let your light so shine before men..."
39. Lk.12:35—"Let your waists be girded and your lamps burning"—this is the obligation for every true Christian...
40. [a] Fill your lamps daily with oil—I mentioned this morning, the lamps of Jesus day were filled with olive oil...
41. Accordingly, they were in need of being replenished daily, otherwise, they would grow dim, and finally go out...
42. Well, so too—Christians are in need of daily replenishing the oil of God's grace within the lamp of their soul...
43. Or, put another way, Christians have need of being filled with Christ's Spirit—and they do this through prayer...
44. Lk.11:13—"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him..."
45. Matt.12:20—"A bruised reed He will not break off, and a smoldering wick He will not put out"—that is, the weak soul...
46. [b] Walk in the light of the word—throughout the OT and NT, the Scriptures are described with the imagery of light...
47. Ps.119:130—"The entrance of Your words gives light" Prov.6:23—"The commandment is a lamp, and the law a light..."
48. [c] Stay close to the source of light—the closer the moon is to the sun, the BRIGHTER the light that it reflects...
49. Thus—the closer we walk with Christ the more light we will reflect—or, the BRIGHTER our lights will burn...
50. Jn.8:12—"I AM the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life..."
51. Since Christ Himself is the ultimate source of our light, the closer we follow Him the more light we will have...

B. Why are we to let our lights shine?

1. Our Savior provides a very beautiful reason to let our lights shine—"that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven..."
2. Matt.6:1—"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven..."
3. How do we reconcile this statement with Matt.5:16—well I suggest the answer lies in WHY we do good works...
4. Here our Savior is addressing good works done for our own glory, whereas in 5:16 they are done for His glory...
5. John Gill—"The proper motive to influence us is not simply that we may be seen, but it should be that our heavenly Father may be glorified. The Pharisees acted to be seen of men, true Christians act to glorify God, and care little what people may think of them, except as by their conduct others may be brought to honor God..."
6. [1] The NATURE of good works—"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see our good works..."

7. What does our Savior mean by "good works"—well, let me give a more formal definition and then explain it...
8. Good works are—deeds done from a good heart, in harmony to a good rule, and done for a good end or goal...
9. [a] Good heart, Matt.13:33—"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit..."
10. [b] Good rule—by this I mean, for a work to be good, it must comply with the righteousness rule of God's law...
11. [c] Good end—by this I mean, for a work to be good, it must be done for the end or purpose of God's glory...
12. Thus, when a work or deed is done from a good heart, in harmony to God's law, and for His glory—it is GOOD...
13. [2] The PURPOSE of good works—"that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven..."
14. This phrase has been understood in two ways—first, some say it merely refers to a general acknowledgment of unconverted that our works are done by God...
15. Thus—in the generic sense they "glorify our Father"—though their hearts are not truly or savingly changed...
16. But, most commentators say—our Savior is implying conversion, so that they now glorify God as Christians...
17. Lenski—"The works wrought by the Word shine with a heavenly brightness in this dark world of sinful works; and this light will draw many to Christ, so that they too, believe and thus give praise and glory to God, the Father, who sent Christ, and on their part join us in the same radiant works..."
18. Thus I suggest our Savior means—Let your light so shine that others will be attracted to the truth that saves...
19. In other words—our Savior presupposes an inward work of God's grace, as sinners repent and believe the gospel...
20. 1Pet.2:11-12—"Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation..."
21. [a] Observing, v12—"that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe..."
22. The word rendered "observe" refer to "a careful and prolonged scrutiny"—to watch something over a period of time...
23. It refers to non-Christians around us, who observe our actions, even though they falsely accuse us of evildoing...
24. [b] Glorifying, v12—"glorify God in the day of visitation"—that is, in the day He visits them in saving grace...