

BIBLE STUDIES - WHO ARE YOU?

SERIES: **NAMES GOD USES FOR CHRISTIANS**
“A good name is to be more desired than great wealth.” (Prov. 22:1)

Lesson #6 **“LIGHT”**

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matt. 5:14-16)

In western Washington State, there is a church named Beacon Baptist Church. I have had the privilege of ministering there several times. On their church sign is a picture of a lighthouse and their motto is: “If you are on The Rock, shine like a lighthouse!” Well stated. Every New Testament church ought to shine as a lighthouse shines, sending out a beacon of blessing to its community.

Briefly, and in order to introduce the subject, let us analyze the statement Jesus made when He said, “You are the light of the world.” First:

- **Consider The Source Of Light.**

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.” However, He also said, “You are the light of the world.” Here are two statements that seem at odds one with the other, until we read John 9:5 where it is recorded that He said, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

These two statements must always be considered together because they show the relationship that we must have with our Light Source if we are to shine. A sunbeam has no power to shine unless it is connected to its source, the sun.

As Luke 1:79 states, Jesus came “to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death.” Can you say with the Psalmist, “The Lord is my light and my salvation”? (Ps. 27:1) If He is our salvation, He is our Light. There is no shining without salvation!

- **Consider The Scene Of Light.**

“You are the light of the world.” These words indicate that the world of mankind is in a state of spiritual darkness; it is in such a state because it rejects Jesus Christ Who is Light. The world of mankind rejects The Light because “men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” (John 3:19)

- **Consider The Stewardship Of Light.**

“Let your light so shine....” Those who have been lighted are responsible to give light. Christians are the Lord’s Luminaries; churches are the Lord’s Lighthouses. We are either lighting the world or the world is darkening us!

How, Then, Should We Shine?

I. WE ARE TO SHINE CONCURRENTLY.

“You are the salt of the earth” - “You are the light of the world.”

The word “concurrent” means, “acting together”; To operate and/or function in conjunction with or parallel to something else.” We are both salt and light; we are to be salting and shining. We do not cease to be one in order to be the other. We are to salt and shine, shine and salt concurrently!

Why did Jesus call us both salt and light? Because in using these two analogies He was addressing two different curses that afflict and affect all of mankind.

A. The Two Curses.

The two curses are: Moral Decay and Spiritual Darkness. Decay and darkness are dual maladies. They aid and abet each other. They go hand in hand and where you find the one you find the other. That is the nature of these twin evils. They enjoy each other’s company.

B. The Two Cures.

The antidote for Moral Decay is Spiritual Salt; the antidote for Spiritual Darkness is Spiritual light. Therefore, we are in the world to deal with both by being salt and light.

Jesus does not give us the option of being one or the other. He did not say, “Choose whether you want to be My salt or My light in the world.” He said, “You are salt” and He said, “You are light.” Consequently, He expects us to salt concurrent with shining!

II. WE ARE TO SHINE CONSPICUOUSLY.

“A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.”

A. The Purpose Of Light Is To Reveal, Not To Conceal.

A hill-top city is obvious. The many lights of a city at night make it conspicuous. The Lord’s Lights may not be outstanding individuals in the eyes of society in general, but they should be standing out in this world of spiritual darkness!

B. For A Christian To Attempt To Be Hidden Is Forbidden.

God has no “under cover agents.” A candle light under a bushel basket gives light to no one and, in fact, can be dangerous!

Illust. A missionary took a sun dial with him to his remote mission station in Africa. He assembled it out in the center of the village and told the villagers that he would explain its purpose and function after he returned from a visit to the outlying villages. When he returned after several days, the villagers had erected a roof over the sun dial saying, “We did not want the sun to harm it.”

Hiding our light is similar to putting a candle under a basket or building a roof over a

sun dial. In either case, the purpose of the light is defeated. There should be no such entity as a “secret saint”! Away with inconspicuous Christianity!

C. We Are Not To Shine For Publicity But We Are To Shine Publicly.

Jesus spoke of two different types of lights: a hill-top light, a city on a hill, and a house light, a candle that gives light to all in the house. One is a public light, one a private light. We are to shine both publicly and privately.

Eugene Peterson’s *The Message* puts it this way: “God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine!”

Whether on a hill or in a house, we are to be public with our testimony. The best place to start is in the home. We have heard it said, and it is true, that “the light that shines farthest shines brightest at home.” It is not the largeness of our life, nor the length of our life, but the luster of our life, that counts with God.

Illust. Will Rogers tells in his biography about a night when a great rain storm came up and washed out the highway bridge. His son had gone to town and would be returning home late at night after drinking alcohol with his friends. Will knew the boy would not know the bridge was out, so he took a lantern and went to the end of the bridge and waited until he saw the headlights of his son’s truck coming down the highway. The truck was coming at a high rate of speed and he began waving the lantern furiously. His son saw the signal and stopped the truck in the nick of time. Will said that although he was wet and weary, it was worth the lost sleep to wait up and wave the lantern to save his son’s life.

Because the light was conspicuous, his son’s life was saved. Christians are here in this dark and stormy world to be conspicuous lights of witness and warning.

III. WE ARE TO SHINE CONSCIOUSLY.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

A. The Manner Of Shining That Jesus Emphasizes.

“Let your light so shine” – that is, “let your light shine in such a manner that others may see the light.” We should be living in such a manner that our Christly radiance will be seen by others. Therefore, we must be consciously Christian in our lifestyle at all times that others may see our good works.

The doing of good works is shining and shining is the doing of good works. Paul reminded Titus to “Be careful to maintain good works.” (Titus 3:8) That takes conscious and deliberate effort. There is no such thing as “unconscious Christianity”!

B. The Motive For Shining That Jesus Expresses.

“glorify your Father in heaven.” Everything we do should be done in a manner and with

the motive of glorifying our heavenly Father. Paul said, “whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (I Cor. 10:31)

We should be consciously going about our Father’s business as long as we are in this world. Strangers and pilgrims we may well be, as Peter says in I Peter 1:17, but we should be shining strangers and pilgrims, ever mindful that we are on the mission of brightening the corner of the world where we are.

Illust. An elderly father could not decide which of his two children should inherit his mansion, so he devised a test. He gave each of them \$20, instructing them to buy something with which to fill every room in the estate. One bought straw and scattered it as far as it would go, but it did not nearly cover all the rooms. The other bought candles and placed one in each room, filling the entire mansion with light.

There are enough professing Christians in the world, that if all were genuinely Christian, and shined as they should and could, the world of mankind would be compelled to take notice of the Savior’s Lighting System!

SUMMATION

The Source of Light is Jesus; The Scene of Light is the world; The Stewardship of Light is our responsibility. We are to shine:

- Concurrently – as both salt and light;
- Conspicuously – as a city on a hill or a candle on a lamp stand;
- Consciously – being aware that we are children of light in a dark world.

CONCLUSION

Illust. Many years ago, on a stormy and starless night, a ship was crossing Lake Erie with its destination the harbor of Cleveland, Ohio. Beside the helmsman stood the captain peering out into the darkness. Only one light was visible – the Cleveland lighthouse.

The Captain remarked to the helmsman that he could not see the lights that were along the shore that guided ships into the harbor. The helmsman said that the storm must have obliterated those lower lights along the shore. The Captain said, “we must see those lights in order to safely enter the harbor; otherwise we will be in great peril.” That night that ship struck the rocks at the mouth of the Cleveland Harbor and sank and many lives were lost.

Evangelist D.L. Moody related this tragedy to his audience in one of his great evangelistic meetings and then added: “My brothers and sisters, the Master will take care of the Great Lighthouse. Let us keep the lower lights burning brightly!”

In the meeting that night was a man named P.P. Bliss, a song writer. As he listened to the account of the sinking of that ship his heart was stirred to write a song about it. The song is a familiar one to church-goers. It is titled: “Let The Lower Lights Be Burning.” The words are as follows:

“Brightly beams our Father’s mercy
From His Lighthouse evermore;
But to us He gives the keeping
Of The Lights along the shore.

Let the lower lights be burning:
Send a beam across the wave,
Some poor fainting, struggling seaman
You may rescue, you may save.”

It was the lower lights that Jesus was talking about when He said, “You are the light of the world.” There are lighthouses all along the coasts of the United States. The motto of the Lighthouse Keepers is: “The light must not go out!” If you are on The Rock, shine like a lighthouse!

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matt.5:16)

JdonJ