

“Lampstand of the Lord”

Summary

This message challenges us to become the radiant light Jesus calls us to be in a darkening world. The imagery of the lampstand, fueled not by wax but by pure olive oil, reminds us that our light comes from the Holy Spirit, not our own strength. We're called to yield quickly to God's refining process, like the first pressing of olives, to produce the purest oil. This ties into Jesus' experience in Gethsemane - the olive press - where He was squeezed for us. As we face our own seasons of pressure, we're encouraged to cooperate with God's purification, letting go of contaminants that hinder our usefulness in His kingdom. This message urges us to step onto the stage of history, making a difference by allowing God to refine us for His purposes.

Main Points – Lampstand of the Lord

Title: Relighting the Lampstands: Preparing the Church for Jesus' Return

Sermon Summary: This message emphasizes the importance of the church being ready for Jesus' return, likening the process of spiritual preparation to the refining of olive oil and the recycling of paper. Pastor Rob stresses the need for us, believers to yield to God's purifying process and to shine as lights in the world and fulfill God's original intent for His people.

Key Points:

- The importance of physically being present in spiritual assignments
- God's assessment of the church and the need for self-evaluation
- The symbolism of lampstands and pure oil in Scripture
- The process of spiritual refinement likened to olive oil production and paper recycling
- The call for the church to be a light to the world in preparation for Jesus' return
- The significance of yielding quickly to God's refining process

Scripture Reference:

- Revelation 1:10-20 (John's vision of the seven lampstands)
- Zechariah 4:1-7 (Vision of the golden lampstand)

Stories:

- Pastor Rob's experience working at a recycled paper plant, used as an analogy for spiritual refinement

- The upcoming trip to Turkey and Israel, framed as a spiritual mission to the seven churches of Revelation
- The story of Constantine's conversion and the Nicene Creed, highlighting both positive and negative impacts on the early church

Small Group Study Guide – Lampstand of the Lord

Key Takeaways:

1. God is calling His church to be a bright light in the world, illuminating darkness.
2. Jesus is assessing and offering self-evaluation to the church to prepare for His return.
3. The power of the church comes from the Holy Spirit, not human strength or wisdom.
4. God is looking for people who yield quickly to His refining process.
5. Our purpose as Christians may require surrendering our previous identities and letting go of contaminants.

Discussion Questions:

1. Pastor Rob mentioned that God is "sifting through his body throughout the world." What do you think this means, and how have you seen evidence of this in your own life or in the broader Christian community?
2. Reflect on the metaphor of the recycling process. How does this relate to your own spiritual journey? Can you identify any "pressure screens" or "vortex cleaners" in your life?
3. The sermon emphasized the importance of "pure oil" for the lampstand. How can we ensure we're offering our best to God in our daily lives?
4. What do you think it means to "walk among the seven golden lampstands" with Jesus in today's context?
5. How does the idea of being "light in the world" challenge you personally? Are there areas in your life where you feel you need to shine brighter?
6. Pastor Rob spoke about God's original intent for humanity. How do you see the church working towards restoring this intent in the world today?

Practical Applications:

1. Self-Assessment: Take time this week to prayerfully ask God to show you any areas in your life that need refining. Write these down and create an action plan to address them.
2. Light-Bearing Challenge: Choose one specific way you can be a "light" in your community this week.
3. Yielding Practice: When you face challenges or pressures this week, consciously practice "yielding quickly" to God. Reflect on how this changes your response to difficulties.

4. Church Unity Prayer: Spend time praying for your local church and the global church, asking God to unite and strengthen His people for His purposes.

5. Scripture Meditation: Read through the letters to the seven churches in Revelation (chapters 2-3). Reflect on what Jesus might say to your church or to you personally if He were to write a letter today.

6. Anointing Oil Reminder: Consider keeping a small bottle of olive oil visible in your home as a reminder of the Holy Spirit's work in your life and the importance of yielding to His refining process.

Discussion Questions – Lampstand of the Lord

How can we as individuals and as a church become more attuned to Jesus' assessment of our spiritual condition, as He did with the seven churches in Revelation?

In what ways might we be resisting God's 'squeezing' process in our lives, and how can we yield more quickly to His refining work?

How does the imagery of the lampstand and pure olive oil relate to our role as Christians in illuminating the world today?

What does it mean for us to 'walk among the seven golden lampstands' with Jesus in our current context?

How can we discern between human reputation and God's perspective on our spiritual condition, both individually and as a church?

In what ways might we be clinging to 'contaminants' that hinder our spiritual growth and usefulness to God?

How can we cultivate a greater awareness of God's 'end game objective' for our lives and for the church as a whole?

What does it mean for us to participate in 'restoring the testimonies' that have been lost or diminished in the church's history?

How can we better understand and apply the concept of 'not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit' in our daily lives and ministry?

In what ways can we as a church step onto the 'stage of history' and make a difference in our generation, particularly in light of end-time prophecies?

Scriptures – Lampstand of the Lord

Here are the [scripture references](#) mentioned or alluded to in the sermon, along with some relevant verses for key themes:

Explicitly Mentioned:

1. Revelation 1:10-20
2. John 8:12
3. Matthew 5:14-16
4. Ephesians 5:8
5. Revelation 2:1
6. Zechariah 4:1-7
7. Isaiah 61:1
8. Psalms 18:28-29 (mentioned but not quoted)
9. Proverbs 20:27
10. Leviticus 24 (general reference to pure oil instructions)

Alluded to or Implied:

1. Genesis 1:26-28 (God's original intent for mankind)
2. Daniel 12:4 (knowledge increasing in the last days)
3. 1 Peter 4:17 (judgment beginning with the house of God)
4. 2 Timothy 2:20-21 (vessels of honor and dishonor)
5. Hebrews 12:2 (for the joy set before Him)

Relevant verses for main themes:

1. On being light: Philippians 2:15
2. On God's refining process: Malachi 3:3, 1 Peter 1:7
3. On yielding to God: James 4:7
4. On the end times: Matthew 24:14, 2 Timothy 3:1-5
5. On the church's mission: Acts 1:8
6. On spiritual warfare: Ephesians 6:12
7. On God's original intent for mankind: Psalm 8:4-6
8. On the importance of the Holy Spirit: Acts 1:8, Galatians 5:16-18
9. On the return of Christ: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17
10. On overcoming: Revelation 3:21

Devotional – Lampstand of the Lord

Here's a 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide:

Day 1: Becoming Light in the World

Reading: John 8:12; Matthew 5:14-16

Devotional: Jesus declares Himself as the light of the world, then calls us to be that same light. This transformation from darkness to light is at the core of our Christian journey. Reflect on how your life has changed since coming to Christ. Are you shining His light in your daily interactions? Consider ways you can more intentionally reflect Christ's light in your workplace, family, or community. Remember, it's not by your own power, but through the Holy Spirit working in you that this light shines.

Day 2: The Refining Process

Reading: Zechariah 13:9; 1 Peter 1:6-7

Devotional: Just as olive oil is produced through pressing, our spiritual growth often comes through trials and challenges. God uses these experiences to refine us, removing impurities and strengthening our faith. Think about a recent difficulty you've faced. How has it shaped your character or deepened your reliance on God? Thank Him for His refining work in your life, even when it's uncomfortable. Ask for the grace to yield quickly to His process, producing the purest "oil" for His purposes.

Day 3: Walking with Jesus

Reading: Genesis 5:24; Revelation 2:1

Devotional: Enoch walked with God, and Jesus walks among the churches. This intimate, daily relationship with Jesus is vital for our spiritual health. How would you describe your current "walk" with Jesus? Is it close and consistent, or do you feel distant? Take time to envision Jesus walking beside you throughout your day. What would change if you were constantly aware of His presence? Commit to intentionally including Him in your thoughts and decisions today.

Day 4: Overcoming in the End Times

Reading: Revelation 3:21; 1 John 5:4-5

Devotional: The letters to the seven churches emphasize the importance of overcoming. As believers, we're called to stand firm in our faith, especially as we near Jesus' return. What challenges to your faith are you currently facing? It might be cultural pressure, personal temptation, or spiritual warfare. Remember that your victory is assured through Jesus. Pray for strength to overcome and consider practical steps you can take to fortify your faith against these challenges.

Day 5: Yielding to the Holy Spirit

Reading: Zechariah 4:6; Galatians 5:16-18

Devotional: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord. Our effectiveness as Christians doesn't come from our own strength or abilities, but through yielding to the Holy Spirit. Reflect on areas of your life where you might be relying too much on your own efforts. How can you more fully surrender these to God's Spirit? Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you afresh today, empowering you for whatever tasks lie ahead. Listen for His guidance and be ready to obey His promptings throughout your day.