

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT SERIES SHEDDING THE LIGHT - PART I

Text: Matthew 5:14-16

Key Word: Light

Key Thought: The Importance of Light

*** Making decisions in the dark can lead to some regrettable consequences. Back in the days before electricity, a tightfisted old farmer was taking his hired man to task for carrying a lighted lantern when he went to call on his best girl.

"Why," he exclaimed, "when I went a-courtin' I never carried one of them things. I always went in the dark."

"Yes," the hired man said wryly, "and look what you got!"

Source Unknown

Light is a very important aspect of our lives. We cannot survive without it. Light therapy is becoming quite popular especially in northern areas during the long, dark winter months. Just consider what life would be like if the sun never rose in the morning! Life could not exist upon the earth without the sun beaming its light upon it. Whether we want to acknowledge it or appreciate it, we owe our lives to the light that breaks upon us each and every day.

But it is one thing to benefit from a light source while it is quite another to be a source of light in and of itself. Just as much as we need natural light to live a healthy life, so we need to shine forth "in the midst of crooked and perverse generation" in order to lighten the way back to a healthy condition. We are not just to shine forth in heaven once we reach our final goal of pure righteousness, we are also to shine forth here on earth.

"We are not here to learn how to live in the dark but to walk in the light."

Vance Havner
"The Vance Havner Quote Book"
Compiled by Dennis J. Hester
Baker Book House
1986, p. 133

What Should We Know About Being the Light of the World?

- I. THE SOURCE OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:14a)**
- II. THE SECLUSION OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:14b,15)**
- III. THE SPREADING OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:16)**

I. THE SOURCE OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:14a)

A. The Sun/Moon Source - Reflection

God spoke light into existence on the first day of creation and separated it from the darkness (*Genesis 1:3-5*). On the fourth day of creation, He placed a myriad of stars in the sky. Before He finished that day, He made sure that the sun and the moon were also in their proper position (*Genesis 1:14-19*).

The sun was recognized as “*the greater light to govern the day*” while the moon was called “*the lesser light to govern the night.*” We all know that the moon in and of itself contains no light at all. It simply reflects the light of the sun that permeates its darkness.

Just like the moon, we reflect the glory of God for others to benefit from. Without the Son of God, we would never be able to shine forth in a dark world. Yet we often have had to come to grips with the fact that we are a poor reflection of God. Perhaps we haven’t placed ourselves in His stream of light long enough.

*“Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror;
then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part;
then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”*

I Corinthians 13:12

This is not the way it has to be. God truly desires to shine forth from our lives for all to see. A case in point is found when Moses entered the presence of the Lord.

*“When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it.
16. And the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud.
17. To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain.”*

Exodus 24:15-17

After this incredible encounter with the Living God, and after God had spoken to Moses face to face as a friend speaks to a friend (Exodus 33:11), Moses asked the LORD if he could see His glory (Exodus 33:18). God not only placed His servant in the cleft of a rock and passed by him (Exodus 33:22), but He also caused His glory to be so penetrating that the face of Moses shone forth the very gleaming presence of God.

I. THE SOURCE OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:14a) (Contd.)

A. The Sun/Moon Source - Reflection (Contd.)

“When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD.

30. Then Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him.

31. But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them.

32. Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai.

33. When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face.

34. But whenever he entered the LORD’s presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded,

35. they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD.”

Exodus 34:29-25

B. The Single Eye Source - Resistance

“Some people change their ways when they see the light, others only when they feel the heat.”

Source Unknown

We need to learn to become resistant to anything that does not find its light source in God.

*“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, **“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”***

John 8:12

I. THE SOURCE OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:14a) (Contd.)

B. The Single Eye Source - Resistance (Contd.)

“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

John 9:5

God is still in this world reflecting His light through those who are called by His name. I know that some would think that if that is true, **why has God’s Church become a reflection of darkness in some cases instead of light.** The answer to that question is found in the Bible. It should be a warning to us not to allow our eyes to become distracted.

“Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man.”

Proverbs 27:20

“All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.”

Ecclesiastes 1:8

“For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.”

1 John 2:16

So in order to build a resistance, we must control what our eyes desire to see.

C. The Stimulated Source - Resilience

As much as we would like to believe that everyone continues to look to God as their only source of light, we know that this does not exist in the real world. **Good people do fail to live up to the standards that they truly believe in. That may sound strange or even hypocritical, but it is reality.**

When we do fail to follow the true light, does that mean that we are finished, wiped out, never to return again? NO! NEVER! There is an answer. **God can and will stimulate our LIVES and our EYES back toward Him if we truly desire to be led back.** I would much rather deal with someone who admits to doing wrong than one who conceals his sin. **Even when caught in sin some choose to make excuses and run from the problems instead of humbling themselves and building a resilience to the sin.** The Bible offers us the answer.

I. THE SOURCE OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:14a) (Contd.)

C. The Stimulated Source - Resilience (Contd.)

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

2. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

4. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

5. And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,

6. because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”

7. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?

8. If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.

9. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!

10. Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

11. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Hebrews 12:1-11

I. THE SOURCE OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:14a) (Contd.)

C. The Stimulated Source - Resilience (Contd.)

I have found that those who truly repent and deal with their sinful nature begin to stand even more resilient to the subtle attacks that they once fell into. We don't have to live in the bondage of our past. God does discipline those whom He loves. If we keep our eyes on Jesus, He will stimulate us back to a place where we will become resilient against the things that once entrapped us. We don't ever have to fear that darkness will completely overtake us even though we succumb to the spiral attack of the enemy. God is able to keep His light shining even in the midst of utter darkness if we let Him be our guide.

*** Bob Woods, in *Pulpit Digest*, tells the story of a couple who took their son, 11, and daughter, 7, to Carlsbad Caverns. As always, when the tour reached the deepest point in the cavern, the guide turned off all the lights to dramatize how completely dark and silent it is below the earth's surface.

The little girl, suddenly enveloped in utter darkness, was frightened and began to cry.

Immediately the voice of her brother was heard: "*Don't cry. Somebody here knows how to turn on the lights.*"

In a real sense, that is the message of the gospel: light is available, even when darkness seems overwhelming. ***

Craig Brian Larson
"Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching"
From Leadership Journal, Christianity Today
Baker Books
1993, p.133

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Date: Dec 8/24

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear - D

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A. The Sun/Moon Source - Reflection - *Genesis 1:3-5, 14-19; I Corinthians 13:12; Exodus 24:15-17; 33:11, 18, 22; 34:29-25*

B. The Single Eye Source - Resistance - *John 8:12; John 9:5; Proverbs 27:20; Ecclesiastes 1:8; I John 2:16*

C. The Stimulated Source - Resilience - *Hebrews 12:1-11*