

## Letting Your Light Shine

The Bible teaches that mankind is dead in trespasses and sins--that is a fact borne out by experience. When we hear the news of another drug overdose, of gangs, and of murders--we cannot help but realize this. Yet how we respond to this fact can make all the difference in the world.

Positively, we can live as a model or example to that darkened world--not to convert the world (although that *may* be a by-product of our witness), but to show that there is a definite, livable lifestyle that Christians enjoy because of their trust in Jesus Christ.

Jesus spoke of the darkness in Matthew 5:14-16, and offers a contrast to the essentially negative image of salt He gives in verse 13. Here He speaks of light in the midst of darkness.

He says, "Ye are the light of the world." This is an **unavoidable reality**. It is a statement of fact, and it is going to happen. Christians show forth the light to the extent that we first receive it from and Christ and reflect it to others. Jesus is like the sun, and we are like the moon. The moon shines, but not of itself.

Christians are to be as the "city on the hill." When Jesus spoke this, there were no high intensity street lamps, but merely the light from torches and small oil lamps. He was likely thinking of Jerusalem, as it sat on Mount Moriah. You could not miss its glow in the night. Likewise, people ought not to be able to miss us as we reflect His light and life.

In these verses we also find that Jesus gives us an **undeniable command** (v. 16a). He says, "Let your light shine before men so they may see."

We do not make or create the light. It shines through us from the Lord. It is God's light--we simply allow it to shine. What happens then? It dispels the darkness. It shows things as they really are, not as hidden or concealed.

Faithful, consistent Christian living also brings wrong under the light of right. When a Christian is living in Jesus, the world must either run or get angry, for its deeds are exposed for their worthlessness.

When we live and speak our faith in Jesus Christ, we act as reflectors of His light. How might we do this?

- visiting and welcoming new neighbors
- inviting and bringing others to worship

- doing our own work well (especially when others do not)
- talking about our faith in Christ in a real, down-to-earth fashion
- being friendly
- cooking for a sick friend
- going out of your way to help someone
- building a great marriage
- speaking well of other believers and of the Church
- living with integrity
- being known as someone who talks about their faith
- not tolerating evil if there is something we can do about it
- raising godly children (it can and must be done)

Do we do this so that we look good? No, and this brings us to the ultimate purpose of reflecting the light of Christ. "Glorify your Father Who is in Heaven" (v. 16b).

These things I have suggested exalt God. Our "good" works are to be attractive and beautiful in order to point people to our God. When one goes into a lighting store, you can see the lights, but your thoughts are drawn to the intricate design and craftsmanship of the maker of the lights.

We do things so that God receives the credit, and that people may know that there exists a tender and intimate, yet majestic and holy God. We want people to honor the God we serve.

Do people see Jesus in you? They will not find Him in the world--literature, culture, or pastimes. They will find Him only as you look to Jesus, spend time with Him, and thereby allow some of His light to be reflected from your life to those about you.

It is said of the Scots preacher Robert Murray M'Cheyne, that when people would look at him, they would fall on their knees and accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour. This is the kind of light God wants His people to be. Let your light shine!

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