

Reflecting the Light of Christ¹
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
May 9, 2021

Text: Matthew 5:13-16

Purpose: The source of our light comes directly from Christ. We are not the light, He is. We are to let the light of Christ shine in us so that others may see our good works and glorify God.

A motorcycle cop was rushed to the hospital with an inflamed appendix.

The doctors operated and advised him that all was well. However, the patrolman kept feeling something pulling at the hairs on his chest. Worried that it might be a second surgery the doctors hadn't told him about, he finally got enough energy to pull his hospital gown down enough so he could look at what was making him so uncomfortable.



Taped firmly across his hairy chest were three wide strips of adhesive tape, the ultra-sticky kind. Written in large black letters was the sentence, “Get well soon! Luv, from the nurse you gave a ticket to last week!”²

I guess the lesson from that story is you need to be careful what you say and do! It might come back in ways you never expect.

¹ Outline from Ray K. Hodge’s sermon on Matthew 5:13-16

² Mikey’s Funnies, An Ouch Funny, April 30, 2021

It seems as if the moon continues to influence people all around us. Just last week we saw a super moon that was as bright as it will be in many years. When it occurs in April, it is called the Pink Moon. It was brighter last week because it was as close as it will be in a long time. I understand there are more births on a full moon, more crime on a full moon, and according to some, people get a little crazy during a full moon. It is as if our world has come under the moons spell.

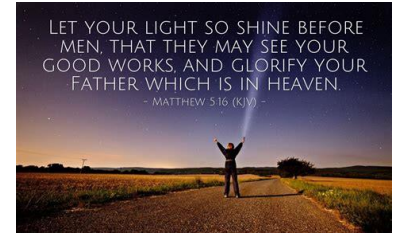


Maybe you have heard of someone that is moonstruck. It implies the moons light has mesmerized lovers, inspired writers, set dogs to barking, and benefits nighttime travelers. The reason the calendar date for Easter changes back and forth is that long ago the date was set to coincide with a full moon, to make it possible for people on religious pilgrimage in ancient times to travel long distances, giving them the light they needed for camping at night along the way. Many songs, poems, and stories tell of the moon's strange hold on people. What we often forget is, the moon has no light of its own. It can only reflect the light of the sun.

Our relationship with Christ and our purpose in life is similar to the moon's relationship with the sun. The scripture affirms that *“Jesus is the light of the world.”* Since He is the light, we are to be the ones reflecting the light.

I. THE LIGHT'S SOURCE

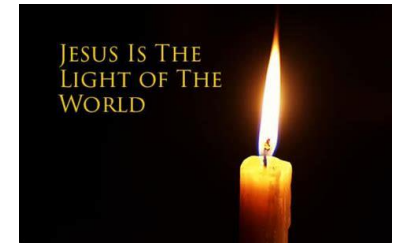
In the scripture passage that was read earlier, Jesus said, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*



A. WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF OUR LIGHT?

What is the source of our light? For us to physically see, we need the light of the sun. The sun is our source of light in our galaxy. It is the source of light and energy. From it come all the other sources of light we use.

When it comes to spiritual vision, Jesus Christ is our source. He is God’s Son. He is our Sun. In John 1:4, it says, *“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.”* He is our source of light. Later in John (8:12), Jesus described himself in this way: *“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”*



B. WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF LIGHT FOR A LOST WORLD?

If Jesus is our light, what is the source of light for the lost world? Over the years, I have had the opportunity to speak with several people about the hope I found in Jesus Christ, even during the difficult days in my life.

One of these men that I had a conversation with stands out in my mind. He could not understand this kind of hope. He told me that he thought when you died, you simply stopped living. There was nothing else. He went on to say that from his perspective, all this Christian faith, made absolutely no sense at all. He thought because he was a learned, intelligent, scientific minded individual that the Christian hope was simply a foolish illusion. I came away from talking with this person fully aware of how dark the spiritual world was in which he lived. There was no hope, there was no light in his dark world.



He is an example of one walking in darkness and doesn't comprehend how dark they are. To this man, the preaching of the cross is foolishness. But to those that love God, the power of the cross is the power of God to redeem man from sin.

Most of the light which unsaved people see is from those who profess to know Jesus Christ as Savior. Of course, an unsaved person can read the Bible, go to church, but much of what they read and hear is measured by the light or darkness they see in professing Christians around them. Jesus is the source of light for everyone. When a person receives Christ into their life, they receive the light of Christ, and while retaining light for them self they also reflect the light of Christ to others.



Simon Peter wrote, (I Peter 2:9), *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...”*

Paul wrote to the Ephesians (5:8) to say, *“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light...”*

Matthew tells us (5:14-15), *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.”*

Just as the moon reflects the sun's light, Christian believers are to reflect light which is the light of Christ. Though that light becomes a part of us, still it is not our light which is reflected. Instead, it is the light of Christ.



Jesus reminds us to, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*

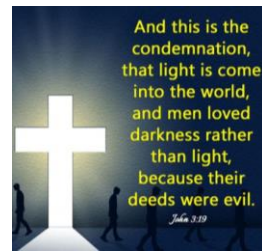
II. LIGHT'S APPLICATION.

Secondly, the lights application is shown in that verse, *“... so shine before men.”* (5:16)

A. LIGHT REVEALS THE BAD THINGS AROUND US.

As we shine that light, it often reveals the bad around us. Light exposes the bad and the ugly. Light exposes things that cannot be seen in the dark. Light exposes dirty faces, dirty clothes and dirty houses. If you were to turn on the light in a dark basement, watch the bugs run for cover. People with sinful intentions and plans prefer the dark because they do not want their plans revealed.

John 3:19 says, *“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”* John 3:20 tells us, *“For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprovèd.”*

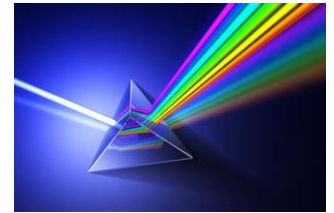


J. Wallace Hamilton, writing for the “The Upper Room,” said, “You've heard of the little girl sweeping the floor, the sun shone in the window and in its ray all the little dust particles were made visible. She said, ‘Look, mama, at all the dust the sun makes.’ And the mother explained, ‘No honey, the sun doesn't make the dust. It only reveals it.’”

Light shows us the dirt and sin around us. It also shows us the dangers that are around us. A light can reveal a washed-out bridge, a tree fallen in the road or a lurking predator. Light reveals danger.

B. LIGHT REVEALS THE GOOD THINGS AROUND US.

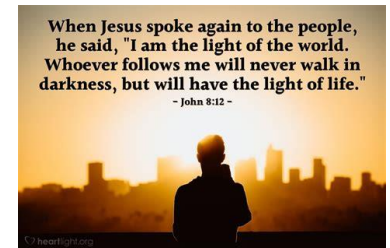
Light can also reveal the good things around us as well. It reveals the beautiful things around us. We can see spring popping up all around us: the trees, the sky, growing plants, beautiful birds, and the people around us.



Light brings out the colors of life. Things would seem drab if there were no light or if we lived in the dim glow of the first light of dawn. The colors come to life when the sun comes out.

C. THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GIVES LIGHT AND LIFE.

The light of Jesus Christ gives us light and life. John 3:21, *“But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”*



Our world offers individuals many different alternatives to the light of Christ. But what people most need is spiritual light. People’s greatest need is the light of Christ.

Ray Hodge, former pastor of First Baptist Church in Kinston, tells of a story where a person went to counsel a returned war veteran whose wife had requested it. The man was near the raving stage and had gone crazy.

He had been in the Quartermaster Corps and participated in several dishonest deals. His Christian family and background caused him conflict. While in service he had been unfaithful to his wife during a tour with the army of occupation. She forgave him but it was his conscience that drove him crazy.

The psychiatrist treated him, including electric shock therapy. This treatment worked for a time. He regained his prior state of rationality, but the psychiatrist did not have the spiritual insight to provide help for the man's basic problem, the sin which had caused him to go crazy in the first place. The patient kept repeating, "I must get out of the dark." He went crazy again because no one presented the light of the world to him. Christ is the Light. What the man needed most was to see the light of Christ.

In I John (1:7) we read, "*But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*" If we know Christ who is light, we have fellowship with Him and walk in the light and will reflect the light.

But that light must be turned on. All of us have seen a neon sign outside of a business which said, "Open." But for the business to really be open, its doors need to be unlocked and have the lights turned on inside the building. When professing Christians identify themselves with Christ, they have put up a sign which says "Christian." The world is not convinced until the light of Christ is present in their lives.



You cannot say you are a Christian, and display through your actions, words and deeds the ways of Satan.

The light of Christ will shine forth in the world, if Christian people will allow the light of Christ to shine through them. Dwight L. Moody once said, "A holy life will produce the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns; they only shine." Jesus said, "*Let your light shine.*"



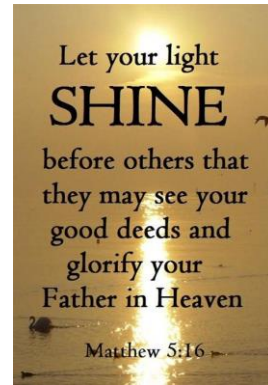
Jesus Christ came into the world as light and the world has not been able to put out that light. Those who know Him and serve him will reflect the light of Christ, and an unbelieving world will not be able to put out that light.

Jesus said, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*" The purpose of our light is to glorify God – not ourselves.

That is how we are to live. We are to live before others so that they may see the light of Christ in our lives. People copy so much of what they see in others. They also pattern their spiritual lives after what they see in others. They buy automobiles, build houses, and join clubs like other people. They may wear their hair and their clothes like other people. Some of the things people copy from others may be good and helpful, while other things may be thoughtless and harmful.

On one occasion, President Calvin Coolidge invited members of Congress to breakfast meetings at the White House. One morning he startled his guests by pouring coffee and cream into his saucer. In confusion, several others at the table did the same. Without a word the president placed his saucer on the floor for his dog.

The example we set is important, because there are people watching us and they may do what they see us doing. And Jesus tells us to *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*

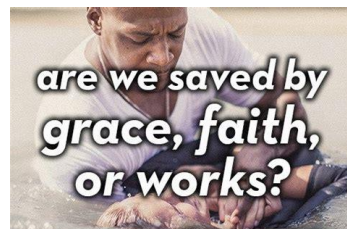


III. LIGHT'S REVELATION.

Thirdly, the purpose of the lights revelation is so *“... they may see your good works,...”*

When Christians live as Christ wants us to live, our behavior will be such that it will reflect Christ. The question we need to ask ourselves is ... “Does my life reflect Christ?” And if it does, “What kind of reflection does my life send forth?”

A. OUR GOOD WORKS DO NOT AND CANNOT SAVE US.



We need to be reminded; our good works do not and cannot save us. Paul wrote to the Ephesians to say (2:8-9), *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”*

B. OUR GOOD WORKS REFLECT CHRIST IN US TO OTHERS.

Our good works reflect Christ in us to others. When we live the Christian life, our lifestyle will be a witness to the world. This is lifestyle evangelism at its best.

The world around us is watching us very carefully. People are watching you in the grocery store and see what you put in your basket. People are watching you and see what you say. When a Christian fails, the world often is the first to point a finger of ridicule. For our lives to reflect purely, we need to make sure our mirror is clean and untarnished. A Christian believer who has a lifestyle which puts Christ first has an opportunity to witness through his or her life to others.

Ralph Jones was a pastor that was leading and encouraging his congregation to stand firm as a witness for Christ. A member of his congregation, a truck driver, heard his message and determined that he would be a Christian in his work.



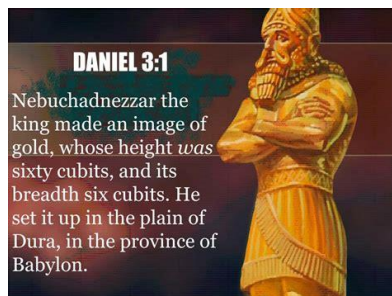
The man he worked for gave him a load to haul some place, and when he found out that it was alcohol, he objected. He told his employer that he did not want to haul alcohol. The employer told him that if he worked for him he would have to haul whatever he said. In other words, “Deliver it or goodbye.” The man refused and was fired. Then he went to see the pastor. He told his pastor he had heard what he said

and that he had taken it seriously. He was determined that he would live in that fashion. “And now I have lost my job. What can I do?”

The pastor assured him that he had done the right thing in making the commitment to put Christ first in his life and work, and that he should not panic. He assured him that God would honor his commitment. He prayed with him about it and told him to be patient. That very afternoon the pastor received a phone call from a man who wanted to hire a truck driver he could trust. The pastor told him about the man and he was hired that very day, and with the prospect of more pay than he had been earning.

Obviously, it doesn't always turn out that way. Some have suffered great hardship when they took a stand for Christ. Some have been thrown to the lions. Some have been burned at the stake. It may take months. It may turn a person to another profession. We are still called to reflect the light of Christ.

Another example of this principle is found in the Book of Daniel. It is the story of three men of Israel: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. One day King Nebuchadnezzar set up a 90-foot-tall golden statue for everyone to come and bow down and worship. These three friends of Daniel refused to fall down and worship the golden image. As a result, the three were ordered to be thrown into the fiery furnace.



When threatened by the king, they said (Daniel 3:17-18), *“If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”*

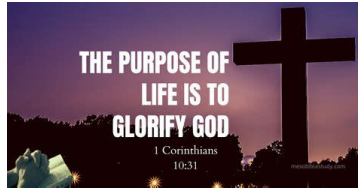
They were thrown into the furnace. The fire was so hot that the men who threw them in were killed. But the three were not. The king looked in the furnace and saw *four* men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth one looking like the Son of God. They were taken from the fire, unharmed, clothes unscorched, hair unsinged, and their clothes with no smell of fire or smoke.

Then Nebuchadnezzar said (Daniel 3:28-30), *“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God. Therefore, I make a decree, That every people, nation and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.”* Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

They let their light shine.

IV. LIGHT'S DEMONSTRATION.

Fourthly, as we move through life, the purpose for our shining for Christ is to “... *glorify your Father which is in heaven.*”



Light's purpose is seen in Matthew's statement (4:16), “*The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.*”

Light's purpose is seen in Paul's declaration that his mission (Acts 26:18) was, “*To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*”

One night a woman was trying to turn on the light in a telephone booth. A passerby stopped and told her, “Lady, if you will shut the door the light will come on.”

Jesus urges us to shut the door on other distractions and to give our primary attention to Him, the light. If we do, then we are able to reflect the light of Christ to others.

The New English Bible translation of our text says, “*And you, like the lamp, must shed light among your fellows, so that, when they see the good you do, they may give praise to your Father in heaven.*”

The world around us lies in spiritual darkness. By God's grace we have been privileged to see Christ the light. We have the opportunity and the responsibility to let that light be reflected to others so that they too may come to know and serve Christ the light. Let this children's song be our theme:



1. This little light of mine,
I'm going to let it shine,
This little light of mine,
I'm going to let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine,
Let it shine!
2. Won't let Satan blow it out ...
3. Hide it under a bushel .. no! ...
4. Let it shine 'till Jesus comes ...

LET US PRAY