



LIFE AS MISSION
The Light of the Mission
Week 12

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brothers Ryan Sharp and Jeff Johnson at Impact Church.

Closing prayer

Introduction:

- Read Matthew 5:14-16

The local church is God's plan to evangelize the world. The local church is God's plan for discipleship and discipleship means that as a Christian, both in desire and action, you want to become more like Jesus.

Discipleship in the local church means that you are willing to be held accountable. This is why the mentality of consumeristic Christianity refuses to die, because in that type of Christianity where you just attend a church, you're not really accountable to the church. When you believe God has placed you

in a local church, which is what the New Testament teaches, then you're more likely to believe you're accountable to that church.

Now, one of the things we keep each other accountable in is this thing called the Great Commission. And every local church acts as a witness, a light, to the local community she finds herself in. We are a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. So, collectively, we together are a witness to the community we find ourselves in — together.

Think of it this way. If one person stands in the middle of a field with a single torch in the darkness, there will be some light.

But if that person is surrounded by hundreds of other people who are each holding a torch, the light for everyone (both those present and those in the distance) is going to be greater.

That's the biblical idea of the witness of the local church body.

- Alone in the darkness | Dimly burning wicks**

If God's plan for evangelism is the local church, then how does Jesus equip us to do this work?

John 8:12

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Jesus has called His church to this Great Commission of making the gospel known to the whole creation. Maybe you don't feel qualified. Maybe you don't feel significant. So, what will give you confidence to engage in this mission? A mission that is in truth more urgent than a surgeon removing cancer from someone's body. Do you believe that? That your part in the Great Commission is more urgent than a surgeon who removes cancer from someone's body?

Many of you know Eric Myers, one of our faithful sound engineers, who had a surgeon remove cancer from his lung. Now imagine if Eric's surgeon, someone fully qualified to operate on him, had simply refused to do so. What reason could he have given? "I'm too bashful to talk to patients? Life is busy? Surgery is messy?" What would we say to such excuses from a surgeon? "You wicked, unbelieving surgeon!"

As Christians, we can't make any of these excuses, because:

1. You have the light of life. You are fully qualified to engage in the Great Commission.

You're not walking in darkness. John said that if you walk in darkness, then you lie and do not live by the truth. This means there's a hypocritical inconsistency to your life. Is that you? If not, then you don't walk in darkness, because you have the light of life. Christ is the light of life and you have Christ in you, the hope of glory, therefore you have the light of

life, which fully qualifies you to engage in the Great Commission. Not because of who you are, but because of who is in you. You have the light of life.

That's even what Jesus says of us:

Matthew 5:14

14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Now, if Jesus is the light of the world, how is it that He says we are the light of the world?

I need to pause here and make this distinction. We are not the light of the world in the same way that Jesus is the light of the world. We are speaking of God here.

There is this important Christian doctrine called the incomprehensibility of God, meaning God is always beyond us in everyday and more than we can imagine. He is so distinct from us that aspects of Him are

simply beyond us and will always be beyond us.

Stephen Charnock (a Puritan who wrote on the attributes of God) put it this way: “And whatsoever conception [of God] comes into your mind, say, ‘This is not God; God is more than this: If I could conceive him, he could not be God; for God is incomprehensibly above whatsoever I can say, whatsoever I can think and conceive of him.’”

Jesus is the light of the world who gives light to every person, but He Himself dwells in unapproachable light.

1 Timothy 6:15-16

¹⁵ which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

Jesus is God who dwells in unapproachable light, so in taking on human flesh He will certainly be the light of the world, the most wonderful being to know.

So back to — if Jesus is the light of the world, how can we be the light of the world?

In Romans chapter 6, the Apostle Paul basically says that whatever is true of Christ is now true of you. Here Jesus is saying exactly that. Jesus, who said that He is the

light of world, now tells His followers that “you are the light of the world.” This is a collective you — you, the body of Christ, the church, you are the light of the world. Then He even says, “There’s no use trying to hide it.” A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

It’s a problem if we hyper-personalize this verse. “You are the light of the world” — the church. Individually, yes, but collectively even greater. Individually, you are not a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. Together, we are a

people gathered in the darkness but we are all holding a torch. And it gives light to everyone.

However much people criticize the body of Christ, if we even had an idea of what this body (the church throughout history) has done and is doing in the world now we would be astounded.

Examples:

- The university system came from the church.

- **Because people believed the Bible was the word of God and they wanted to read it, literacy became rampant.**
- **Early science was propelled by the Christian idea that we live in a rational universe therefore truth about the universe can be discovered. The birth of science came from a Christian view of the world, not a secular one.**
- **Caring for the sick, specifically the sick that no one else would care for, was done by Christians, giving birth to medical care and hospitals.**

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

Matthew 5:15-16

¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

Your relationship with Christ gives light to those around you, both Christians and nonChristians. You give light to everyone in

the house. Your light makes the church brighter. When you're absent, the church is less bright. Don't think your absences go unnoticed. We notice when you're not here because when you're not here we are weaker.

¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

We let our lights shine before others so that God may receive the glory. The point is, you have the light of life, so...

2. Let your light shine before others.

Gandhi observed the missionaries around him in India and reminded them that a rose does not have to preach. It simply spreads its fragrance.

Now he was half right. There is a biblical precedent that some communication happens without a word. Without a word, creation tells us of the glory of God. Without a word, God's laws that are written upon every human heart tell us that life cannot be lived without observing morality.

But, that's only half of it. But neither of those examples can tell us how to actually know the God who whispers behind them. People cannot know unless someone explains the gospel.

- If there is a God, then we cannot know Him unless He has revealed Himself to us.

However, our lives must be fragrant first.

2 Corinthians 2:15

¹⁵ For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,

If you are a Christian, you are the light of the world. If you are a Christian, you are the fragrance of Christ. But some of you don't believe what God says about you is true of you. Instead you contradict the Word of God about yourself and say things like, "I'm such a loser. I've failed and I am failing. God doesn't seem to want to use me. I just don't matter, etc."

That's not what God says is true of you.

Everywhere you go, you go with the invisible presence of the Spirit with you. That makes you pretty significant.

- Significant because of who you're with...

2 Corinthians 3:18

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Regardless of your level of Christian maturity, you are being transformed into the image of Christ and you have the light of life within you. You don't need to feel confident in your ability to share the gospel. You need to have confidence that the Spirit of God is within you, because apart from Him you can do nothing. Sharing the gospel doesn't require a certain level of maturity in order to do it. It simply requires the confidence that the Spirit of God is within you, that you have the light of life.

Exodus 3:14

¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I am has sent me to you.’”

3. We can share the gospel with confidence because of the One who sent us and because of the power within us — the Holy Spirit.

You're not going in your own authority or your own strength or your own power. You go in His authority and His strength and His power with His ideas and His words.

John 20:21-23

²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

You're not going in your own authority or your own strength or your own power. You go in His authority and His strength and His power with His ideas and His words.

“The gospel calls us to front-yard, cul-de-sac hospitality—to be present to one another and the needs of our place. The gospel often starts small—as seed in the ground, in small talk, in service and generosity, and in common moments shared among ordinary days.

“Yes, God calls us to go to the “ends of the earth” (Matt. 28), but he also calls us to start by going next door: to listen, to invite, to create margin for our neighbors. We can do this when we’re at home, walking on the way, lying down, or getting up (Deut. 11:19). Our evangelism is the fruit of our hospitality, and it happens in the midst of everyday life with routine gestures of welcome and warm words of truth.

“Your real life in the place you live is the holy and ordinary ground upon which you live out

your faith. The call of a missionary is not always to move to a new place, but it is always to make room right in the middle of your ordinary life, on your street, among your neighbors—for the gospel to flourish.”

We need to make room in our lives, so that people can see our light shine.