

Let Your Light Shine

Matthew 5:16

Introduction

1. In Matt. 5:14 Jesus said that we are the light of the world and He commanded us in verse 16 to let our light shine before men.
2. This is a wonderful way in which Jesus teaches us to have a good influence in the world around us.
 - a. As an illustration it is so simple, yet it described so clearly the kind of affect we are to have on the world around us.
 - b. Jesus pointed out that as lights we must not allow our light to be hidden.
3. In this lesson we are going to consider how we can let our lights shine to their fullest in the world around us.

Discussion

I. Source of Light

- A. In the world there are many different kinds of light because there are many different sources for light.
 1. LED,
 2. Candle,
 3. Household bulb, etc.
- B. The source for our light is a spiritual source—the source for our light is Jesus: John 8:12
 1. Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness.”*
 2. As Disciples of Christ this is precisely our goal: Disciple means learner or follower.
 3. Now, if Jesus is the light of the world then what happens when we follow Him by imitating His character and good works? WE TOO BECOME LIGHTS.
 4. One might say we are as mirrors reflecting the light that Jesus first showed us by His life.
 - a. 1 Cor. 11:1: *“Imitated me, just as I also imitate Christ.”*
 - b. Eph. 5:1: *“Be imitators of God as dear children.”*
 - c. 1 John 2:6: *“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”*
- C. How can we learn to reflect that light?
 1. 2 Tim. 2:15: Study to show yourselves approved unto God.
 2. James 1:22-25: *“Be doers of the word and not hearers only.”*
 3. 2 John 9: Abide in the doctrine of Christ.
 4. If we are not doing this then no matter how hard we try we cannot be the light of the world.

II. How Do We Let Our Lights Shine?

- A. Some “show off” with their good deeds rather than shine as lights.
1. There is a great difference between showing off and shining light.
 2. Showing off is seeking own glory. Want other people’s attention.
 - a. Like the Pharisees (Matt. 23:5-6).
 - b. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-4).
 - c. Jesus said this was not the way we are to do things (Matt. 6:1-2, 5).
 3. If this is our goal then our eyes are set on the wrong things; on evil things.
 4. Concerning this Jesus said, “*But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*” (Matt. 6:23).
- B. Rather, in our passage Jesus says, “...*that they may see your good works and GLORIFY your FATHER in heaven*” (emph. Mine, DP).
1. So our works must be done in such a way and with such character that men give glory to God and not to us.
 2. Such requires humility (Luke 17:10).
 3. Do not seek recognition, but act as if nothing special (Matt. 6:3).
 4. When Jesus did His works He always used opportunity to teach spiritual truths.
- C. For Christians, good works must not be special, but rather a normal part of daily living.
1. Not flashlight (off and on), but constant light that fills the room or like a city that is constantly lit (see Matt. 5:16).
 2. 2 Tim. 3:16: God’s word is meant to equip us for EVERY good work, not a good work here and there.
 3. Heb. 6:11-12: We are to be diligent, not sluggish.
 4. When good works are a normal part of our lives then we will be less inclined to seek attention for ourselves.
 5. Others will see our works without our drawing attention to them.
 - a. When we draw attention to our own good works people are often turned off by them.
 - b. But when they see good works with humility they take notice. They realize that there is more to what we are doing than trying to get attention.
 - c. They may know we are Christians.
 - d. As in many cases, they may ask if we are Christians and there we have an opportunity to glorify God and possibly save a soul.
 6. We may receive praise from time to time and that is not bad (Prov. 27:2), as long as our goal is to direct the attention of others to the Father in heaven, “*that they may...glorify your Father in heaven.*”
- D. One thing Jesus clearly showed us is that our light must go far deeper than simply doing good things for other people.
1. While we were in the world we were in darkness (John 12:46).

2. It was only when we came to Jesus and had our sins washed away by His blood that we were given the ability to shine as lights in the world.
3. Jesus was such a great light in the world, not only because He did great things, but because of His inward character and His attitude toward all things:
 - a. The way He thought about things.
 - b. The way He reacted to things.
 - c. The way He handled Himself in all things.
4. Likewise, we are exhorted to “*not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds*” (Rom. 12:2).
 - a. Through this process we are able to “*prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*”
 - b. Our lights are able to shine when we approach life with an eye toward our eternal goal (2 Pet. 3:11-13).
 - c. Our *good works* will be seen in the way we interact with people in the world (2 Cor. 5:16a).
 - d. As James said, “*Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom*” (James 3:13). Attitude is everything!
 - e. Wives are able to win their unbelieving husbands to Christ because of their conduct which is accompanied by fear (1 Pet. 3:1-2).
5. Therefore we are able to preach the gospel to the lost, not only with our words, but also with our good works and the attitude with which we do those works before men.
 - a. “Actions speak louder than words” (unknown).
 - b. When we live the gospel we will be louder and more persuasive than by preaching the gospel alone—as alight pierces the darkness.

III. Things that hinder shining light.

A. “*Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket.*”

1. Continuation of Matt. 5:12.
2. If salt no longer salty, good for nothing.
3. What of the light? What use is a light that does not shine?
4. Many Christians are hiding under a bushel.

B. What keeps our light from shining?

1. Selfishness: too worried about what we are going to get or serving self to expend our efforts on others.
2. Fear: Because people do not fear God, they are too shy to open themselves to the service of others.
3. Arrogance, Pride: Some people believe themselves to be above others, so they do not condescend themselves to serve others (Rom. 12:16).
4. Bitterness: Because people’s feelings may have been hurt they may avoid those in need, even watching to see them suffer. But this kind of heart is enemy of God (James 3:18-4:6).

- C. Whatever hinders our lights make us reflect the darkness of the world rather than the light of Christ (review Matt. 6:23—light in you is darkness).
1. If we are selfish, fearful, arrogant, bitter—all of these things describe the character of the world.
 2. If we are acting like the world then we are spreading darkness rather than shining light.
 3. If we think like the world then the darkness that is in the world is also in us!
 4. What about you? Are you spreading darkness or are you a shining light?
 5. Are you being perfected unto every good work or are you too busy in serving self?

Conclusion

1. Is your light shining?
2. God's people are told that if they are diligent to work in this life then they have a great reward.
3. If our light is shining in this life, then we will be able to enjoy the eternal light of God's glory in heaven.
4. Therefore Paul exhorts us saying, "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord*" (1 Cor. 15:58).
5. Do you wish to become a shining light in the world? You can do so by becoming a Christians and serving God with your life. Then you too will have the hope of eternal glory.
6. Will you come?

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