

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

Text: Matthew 5:14b-15

Key Word: Light

Key Thought: The Importance of Light

*** One of the world's most renowned women was Helen Keller, that prodigy who lived and became famous-without sight or sound. But telling the story of Helen Keller is only telling half of the story. Another woman was very important in her life.

Anne Sullivan was born at Feeding Hills, Massachusetts, in poverty, in affliction. She was half-blind. Her mother died and Anne ended up the poorhouse. Then, at the "*Perkins Institute for the Blind*," a brilliant operation restored her sight. Thereafter, she devoted herself to the care of the blind.

Meanwhile, down south a baby was born, a girl destined after early childhood never to see or speak or hear! Helen Keller. She came under the care of Anne Sullivan. In two weeks Anne taught her thirty words, spelling them by touching the hand. Under this system, Helen Keller rose to become renown. Teacher and pupil remained inseparable for forty-nine years.

Time came when misfortune befell Anne Sullivan, who meanwhile had become Mrs. Macy. What misfortune? She became blind as well. And now, turn about, Helen Keller taught her how to overcome the lack of sight. She schooled her former teacher as devotedly as she herself had been schooled.

Finally Helen Keller stood at the deathbed of her other half. When it was all over, she said: "*I pray for strength to endure the silent dark until she smiles upon me again.*" ***

<http://www.ezillustrator.com>

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

In my last sermon I addressed the first part of this important question by . . .

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

A. The Sun/Moon Source - Reflection

. The Single Eye Source - Resistance

C. The Stimulated Source - Resilience

Today I want to address the second part.

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

II. THE SECLUSION OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:14b-15)

A. In Secrecy - I Don't Want Them to Know I Have it

** When my wife's little sister, Patty, was very young, she was allowed to have her best friend, a boy named Rory, over to spend the night. As the children grew toward adolescence, their parents knew that someday the sleep overs would have to end.

One night, when Rory and his family were visiting, everyone gathered around the television to watch the Miss America pageant. When Patty asked if Rory could stay over, the parents hesitated, wondering if the time had finally come to discontinue the tradition. At that moment, the pageant host announced a contestant's measurements: 36-22- 36.

"Rory," his mom asked, "what are those numbers?"

The boy thought for only a moment before responding, "Ninety-four?" Rory got to spend the night. **

Contributed to Reader's Digest by Ron Pyron

"Life In These United States"

<http://www.geocities.com/tzingale/illustrations/frame.htm>

There are some things in life that are best kept a secret. Shedding the light of the Gospel is not one of them. We have all met people who have acted in such a way that nobody would know that they were a Christian. I wonder if it is because of fear, shyness or maybe even embarrassment. Whatever the reason is, the light of the gospel is hidden from normal view.

Perhaps the reason for the lack of reflecting the light of God is because of where we have situated ourselves. If we keep ourselves in a **"valley mentality"** we will seldom declare forth the witness/image of a Christlike life. We need to make a conscious decision to place our lives as an abiding witness in a position that others can clearly see.

"A city on a hill cannot be hidden."

Matthew 5:14b

If we are being likened to a city, we need to locate ourselves in the eyes of those we know in such a way that they don't have to question whether we are a Christian or not. A Christianity that stops at the church doors is of little help to anyone. We are not called to be the **light of the Church**. We ARE the **light of the world**.

II. THE SECLUSION OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:14b-15) (Contd.)

A. In Secrecy - I Don't Want Them to Know I Have it (Contd.)

“There can be no such thing as secret discipleship, for either the secrecy destroys the discipleship, or the discipleship destroys the secrecy.”

William Barclay
“*The Gospel of Matthew*”
The Westminster Press
1975, p. 123

B. In Segregation - I Don't Want Them to Have it

Did you ever experience a time when someone “hogged the ball?” If so, I'm sure your feelings of frustration grew. You may have thought, “*What gives him/her the right to keep a hold of it?*” Doesn't it make you want to teach them a lesson that they'll never forget?

The same principle of truth applies when it comes to sharing our faith with others. It just doesn't make any sense to “hog the ball.” The game of life is so much more enjoyable (and stretching) when others join in the game. It gets really boring playing the game of life by ourselves. In fact, our light will quickly go out if we attempt to segregate ourselves from others.

“Neither do people light a lamp and place it under a bowl.”

Matthew 5:15

In the land of Palestine, houses were built in such a way that very little light made its way into the houses. What few windows they had were only 18 inches across. A lamp was like a simple sauce-bowl with a wick in it. They were normally placed upon a roughly shaped branch of wood.

Most people felt it was unsafe to leave their homes with the lamps on the stands. They would remove them and place them under an earthen vessel to reduce the risk of any fire. It was just too much of a hassle to rekindle the fire each time you came home. It was uncommon to leave the light shining if no one was at home. Perhaps this is where we get the saying, “*The lights are on but nobody's home.*”

If we are going to be at home – we have no choice but to share our light. If we don't want others to have it, we will soon fade out being disciples sharing our light to others.

II. THE SECLUSION OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:14b-15) (Contd.)

B. In Segregation - I Don't Want Them to Have it (Contd.)

*** In its January 25, 1988 issue, TIME provided an insight on sharing. Speaking about the introduction of the videocassette recorder, the article said, *"The company had made a crucial mistake. While at first Sony kept its Beta technology mostly to itself, JVC, the Japanese inventor of the VHS (format), shared its secret with a raft of other firms. As a result, the market was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the VHS machines being produced."*

This drastically undercut Sony's market share. **The first year, Sony lost 40 percent of the market, and by 1987 it controlled only 10 percent.** So Sony jumped on the VHS bandwagon. While it still continued to make Beta-format VCRs [interestingly a higher quality technology] Sony switched to VHS. According to TIME, VHS will likely send Beta machines to *"the consumer-electronics graveyard."*

Even in a cutthroat business, sharing has its rewards.

Phillip Gunter

<http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=s&whichFile=selfishness>

C. In Selfishness - I Want it All for Myself

"Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house."

Matthew 5:15

*** In Ernest Gordon's true account of life in a World War II Japanese prison camp, *"Through the Valley of the Kwai,"* there is a story that never fails to move me. It is about a man who through giving it all away literally transformed a whole camp of soldiers. The man's name was Angus McGillivray.

Angus was a Scottish prisoner in one of the camps filled with Americans, Australians, and Britons who had helped build the infamous Bridge over the River Kwai. The camp had become an ugly situation. A dog-eat-dog mentality had set in. **Allies would literally steal from each other and cheat each other; men would sleep on their packs and yet have them stolen from under their heads.**
(Contd.)

II. THE SECLUSION OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:14b-15) (Contd.)

C. In Selfishness - I Want it All for Myself (Contd.)

***** Survival was everything. The law of the jungle prevailed until the news of Angus McGillivray's death spread throughout the POW camp.**

Rumours spread in the wake of his passing away. No one could believe big Angus had succumbed to death. He was strong, one of those whom they had expected to be the last to die.

Actually, it wasn't the fact of his death that shocked the men, but the reason he died. Finally they pieced together the true story.

The Argylls (Scottish soldiers) took their buddy system very seriously. **These Argylls believed that it was literally up to each of them to make sure their buddy survived.** Angus's buddy though, was dying, and everyone had given up on him, everyone, of course, but Angus. He had made up his mind that his friend would not die. Someone had stolen his buddy's blanket. So Angus gave him his own, telling his buddy that he had *"just come across an extra one."*

Likewise, every mealtime, Angus would get his rations and take them to his friend, stand over him and force him to eat them, again stating that he was able to get *"extra food."* Angus was going to do anything and everything to see that his buddy got what he needed to recover.

But as Angus's buddy began to recover, Angus collapsed, slumped over, and died. The doctors discovered that he had died of starvation complicated by exhaustion. He had been giving of his own food and shelter. **He had given everything he had – even his very life.** The ramifications of his acts of love and unselfishness had a startling impact on the compound.

"Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"

John 15:12

As word circulated of the reason for Angus McGillivray's death, the feel of the camp began to change. **Suddenly, men began to focus on their mates, their friends, and humanity of living beyond survival, of giving oneself away. They began to pool their talents.** One was a violin maker, another an orchestra leader, another a cabinet maker, another a professor. Soon the camp had an orchestra full of homemade instruments and a church called the "Church Without Walls" that was so powerful, so compelling, that even the Japanese guards attended. (Contd.)

II. THE SECLUSION OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:14b-15) (Contd.)

C. In Selfishness - I Want it All for Myself (Contd.)

*** The men began a university, a hospital, and a library system. The place was transformed; and love revived, all because one man named Angus gave all he had for his friend. For many of those men this turnaround meant survival. What happened is an awesome illustration of the potential unleashed when one person actually gives it all away. ***

Tim Hansel
"Holy Sweat"
Word Books Publisher
1987, pp. 146-147

<http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=s&whichFile=selflessness>

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

I believe it IS time for the Church to evaluate its attitude toward reaching out to those who have not yet accepted Christ as their personal Saviour. I realize that those we come into contact with, have their rights as well. **We need to be sensitive in our approach.**

But I also realize that some of them would appreciate if we would share with them the greatest thing that every happened in our lives. It just doesn't seem right to keep it to ourselves.

II. THE SECLUSION OF LIGHT - (Matthew 5:14b-15) (Contd.)

- A. In Secrecy - I Don't Want Them to Know I Have it
- B. In Segregation - I Don't Want Them to Have it
- C. In Selfishness - I Want it All for Myself

“Like that city they, as a body, would be set on high. The very fact that their being set apart from the rest of mankind would make it impossible for them to be ignored. Try as they might, they would not be able to hide themselves. Their life as a body, their fellowship with one another, their agreements and disagreements, would be seen by all; a model, or a warning: but always, because of their position, an influence; either drawing people towards them, or driving them away. **It is clear, however, that they were treated here as being what they were intended to be, an influence for good; showing forth, as a body, to all the world the Light of Christ.”**

Thomas Lintill Abron
“The Lectures of St. Matthew”
Morehouse Publishing Company
1932, p. 88

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Date: Dec 29/24

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Light of the World (The World Waits for a Miracle)

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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

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C. In Selfishness - I Want it All for Myself - *John 15:12*