

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

“In him was life, and that life was the light of men.” —JOHN 1:4

It is through people indwelt by the life of Christ that God intends His righteousness be revealed, and their lives become part of the message He has for this world.

When Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms, he declared him “...a light for revelation to the Gentiles” (Luke 2:32). John describes Jesus as, “The true light that gives light to every man” (John 1:9). The whole thrust of light is that it exists for the benefit of others. Putting our own interests first and finding personal fulfillment by shining in what we do has little to do with our function as light. Its function is ultimately as Jesus said; that we might be to people “the light of life” (John 8:12).

There is only one possibility of being the light of life and that is through a relationship with Jesus Christ, which allows Him to be in us what He was Himself on earth - the light of men. He does not teach us how to shine as a technique, because He is Himself the light. Jesus said of John the Baptist, “John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light” (John 5:35). John was the lamp, the instrument through which the light of Christ went before Him. As Christians, we are the instruments God uses for the light of Christ to shine in this world.

Paul tells the Christians in Philippi to be “blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe” (Philippians 2:15). In Biblical times, stars were used on the seas and on land to navigate a course of travel. We are to be like pinpricks of light in the night sky for the lost and lonely to find their way home. In the words of Paul, we then show we are “a letter from Christ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” (2 Corinthians 3:3).

When Francis of Assisi sent his men out to evangelize, he would tell them to preach Christ by every means possible, but if necessary, use words. It’s our actions and attitudes that gives evidence of Jesus Christ living within us, and that gives credibility to what we say. In other words, people will see our good deeds, but what they will recognize is Christ within us, and their focus is drawn to God. Our behaviour then ceases to be explained in human terms, but is the consequence of deity at work in and through us.

PRAYER: Precious Lord, I pray for a deeply enriching work of your Spirit so that your light in me will guide many people to You. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I seeking opportunity to serve as a light for Christ?