

Matthew 5:14-15 *You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.*

This is an amazing and powerful statement of who I am as a Christian. Light of the world? – me? It is especially amazing when I consider:

1. Jesus is the Light of the world (John 8:12) – now that makes sense
2. There is still darkness within me – how can light coexist with light?
3. This statement is made before Jesus left the world and the Spirit entered Christians

This amazing proclamation gives me:

1. Significance
2. Purpose
3. Commission

I must not take this lightly. Truth is, I never “signed up” for being light. I just “signed up” for being saved from sin and hell. Now I find out that my calling is far more significant and purposeful. The question now is, will I accept this commission? I am light – will I let it shine?

OBVIOUS IMPLICATIONS

1. The world is in darkness

John 1:4-5 *In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

2. The Christian is enlightenment alone (check out Proverbs 1:7 and 9:10)

Ephesians 5:8 *For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light*

3. God doesn't want secret Christians

Matthew 5:16 *Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

OBVIOUS INFERENCES

1. I reflect the light of Jesus (I am not the light source)

John 8:12 *Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”*

John 9:5 *While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.”*

2. The light is now in me (by the Holy Spirit)

John 12:35-36 *So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.” These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.*

SALT, THEN LIGHT

- √ This mirrors the order of a healthy life testimony - a life well-lived (as visible “salt”), then a life well-expressed (as vocal “light”)
- √ This mirrors the order of evangelism – creating a thirst, then offering the “living water”
- √ This mirrors the order of conversion – conviction of sin (salt), then reception of truth (light)

THIS IS WHO WE ARE AS KINGDOM CITIZENS – SALT and LIGHT

The imagery of LIGHT is so prevalent and powerful in the Bible it is hard to cover its many implications – even in the two weeks we have allotted to its consideration – this week and the next.

- √ We could speak of “The Word” speaking in the darkness of creation *“let there be light”* and it was
In that sense, the light of God was the beginning of all we know
- √ We could go to the Psalms and read in 27:1 *“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear,”* and speak of the light that brings salvation and protects from fear.
- √ Or we could spend time in John’s writings – John being the chief scribe regarding “light” – and read in John 1:

John 1:4-5. 9 *In Him (the Word, Jesus) was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend (or overpower) it. There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.*

- √ Or spend time in John’s first epistle:

1 John 1:5-7 *This is the message we have heard from Him (Jesus) and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

FOUR CRITICAL ASPECTS OF LIGHT

But I want to spend the remainder of our time today focusing on four aspects of LIGHT. Each will give us a challenge as we endeavor to be that light in the darkness to which Jesus calls us.

- 1. LIGHT EXPOSES DARKNESS**
- 2. LIGHT EXPLAINS DARKNESS**
- 3. LIGHT OFFERS HOPE**
- 4. LIGHT OFFERS DIRECTION**

Let us take each in turn.

1. LIGHT EXPOSES DARKNESS

One blind from birth would not know he was blind or in darkness unless he was told by someone else. Likewise, a spiritually blind person – one who is not born again in Christ – has no concept that he or she is in darkness. Only when light shines into on upon his/her life is there an awareness of a need for light. So one of our roles as “light of the world” is to reveal the need for light to come in.

Only when a light is turned on in a dark room does one become aware of how truly dark it was. Light exposes the depth of the darkness as well as exposing that which was hidden in the dark. So as we shine as “light of the world” those in darkness hopefully will see the darkness of their life in contrast to the light we exhibit. In this way we offer a standard of morality, integrity and authenticity that will expose their probable lack thereof. And, as they see the light of God in our life, it might well bring anger, fear or defensive guilt.

It’s not that we need specifically point out their faults. But when the light of truth and goodness seen and expressed in us is juxtaposed with their spiritual darkness, the difference should be obvious. This is why we must be sure we are not “blending in” but being distinct light in darkness.

For instance: We choose to go to church on Sunday, they don’t. We don’t cheat on our taxes, whereas they might. We don’t use the Lord’s name in vain, and they do. We don’t bend the truth, whereas they sometimes do. We put out a Nativity scene for Christmas and they display a Santa Claus. The distinctions might be slight or great, but light shining will always expose darkness (whether we realize it or not). And God is pleased when our life of light exposes their life of dark. This is what Jesus did in his days on earth.

Philippians 2:14 *Do all things without grumbling or disputing; 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.*

2. LIGHT EXPLAINS DARKNESS

More than expose the darkness, light also EXPLAINS spiritual darkness – meaning, it shows that darkness chooses to be dark, and light chooses to be light. It is a choice made, not just a personality difference. Hear what disciple John had to say about this:

John 3:19 *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. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.*

In phrase then, here is the explanation of darkness that light brings: “men love darkness rather than the light.” It is a CHOICE made – a choice of rebellion and hiding from the light. Now some, who practice truth and value truth, called by God, will come to the light – become Christians. But sadly, most will choose to reject the light of truth and moral goodness offered by God through you.

As we are being “light of the world” we must help people to understand that their response to God and His ways is a CHOICE. Let them know that one either accepts Jesus as Savior and Lord or rejects Jesus, and that there is no middle ground. A “don’t know” response is a rejection. This is one of the key aspects of light in the darkness – it EXPLAINS darkness for what it is.

3. LIGHT OFFERS HOPE

Imagine a ship lost in a storm on a dark night. And imagine the joy of seeing a beacon of light shine through the darkness at such a time of despair. That light offers hope of rescue and hope of a destination to pursue to safety.

For many in spiritual darkness they are looking and hoping for a beacon light. Just the light itself brings hope and belief that there can be rescue and restoration. It has been said that all successful journeys begin with hope.

In John 16:8, Jesus is teaching of the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit who is to come.

John 16:8 *And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness and judgment.*

We will know of the Spirit’s convicting of sin. But are we aware that He also convicts of righteousness – meaning of the possibility of righteousness? He lets people know that there is the possibility of making right with God and becoming a better person. That is also what light does when shining through our life – the Holy Spirit gives those in darkness the hope of a better self.

4. LIGHT OFFERS DIRECTION

It is one thing to offer hope, but another to offer direction to that hope. And that is what light also offers. That shining beacon in the dark of night does more than bring hope – it provides a source of direction, if followed. That’s the key. Simply feeling the hope of God’s light will never bring rescue and restoration. You must follow it – pursuing it diligently. If you were lost in the dead of night, with no sense of where to go, and you saw a light shining in the distance, would you not follow it? I would think you would.

And the light of Jesus in each believer becomes an invitation out of the darkness into the light. When Jesus was commissioning Saul on the road to Damascus, giving him the ministry of being evangelist to the Gentiles, He said:

Acts 26:18 *(I am sending you) to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.*

Paul was called to be a light to which people would receive direction toward God. And that is our calling as well. Our life of light can point people to receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance of eternal life in Christ. Will you accept that commission? Will you let your light shine brightly?

CONCLUSION

So think of the light of God within you as helping to:

- (1) expose the darkness of the world around you,
- (2) explain the darkness as a choice that has been made,
- (3) offer hope –the hope something better and a life pleasing to God,
- (4) offer direction to eternal life in Jesus.

When in darkness, good council is to always follow the light. When you are not sure where to turn, turn to the Light of Jesus. Read His Word. Pour out your heart to Him in prayer. Seek His direction and will. Fill your calendar with those things that would please the Father of Lights, and you will have direction out of darkness.

Jeremiah 29:13 *You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.*

Jesus says that you, Christian, are the “light of the world.” Rejoice in your calling. Accept your calling. Don’t be secretive about it – let it shine brightly. Don’t be arrogant about it – you are only reflecting His light, as the moon reflects the sun. Bear His light faithfully and proudly. This is who you are as a citizen of God’s Kingdom!