

SHINE THE LIGHT OF JESUS

Text: Matthew 5:14-16

Message: God wants Christians to dispel the darkness of sin and Satan with the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine/Teaching: Missional

Response: Decide to spread the light of the Gospel to everyone in their sphere of influence.

I. Introduction

- A. My wife calls me a vampire. Not because I bite her neck or have a taste for blood, but my abhorrence of light. My first actions upon arriving at home to turn off lights and pull the window curtains. It is a rarity that I am outside without very shaded sun-glasses. I tend to use the least amount of light I need in order to function. Sometimes, I have had accidents, mainly in the form of a stubbed toe, due to my misjudging how much light I need.
- B. My lack of light does not just affect me but those around me. My family has often complained that the light levels are not just for me, but for them. The point is that light is not just about me, but others.
- C. Jesus is going to illustrate this point in Matthew 5:14-16. He talks about the fact that due to their faith in Him, they have become light to the world.
- D. God wants us to a light seen by the world to affect the world.
- E. What does it mean to be the light to the world?
- F. Here are four answers to the question of what does it mean to be the light to the world.

II. What does it mean to light?

- A. First, we need a general understanding of what light is. I am not physicist; therefore, I am not going to give a scientific definition of light. Concerning the words of Jesus, we are going to consider two aspects of light. Both of these observations come from Genesis 1:3-4 which says, "Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness."¹
 - 1. First, we see that light is, as *Easton's Bible Dictionary* calls it, the offspring of God.² Light was created by the divine command of God. This

¹ Unless otherwise indicated all Bible references in this sermon are to be the New American Standard Bible (NASB) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1973).

² M. Easton, "Light - *Easton's Bible Dictionary*," on *Blue Letter Bible*, 24 June, 1996, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary/viewTopic.cfm> (25, June 2017).

is a very important point to make. The fact that God created the light makes it holy. Light is right. Light is good. Paul uses the fact that God created the light as an argument of what happened to us when we received the Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives. He writes, “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). The God Who created the light in the universe has created the light in us through Jesus.

2. The second thing we see from the Genesis account of the creation of light is that it dispels darkness. Note the phrase, “. . . God separated the light from the darkness” in Genesis 2:4. Darkness was already present. I observe from this passage that it took light to separate or dispel the darkness. I have noticed that I do not have to turn on darkness. In a room, all that it takes for darkness to come, is the absence of light. Yes, these are abstract thoughts about light. These thoughts will us later in the message to understand the words of Jesus.

B. Next, let us look at what Jesus specifically said about light as it pertains to us. He said, “You are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14). David Guzik says this has two great thoughts contained it.³ We will examine these thoughts.

1. This can be taken as a great compliment. Jesus called His disciples that same thing He calls Himself elsewhere when He said, “I am the light of the world” (Jn. 8:12). So Jesus is the light of the world and Christians are the light of the world. What a great compliment! Spurgeon mused that it had to be shocking to the hearers that the same title Jesus carried was bestowed upon these “few bronzed-faced and horny-handed peasants and fishermen. . .”⁴
2. With this compliment came also with a great responsibility. Guzik said that believers are “not only light-receivers, but also light-givers”.⁵ Light has a responsibility to dispel the darkness. This world needs light. Dake writes, “Believers come lights of divinity in the social systems of men.”⁶ It needs Christians to be light. Spurgeon put it this way, “Poor world, poor world, it is dark, and gropes in midnight, and it cannot get light except it

³ D. Guzik, “*Study Guide for Matthew 5 by David Guzik*,” on *Blue Letter Bible*, 7 July, 2006, https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Mat/Mat_5.cfm (25 June 2017).

⁴ Guzik, np

⁵ Guzik, np

⁶ Finnis Jennings Dake, *Dake Annotated Reference Bible* (Lawersville, GA: Dake Bible Sales, 1963), 4, column 1, commentary note q for verse 14.

receives it through us!”⁷ He gave Christians as the light of the world that responsibility to say and do what He as the light of the world would say and do. We are to be like Jesus on the earth.

III. What do we do with the light?

- A. First, we are going to look at what we should not do with the light. In this discussion, He diverts slightly and talks about a city on a hill, He said it “cannot be hidden” (Matt. 5:14). When specifically speaking of light, He says it is not “. . . put under and basket. . .” (Matt. 5:15). So, we see from these verses that the light Jesus is speaking about is not be hidden or concealed. How useful is a light that is hidden under a basket? To hid the light has an interesting implication. Light is created by God. Baskets are created by men. The implication is that men would be tempted to hid the divine with humanity. This could suggest that at times we take on worldly ways instead of following the divine nature. Jesus knew the human weakness to conceal the light within them. He even warns them that if they hid their knowledge of Him from the world, He would do the same to them before God the Father (Matt. 10:33). This is a serious and sobering issue. Spurgeon said that, “Christ never contemplated the production of secret Christians.”⁸ There is a story of a family who are Christians. They were concerned that their son would be bullied as a new student. The parents instructed the son to not be vocal about his faith. As he arrived home from the first day of school he said to his parents, “I have good news, no one at my school knows I am a Christian.” What a travesty! We cannot deny or hide the light of Jesus Christ from our world.
- B. So, what should we do with the light? Instead of hiding it, we position it. Jesus describes the position as “on a hill” (v. 14) and “on the lampstand” (v. 15). The light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ should be intentionally positioned shine in the most visible place possible. Please notice that this is an active positioning. Sometimes I fear that Christians will want to think that their “light” will be seen as a passive activity on their part. They will just expect that somehow the world will see their light. This is active positioning. This is not any passive mindset. I see this active positioning of the light in Paul’s words about to the Romans when he said, “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10:14) We must be active about preaching to the world concerning the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The mandate God gave Oral Roberts concerning ORU has this at its core. God told Roberts, “Raise up your students to hear My voice, to go where My light is dim, where My voice is heard small, and My healing power is not known, even to the uttermost bounds of the earth. Their work will exceed yours, and in this I am well pleased.”

IV. Where do we shine the light?

⁷ Guzik, np

⁸ Guzik, np

- A. Let us first look at the locations Jesus talked about in our passage. He said, “of the world” (v. 14), “all the house” (v. 15), and “before men” (v. 16). It seems obvious that He expects us to take the light of Jesus everywhere.
- B. What is said about the where we should shine the light elsewhere in Scripture?
1. In Mark, Jesus commanded us to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mk 16:15). This is what is known as the Great Commission. Christians are to “go” to all the world and preach to everyone on earth.
 2. In Acts, Jesus said that the disciples would be “. . . witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts.1:8). Jesus here is describing the effect of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the early believers (and ours) lives. They would be witnesses of the light from a local perspective (Jerusalem) to a great perspective (remotest part of the earth). There is no place left out!
 3. Paul said that he became “. . . all things to all men. . .” (1 Cor. 9:22). He was describing his methods and his scope. Please note that he did not change his message. But Paul would change his methods to reach anyone. He believed that he was called to affect “all men” with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- C. We are called to shine the light of Jesus Christ to everyone!
- V. Why do we shine the light?
- A. We shine the light to dispel the two causes of darkness.
1. We shine the light to dispel the darkness created by sin. Sin causes darkness. John said, “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed” (Jn. 3:19-20). So we establish that the cause of darkness is sin. Yet, we are to not walk in the sin that causes darkness. Paul instructed Philippians, “. . .so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world . . .” (Phil. 2:15). We become lights to the world when we refuse to give in to their sinful lifestyles. This world is getting darker and darker. Truly, this generation is “crooked and perverse”. It is imperative that we live “blameless and innocent” lives. Just as light is the offspring of God we are to live like the offspring (children) of the God! John Olley writes, “In Isaiah the contrast between ‘light’ and ‘dark’ covers the whole of the life of a community. Thus ‘darkness’ can describe a situation of defeat, devastation, injury and captivity as a result of war (e.g., 9:2 [Hebrew9:1]; 49:9), and oppressive social settings where injustice is rife (58:10;59:9), while ‘light’ as the obverse is a situation where everything has been ‘put right.’ It is God who is going to act,

delivering the people from 'darkness' and providing leaders who will do "what is right" (11:1 -9; 32:1)."⁹

2. We shine the light to dispel the darkness created by Satan. Paul identifies Satan and the one causes darkness and blindness. When describing the difficulty of the task of reaching people with the Gospel he said, "in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. . ." (2 Cor. 4:4). Here Paul calls Satan the "god of this world". He, Satan, can keep people from seeing the "light of the gospel". Yet we are to combat Satan the same way Jesus did. Peter said concerning Jesus, that, "God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38). Jesus overcame the workings of the Satan by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are Spirit-empowered believers are called bring healing to those who are effected by the devil. Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary says Christians only "shine with His light upon the world, in virtue of His Spirit dwelling in them. . ."¹⁰
- B. We shine the light bring glory to God and not us.
1. God is to receive the glory for the light we shine. Jesus said that men would see our good works and give the Father God glory (v. 16). Dake said, "The purpose of all good works among men is to glorify the heavenly Father."¹¹ It is important that we understand that God gets all the glory.
 2. We are not to receive the glory for the light we shine. Jesus is going to mention later in the Sermon on the Mount that we should not give (Matt. 6:2), pray (Matt. 6:5), and fast (Matt. 6:16) before men in hopes of getting glory for it. There is a sobering warning Jesus gives in Luke after His disciples return from a commission He gave them. "The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.' And He said to them, 'I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. 20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven'" (Lk. 10:17-20).

⁹ John W. Olley, "*You are light of the world': a missiological focus for the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew*," *Mission Studies* 20, no. 1 (2003 2003), *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed June 25, 2017), 9.

¹⁰ Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, "*Commentary on Matthew 5 by Jamieson, Fausset & Brown*," on *Blue Letter Bible*, 19 Feb, 2000, https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/jfb/Mat/Mat_005.cfm (25 June, 2017).

¹¹ Dake, 4, column 1, commentary note u for verse 16.

The disciples are jubilant that demons are subject, as they put it, “to us”. Jesus then starts describing how Satan fell from heaven to the earth. We read elsewhere that Satan fell because of a desire to receive praise that was due only to God (Is. 14:12-14). Jesus seems to clearly be warning His disciples to avoid the pride trap when used of God. He, and He alone, gets the glory for the good we do and light we shine. My first pastor, Waymon Rodgers said it to me like this concerning the ministry, “Don’t touch the gold. Don’t touch the girls. Don’t touch the glory. They all belong to God.

3. To put this together, we are to do are good works before men. Yet the purpose is for God to get the glory and not us.

VI. Conclusion

- A. When we receive Jesus Christ we become the light as His is the light.
- B. The receiving of the light gives us responsibility to be light to the world.
- C. We show the light when we refuse to walk in sin and allow the power of the Holy Spirit to operate in our lives for others.
- D. God gets all the glory for the light we shine.
- E. Keep in mind, just like I had to realize, the light does not just affect me, but those around me.

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