

Matthew 5:14-16

Todd Fletcher [00:00:03] Jesus says, "you are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 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. 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." Thus reads the words of the Lord, you may be seated.

Todd Fletcher [00:00:39] So as we look at the world around us, one of the things that becomes evidently clear is how sinful and dark this world is. It's an issue that we've experienced since the time of Adam, that our hearts are ultimately and absolutely corrupt. They are deceitful above all things, and who can know them? See, deception is a big issue in this world. And you know that Satan is the father of lies and that he is the chief deceiver. And so one of the things that we have thought and tried to work through as humanity is how can we deliver ourselves from sin by our own means? In the age of the Enlightenment, as Martyn Lloyd-Jones reflected on this time, the age of reason. We thought that we came up with the solution. That logic and reason and intellect could deliver us from sin. The age of the Enlightenment especially took place in Europe in the 17th and 18th century. That was preceded by what we know as the scientific revolution that science is the answer to man's problems. People still believe that today.

Todd Fletcher [00:01:42] We should know that very well with the season we just came out of, where everyone said that the answer was science and not God. You notice it was churches that were shut down during the last pandemic, but that's what people needed the most, wasn't it? Was God and community, people being hugged, people being greeted, people having handshakes, being looked in the eyes. See, people need people, but ultimately we need God. That is what is essential to our lives. It's interesting, the Britannica encyclopedia says this about the Enlightenment, "central to the Enlightenment thought were the use of and the celebration of reason, the power by which humans understand the universe and improve their own condition." Is that how we improve our own condition? Is it through intelligence? Is it through discovery? Is it through science? Yeah many things are better today, but we see also many things are far worse today. Just open the news for one second and see the atrocities that are committed around the world on a regular basis. So we need to recognize that the more intellectually advanced and the more knowledge we have does not necessarily lead to a better morality. In fact, it's the opposite, and I can prove it from Scripture. Let's turn to Genesis chapter 3. There is a tree called the tree of the Knowledge of good and evil, have you ever heard of it? The Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. Now, it's interesting is there was knowledge that was forbidden to humanity. And Satan comes and he tempts humanity with forbidden knowledge. Genesis chapter 3, let's start in verse 1, "now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, Did God actually say, You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?" So see Satan begins to question what God has said.

Todd Fletcher [00:03:41] "And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die. But the servant said to the woman, You will not surely die." See he's getting her to question God's Word. He's even getting her to question the very character of God, God's goodness. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God," keyword "knowing good and evil." You'll know something that was forbidden for you to know. See, God's not

a good God because He kept you from certain things, including the knowledge of good and evil. Now is God a good God for us believing Christians? Yes., God is the ultimate good. God is light and in Him there is no darkness whatsoever. God is truth, He cannot lie. But see Satan gets us to question God, His character and His word. Verse 6, "so when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one," what? Wise, knowledge. "She took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths." See, they had a progression of knowledge and they now actually understood something about themselves that they hadn't understood before, and that's that they were naked. They see now the truth of good and evil.

Todd Fletcher [00:05:19] The fact of, the fact that they can reject God's commands, that they can go against what God has said is true, that they can question His character and in fact, that they could join the rebellion that Satan began. So where did that leave humanity? Well, turn to Genesis chapter 6. Looking at Genesis 6, verses 5 through 7. This is the state that humanity is still in today. "The Lord Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." What is it that made God sad? It was the state of our hearts, that every intention of our heart is evil continually. Is that true? For those who are not in Jesus Christ that is still true of them today. That every intention of our heart is in rebellion to God the Father. That's what makes every intention evil, is that we don't submit to God. That we don't submit to His word and that we choose to continue to walk in rebellion to God our Father. That's what makes every intention of our hearts evil is that we are in rebellion to God. We raise our fists to God saying, Not your way, but my way. You're not king, I'm king. See, that is the rebellion of Satan. Satan desire to take out God and to take over his throne.

Todd Fletcher [00:07:04] Lloyd-Jones says this, as he reflects on his time, remember he experienced World War I and World War II, which is what the age of reason and the age of Enlightenment ultimately led to. Today in our modern day, we're likely on the step or the doorstep of another major war, depending on how things go. So again, reason and enlightened knowledge has not delivered us from these problems of war and death and sickness and all these types of things. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says this, "in spite of all the knowledge that has been amassed in the last 200 years since the beginning of the Enlightenment, halfway through the 18th century, fallen man by nature," that's the key word, "by nature still loves darkness rather than light. The result is that though he knows what is right, he prefers and does what is evil. He has a conscience which warns him before he does anything he knows to be wrong." See, we know what's right, we know what's wrong. In Romans 1, God says that he has revealed those things in the moral law. We know what's right, we know what's wrong but we suppress those things with what? Unrighteousness. We sear our consciences. "Nevertheless," he goes on to say, "he does it. He may regret it, but he still does it." Why? Because he likes it. The trouble with man is not his intellect it is his nature. The passions and the lusts, that is the dominating factor. And though you try to educate and control man, it will avail nothing as long as his nature is sinful and fallen and he is a creature of passions and dishonor. So what's the real problem here? What's the real problem that Jesus came to solve? And that was He came to die for sinful men.

Todd Fletcher [00:08:47] That He who knew no sin became sin so that we might share in His life, in His righteousness, that we might become the righteousness of God. That's what makes us unique, is that Jesus died for us. That He saved us. So let's go back to Matthew chapter 5, looking more closely at 14 through 16. And we're going to break this into three points. The first point is found in verse 14, which is do not hide. Do not hide what you are as a believer of Jesus Christ. Do not hide. Point number two is this found in verse 15, do not fit in. Do not fit in you are different. You should not fit into this world. And point number three is, shine the light and that's verse 16. Shine the light of Jesus Christ in your life. That's the whole goal of today is to get you to shine as bright as you possibly can in every area of your life. So the whole point here is let your righteous deeds, we'll see that that is light. Let your righteous deeds shine before others who are in a dark world that they may glorify your Father who is in heaven. So let's look at the first point here. Do not hide. Look at verse 14, "you are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden." So last week we talked about salt. Salt is interesting because by nature it is a preserving or a preventative agent. That's why commentators and theologians say this is largely a negative substance in the sense of it prevents from decay and the next part is a positive or it is an active aspect of what we do, which is to bring light into the world.

Todd Fletcher [00:10:31] So we said with salt, salt is something that cannot be hidden. If you've ever cooked anything and you spilled salt on something, can you save that food? The answer is yes. No I'm just kidding, the answer is no, you can't. You could try covering it up with butter and whatever you possibly could, but if there's too much salt, the food is ruined because salt is noticeable. Salt is something that cannot be hidden from the palate. Now, what about light? Now, if you've ever kind of if you're married and you've been with your spouse and it's night, it's dark and you have to wake up before them, your alarm clock goes off and you use your phone to try to find your clothing and your shoes, to not step on the Legos that your children leave around. That light is always too bright, isn't it? You're trying to hide it because you don't want to wake up the spouse next to you. But you see, it's impossible to hide light in true darkness. That's why out here in the mountains, when you look up at the night sky, how bright are those stars? That light is so far away, yet it's so bright in the in the darkness. The darker the dark, the lighter the light. We see that. So light is an important aspect. And there's two things that we see here. We're called not to hide the light, we're called to bring the light. And there's two ways that we bring the light. Number one is we bring truth to bear. We speak truth into darkness. A world full of lies calls for a people full of truth. We must be bearers of truth. That is the positive aspect of Christianity. We bring light into a dark world.

Todd Fletcher [00:12:05] We also rescue people out of darkness. We bring truth to bear and we rescue people out of darkness. Did you know that everyone in this room was once a child of darkness? I'll give you some verses, it says you were darkness, the Scripture says. But now you are light, something has happened to you that has transformed you. And the best image of this is a lighthouse. What is the lighthouse's key mission? It's to shine light. It's a lighthouse. Its primary mission is to shine light. It draws ships in to safety, and it shows them where the dangers are. When a ship is lost in a storm and it sees a lighthouse, that is salvation and it goes towards the lighthouse. That's how a Christian is to be in this dark world. We are to shine the light. Now, if a lighthouse is covered, it no longer does what it's supposed to do. It needs to shine. Therefore, a lighthouse must shine. Now for us, what do we do with our lights? Again, as we look at this, what we see here and versus 13 through 16, these are essentially title statements. These are main statements that Jesus makes and then He uses the rest of the sermon to show us how to be salt and light. He says, you are salt and light, that's already happened, if you've been born again. If you're a child of God, you're a child of light, we are called to actually live as we are to be

who we are. We are salt. We are light. But are you being salt and light? That's a big difference. So last week in verse 13, "you are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its taste how shall saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet."

Todd Fletcher [00:13:45] So the salt, we are the salt but are we always salty? Do we live as God and as Christ has commanded us to live? And are we preserving agents in this world? Are we purifying this world by our very presence? That that term saltiness could also be seen as kingdom effectiveness. Are you kingdom effective? Are you on mission, are you on the great Commission? Are you making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them all that Jesus taught us? He promises to be with us until the very end of the age, that's the great Commission. Are we on mission? We must be who we are. That's that part. But what is light? Look at verse 14, "you are the light of the world." That is a massive statement. You are the light. Well, where does the light come from? Does the light come from your personality? Does the light come from your gift of gab? Does the light come from within you at all? Even as a Christian, is it your light? It's Christ's light, it's God's light. Let's look at First John 1:5. See, this is the amazing thing is when you begin to realize that it is no longer you who lives, but it's Christ who lives in you and that you are a vessel fit for His services everything changes. First John 1 verse 5 says this, and I'm going to give you a brief flyover of the New Testament on what it says about light. And then we're going to look at a couple of passages in the Old Testament about light.

Todd Fletcher [00:15:20] First John 1, verse five, "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is" what? "Light, and in him is no darkness at all." Is there any darkness in God? No. Can God lie? No. You see, God is perfect light. God is pure. He is holy, holy, holy. When you look upon God, you are looking at purity. You're looking at pure light. Nothing can dim the light of God in him is no darkness at all. Look at for 6, "if we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." See if we claim to be in the light but live in the darkness, he says, you're lying. He goes on to say, verse 7, "but if we walk in the light, as he is the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." You see how important light is there? So God is light and therefore his children are called to walk in light. Well, now look, let's look at John 8"12. So same author, different book. John 8"12, this is Jesus speaking and Jesus makes a bold statement. Verse 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." You see, if you're a child of God, you will not continue to walk in darkness. In fact, everywhere a light bulb goes, what happens to the room? It fills up with light. It's almost impossible, actually it is impossible to walk in darkness if you're a child of God because you are the light. Darkness is simply the absence of light. And when you're present, there's light. Therefore, it's impossible for a child of God to walk in darkness. Isn't that interesting? So Jesus is the light. He is the light.

Todd Fletcher [00:17:28] His light shines through His people. And we are called to reflect His light. So see this is where the goal of the Christian life is what John the Baptist said, Jesus's cousin. He says, "I must decrease so that he might increase." The best thing anyone can say about you as a believer, as a follower of Jesus Christ, is you look a lot like Christ. You remind me a lot of Jesus. When I look at your life, it's as though I'm looking at the very life of Jesus before me. You love as Jesus has commanded you to love. You care and serve as Jesus served, and you're even willing to lay your life down for others. See, that's the highest praise a Christian can get is you look like Jesus. Now God's people are also the light, turn to Ephesians 5, verse 8. So God is the light, Jesus is the light, God the

Father, God the Son, and also His Spirit dwelling in the church is the light. Let's look at Ephesians 5, verse 8, "for at one time," notice the phrasing here, it's very important, "you were darkness." Not you were in darkness. He says. At one time you were darkness. "But now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in unfruitful works of" what? "Darkness, but instead expose them." So what does light do? It exposes darkness. It brings a purifying, preventative agent of holiness wherever it is. And that is what you are. Let's turn to first Thessalonians 5, I'm just, again we're doing a flyover here of light in the New Testament.

Todd Fletcher [00:19:42] First Thessalonians 5, verse 5, Paul writes, "for you are children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober." We are children of the light, isn't that amazing? Children of the light, not children of darkness. So there's something uniquely different about us. Now let's turn back to Matthew chapter 15, or sorry, Matthew chapter 5. I'm looking at verse 14. Matthew 5, verse 14, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden." Now, this is interesting because one of the issues that we struggle with is being hidden, hiding our light. But he says, you're to be like a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden. Now, what is being thought of here with the city set on a hill? This is where the Old Testament comes in. Likely the idea here is Jerusalem. Jerusalem, the city on the hill, which is the light to all the nations. At least that's what Jerusalem was supposed to be. Jerusalem is the apple of God's eye. Now, is Jerusalem in the news today at all, possibly? You see, Jerusalem is an important city, and Jerusalem was always meant to stand on a hill, to be a beacon to those who are dark. That is the ultimate lighthouse that God has chosen to place His name in Jerusalem. And you see, they were unfaithful to that calling. Let's turn to Isaiah, chapter 42. Isaiah 42, we see there's something unique about light.

Todd Fletcher [00:21:29] Isaiah 42 verse 6. I am Yahweh," don't you just love that? Whenever you see LORD in all caps in the Old Testament that's his personal name, Yahweh. Yeh-ho-vaw, "I am Yahweh; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you;" here it is. "I will give you as a covenant for the people; a light for the nations. To open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in," what? "Darkness." That's how God's covenant people are supposed to be, the light of the world. Setting free the host of captives that are bound in darkness. We are called to permeate the world with light. Now turn to Isaiah 49, verse 6, "he says: it is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel." He says, "I will make you as light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." See, light brings salvation. We are called to be the light in a dark world and to bring salvation to a lost and imprisoned world in darkness. That's why Ephesians 6 explains the beauty of the shoes of those who bring the gospel. When you bring the gospel into someone's life, you bring light into their life. That's what they need more than anything else. It's more important than money. It's more important than doorbells. It's more important than anything is the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I'm impressed with myself. Anyways, so try hiding salt in food or try hiding light in darkness. Again, you can't hide salt in food and you can't hide light in darkness, it's impossible. These things are realities that are insurmountable by darkness and by the devil.

Todd Fletcher [00:23:39] We should not hide the truth, we should not hide the life. Last week's sermon was titled Get Out of the Salt Shaker. That's exactly what this is about. Get out into the world and shine your light of Jesus Christ, the world is in desperate need of it.

This is what Craig Keener said of Jerusalem, he said, "Jewish tradition considered Israel," and we just read of the passages that dealt with this, "and Jerusalem and as well as God and the law as the light of the world. The city here could thus be Jerusalem." See, we see that this city was supposed to be the light, but God's people today are the light. That's what we are to be. So now let's look at point number two. Do not fit in. Look at verse 15. Matthew 5, verse 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." So he says a city cannot be hidden. But he also says nor do people light a lamp and put it in a basket. Rather, they put it on a stand so that it gives its light to everyone. Now, when people find out you're a Christian, what happens? When they find out your Christian, whether they're Christians or not, what happens? Their expectations of you change. They begin to wonder, are you a hypocrite or are you the real deal? You see, the general opinion of the world about the church today is that it's full of hypocrites. And it's because many Christians today are not born again. They are of darkness, yet they claim to be in the light. There are many tares. There are many first churches of tares.

Todd Fletcher [00:25:27] The wheat are different. They have a new constitution, they're entirely different. But what happens in most churches is they are characterized by the tares within the church, by the goats rather than the sheep. And you see, this is why pastors in churches, good pastors in good churches, exercise church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18, to keep the church pure. That when tares are being tares, you call them to become wheat, you call them to repentance. And if they won't repent and they continue to live and open sin causing shame for the name of Jesus Christ, the elders of that church deal with it and they ask that person to leave or to repent. See, this is how the church was designed to be made pure, Matthew 18, if you're interested in looking at Jesus as process for purity. But people are watching you as a Christian, they have expectations of you. I lived in a parsonage for a couple of years here up in the mountains. And you know, it's interesting they say pastors say parsonages are a lot like goldfish bowls. Why do you say that? Because everyone knows where the pastor lives. Even the non-believing neighbors watch you. They watch how you handle your children, how you deal with arguments, what kind of groceries you buy. They watch you. This is interesting because it's not just pastors that are being watched. It's every believer is being watched by a dark world because you're the light. And if light walks into darkness, darkness will always notice light. So the first point here is you don't fit in and you never will. You are different and don't hide it. People already notice that you're different if you're truly born again.

Todd Fletcher [00:27:07] Therefore, the answer is not to fit in, it's to stand out to the brightest degree that you possibly can to show people who Jesus is and how valuable Jesus is to you. So as we look at these two instruments here in verse 15, a lamp and a basket, let's just talk about these for a second. What type of lamp is being referred to here? This is from a historical background commentary says this about the lamp, "the small wicker oil lamps of this period gave little light in the average home, which had few windows, and they would be most effective by being set on a lamp stand. But something large placed over them would presumably extinguish the light all together." So you picture this lamp that's on the slide, which is an old, old oil lamp. It didn't give off much light, and the only place you could put it that had any value was in the center of the room so that everyone could see the light. And the way that they would extinguish it is they take one of these bowls, they would place it over it and that's how you extinguished the light. So what Jesus is saying is this, it's unthinkable to have a Christian who intentionally puts a bowl over their light, because what will that do to the light? It will extinguish it. So why would anyone do that? Now, this word for bowl was a common use. The word bowl comes from the Latin, the modus and the basic unit of measure of dry goods, which was roughly a bowl

of two gallons or 7.5 liters was the standard type of bowl that they would use to extinguish these things. And lamps were essentially for finding one's way in enclosed areas during the night and would be placed under the measuring bowl only to be extinguished.

Todd Fletcher [00:28:41] Again. Another source saying this is how you extinguish lights during that time as you would take these bowls and put it over. So Jesus again is saying, why would you intentionally extinguish your light? You are the light. Be the light. That's what Christians are called to be. Bonhoeffer says this about Christians. He says, Bonhoeffer "shows that any Israelite would immediately think of Jerusalem upon hearing about this hill. But in the case of the new Jerusalem, it constitutes Jesus's followers. These are the new citizens of heaven. These are the people that belong to Jesus. Like Jerusalem they must shine out of the world. For the discipleship is as visible as light in the night as a mountain in the flatlands. To flee into invisibility is to deny the very call of Jesus Christ." See if a Christian seeks invisibility, they deny the very call of Jesus Christ, according to Bonhoeffer. Now, what happened to Dietrich Bonhoeffer? He was killed for opposing the Nazis. For protecting Jews. He showed his light to a world full of Nazis and he was killed for it. He understood what it meant to be a city on a hill. "Any community," he goes on to say, "of Jesus which wants to be invisible, is no longer a community that follows Him. Any church that wants to fit in and be invisible is no longer a church. It's apostates. It's fallen. You see, this is Jesus's letter to the Churches of Revelation, the seven churches. The warning is, is do not fall. There's still a little bit of light within you, fan that light back into flame. If you persevere, you will receive the robes of light. You will receive the crown of life. Just persevere. Fan that light back into flame.

Todd Fletcher [00:30:34] Church, that's what Jesus wants for us. As Bonhoeffer stood out and he suffered the ultimate penalty of being martyred for Jesus Christ. That light began to blaze around the world as the Oxford Martyrs were being burnt in front of Oxford on the post they were saying, May these flames light the Reformation, may these flames light the Scriptures, England on fire where people turn to the Scriptures. So let's look now to this last point here in verse 16. Jesus goes on to say, "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." So a couple of questions before we go on. How do you hide your light? How do you actually try to fit in into darkness? Here's a couple of practical ways. First is we don't bring truth to bear and we accept lies. So when you think about the world, it's full of lies. And what does the world want you to do with regards to its lies? It wants you to accept them and believe them, even though you know they're lies, even though you know what the Bible says is true, and that what the world is saying is wrong. The world simply just wants you to accept it. Misery loves company, right? Deceived people love other deceived people. They don't want anyone messing everything up by saying the emperor has no clothing on guys. Everyone's praising the emperor's clothing, and one person who actually has eyes to see says he's naked. See, this is what's happening in our world, isn't it, right now? We know what's true, the world is saying other things and everyone's saying this isn't true.

Todd Fletcher [00:32:32] But I guess I have to say it, the sky is green. So as Christians, we must bring the truth to bear. Another way that we hide the lie is we don't say anything at all. We go to these classes that our companies make us take and we don't say a word. We go to our teachers that are absolutely in every single way undermining the authority of Scripture and bringing down a biblical worldview and we just nod along. We know what's true, but we don't say anything because we don't want to be persecuted. We don't want to stand out. Another way that we hide the lie is we live like the world. We simply just embrace the lies, we say nothing and we begin to live exactly like them. Turn to Romans

chapter 2. In Romans chapter 2, we see Jesus, ah sorry we see Paul condemning the leaders of Israel. And Romans 2, starting in verse 19, Paul says this, "and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide," now look at verse 17 before we go on his condemning the Jews. "But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind," what? Light, "a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having the law the embodiment of" what? "Knowledge of the truth, you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?" And do you hear kind of these shadows of the Sermon on the Mount here?

Todd Fletcher [00:34:36] "You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For, as it is written, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." See, these Jews claim to be the light of the world, that's what God called them to be. But in fact, they were no different. Now, are these Jews saved? No. They were children of the devil. That's what Jesus says. They were of the synagogue of Satan. These Jews claiming to be children of God were actually children of the devil, even though they claimed to be light delivering people from darkness, they themselves were darkness, delivering people into deeper darkness. You see, we must be careful because these people did not live as the light required. Your theology will not save you. Your doctrine will not save you. Who will save you? Only Jesus. Jesus will save you. He is the light. Obviously, what we believe about Jesus is important. But you can have perfect theology and be lost in your sin. There's many good commentators who openly reject Jesus. There are many scholars and many seminaries who do not believe a word of the Bible. Yet they can explain it and they can detail the history behind it. We must be careful of that. So we see here as we move on, we are to let our light shine as though on a stand. Whatever light you have, you should display it as best you can don't hide it. In every circumstance at work, among family members, among friends. Any and every opportunity, you should use that opportunity to display the light of Jesus Christ. Don't hide it. Don't try to fit in. Stand out for Him. And here's an interesting question.

Todd Fletcher [00:36:23] Do people know whether or not you're a Christian in your certain your particular spheres? Are there people in your life that would have no clue that you were a Christian? That's an interesting question, isn't it? Because we want to live in such a way that everyone knows in our life, our neighbors, our friends and our family members, our coworkers, that everyone knows where our allegiance lies. That we lie, that we stand on Jesus Christ, stand out for Christ. So this last point again, shine the light, verse 16. So we talked about hypocrisy. There's two verses that need to be dealt with here. Look back to Matthew 5, I'm going to read verse 16, and then I'm going to read chapter 6, verse 1, and we're going to parallel these two and show you what the issue is. So, Matthew, 5 verse 16, "in the same way," that is in the same way as salt, is salt and light is light and city cannot be hidden on a hill. "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." So where does the glory go for your good works? God, it points your life as a pointing back to the Father, not pointing back to yourself. So now let's deal with Matthew 6, verse 1, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people, "if you stop there what you just said, let your good work shine, let other people see your good works. Then he's saying, don't let people notice the difference here. "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven."

Todd Fletcher [00:38:05] Or, "you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven." See the issue is heart, it's heart motives, isn't it? When you want your light, your light to shine and your good works to be shown. Why do you want people to see your good works? Is it so that they will see you and they will think that you're special and that you're holier than thou? Is that a good evangelistic tool is to be condescending and to look down your nose at other people? No the best evangelistic tool is to tell people I am just like you, in fact I'm worse than you because I know my own heart. I know how dark my life was. I know the sins that I committed. I know the passions and the lust that I still struggle with on a regular basis. But God is greater than my sin. God's grace is far greater than my sin. And you can have the same grace that I have because I deserve death and hell. So do you. But now I have life in Jesus Christ, I have eternal life. And you can have that as well. Do you see, that's how we evangelize. You're not putting yourself on a pedestal. You're actually putting who on a pedestal? Christ. He must increase and I must decrease. That's what we're called to. So we must share the light. Now, here again notice that in this same way as salt is salt, as light as light so you must share your light. Shine the light. Put it on a lamp stand. Think of ways that you can bring more glory to Christ. More glory to God through the proclamation of the gospel in your life. And the more you do this, the more you shine.

Todd Fletcher [00:39:41] Let's turn to Acts chapter 7. This is an interesting story of the first martyr of the church. In Acts 7, we come across a man named Stephen, who is a deacon in the church. And actually going back to chapter 6, Acts 6, I want to focus on verses 8 through 15 just briefly with you. Acts chapter 6, verse 8, "and Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people." So here's Stephen is full of grace, full of power, doing amazing signs in front of the people. He's letting his light shine. "Then some of those who belong to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen." So these are Jews of the synagogue of Freedmen, what a great name, huh? We're from the Church of Freedmen and we're here to enslave you. Verse 10, "but they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which," Stephen, "he was speaking. Then they secretly instigated men who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God. And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council," that would be the Sanhedrin. "And they set up a false witness who said, This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and this law," the temple and God's Word. "For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us." I wanted to draw your attention to verse 15, "and gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel."

Todd Fletcher [00:41:34] At this moment before Stephen gives one of the best sermons ever preached only second to Jesus's sermon on the Sermon on the Mount. As Stephen is about to preach this sermon, what is his face doing? It's shining. Does that remind you of Moses? Moses comes down from Sinai and he has to wear a veil because his face is shining. What about Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration? Remember what happened when He came down? His face was what? Shining. I think Stephen's face was literally shining. It's an amazing thing because the light was so transparent through Stephen. It's as if heaven itself was shining through Stephen as he was about to be martyred. That's the way that we should want to live, is to where we shine in such a way that is undeniable. That people know exactly who you are and what you stand for and what did they do to Steven? They killed him. Can you imagine stoning someone to death whose face is literally shining like an angel? That's how much they hated this. Now, Jesus says back in

Matthew chapter 5, verse 16, he says, "Let your light shine before others." Before man, literally before men, literally in the Greek. "Let your light shine before others." And here's an important question Who are the others? Who is your neighbor? Everyone. Everyone that you come in contact with is someone you should let your light shine for. Because if they're lost in darkness, that is their only hope of salvation is the light that you bear, the very gospel of Jesus Christ. This word light in the Greek is phos. We also see another form of this word is photos, which is where we get the word photo. Phos it is a light in the context to darkness.

Todd Fletcher [00:43:39] The idea is that you are in the midst of darkness and your phos, your light shines in the middle of darkness. And this word specifically means in this passage, a bearer or bringer of light, i.e., a torch bearer. You are someone that wherever you walk, you bear the torch of Jesus Christ. And you point people to Jesus Christ. And what is our light? What is it practically speaking? It's here in this verse, "so that they may see your," what? "Good works." See we're called to good works. We're not saved by good works, were saved unto good works. But we are called to good works. We're called to let our good works be seen. Well, I thought Jesus said, don't do that, Matthew 6. No, what's the heart motive? Are you praying out in public so you can be seen by others and hear how good of a prayer you are? Are you a giver to where you tell people, hey, guess what, how much I gave to the church just last year, I shouldn't tell you, but let me tell you. I love when people come up to the pastor and say, Pastor, do you know how much I give? And I say I actually have no clue and I don't want to know. Because I don't know. And there's an important thing here is when you do something good and then you tell everyone about it so that they think your good, guess will happen to your reward? You just got it. And it's whatever people think of you right now. So here what we see is Jesus says, "Let your good work shine before men so that they glorify God." And it's interesting where you get into this word Father in just a minute, because that's a very important word.

Todd Fletcher [00:45:17] But we are called to be torch bearers and let our good works be seen so that people might be saved because they see something different about you. They see something as different in the sense of when your friends are using bad language and you join in that distinguishes you or that extinguishes your light. But when you do not join in to cursing or you do not join in to crass speech or to ridiculous jokes or those types of things, and you stand out that's actually a witness to Jesus Christ. That's how we're to be were to bring purity and we're to preserve what is holy wherever we are. So what is our chief end as men and women? What is the main purpose of everything? That's an easy question, isn't it? It's to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, isn't it? The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Here's a quote from one pastor who says this, "Jesus also calls us to be light because you are the light of the world where as salt is hidden, light is obvious. Salt works secretly while light works openly, Salt works from within, light from without. Salt is more indirect and influence of the gospel, while light is more a direct communication of the gospel. Salt works primarily through our living, while light works primarily through what we teach and what we preach and what we say. Salt is largely negative. It can retard corruption, but it cannot change corruption into incorruption. Light is more positive. It not only reveals what is wrong and false, but helps produce what is righteous and true." Where to be salt and light, to preserve and to preach. That's what we are called to.

Todd Fletcher [00:46:59] So a normal question is, is are you being salt and light? Remember verses 11 and 12. Look back to Matthew 5 verses 11 and 12. This is what you're promised. The more you let your light shine, the more of this you will experience. Look at verse 11, "blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all

kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who are before you." So when you are letting your light shine, the question is do people actually give glory to God? Is there always going to be a positive response to your good works? No. And you need to realize their response doesn't matter in light of God's glory. What matters is that you glorify God with your life in light of persecution, that you live a life to the glory of God. You serve an audience of one. That even if everyone around you despises you and hates you and mocks you and picks up stones to kill you, you pray for their salvation because you no longer matter. To live as Christ to die is gain. Go ahead and promote me to heaven, as Stephen is saying. I'm going to pray for you. God, Father, please forgive them, for they do not know what they're doing. Who's standing there? Saul. Paul. Stephen is praying for Saul as he's being killed by Saul. Because the worst you can do to a Christian is promote them to heaven. Stephen is living in such a way that, yes it brings persecution, but his death is bringing glory to God and these people don't even realize they're glorifying God through killing Stephen.

Todd Fletcher [00:48:52] We don't have time to read this, but write this down. This is your homework for tonight John chapter 1 verses 9 through 18. Jesus is the true light that has come into the world. And darkness could not comprehend it. Can you imagine if I were to tell you a story of a perfect person that always cared for others, that always served others that only spoke truth, and then I told you the world hated him and they killed him for it. You would have some questions, wouldn't you? That's exactly what happened to Jesus. He is the light. He is the truth. He only ever loved. He never sinned. He always preferred other people and they hated Him for it. The world didn't know him, and the world didn't want Him. They didn't receive Him, but some did. That's why we let our light shine. Because even if 99% of the people in your life hate you for it, 1% may say thank you. Can you imagine being in heaven on the new heavens and the new earth? And someone comes up to you and says, Did you know that by your life and your witness, I received the gospel and now I get to spend eternity in heaven with you and with Jesus. Would there be any better experience in all of everything than to hear that you had an impact on one person that accepted Christ and now they rule and reign with Jesus for all eternity? There's nothing better than that to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a lost and dying world. So what will save you? Not the Enlightenment, not reason, not knowledge, but light. Jesus will save you. So, as we conclude, I have one question for you. And this is something that I asked my children all the time is what is the wattage when they take a light bulb and they put it in a fixture, that's an important question to ask, right? If you have a light fixture that only takes a 30 watt bulb and you put a 100 watt light bulb in it, which my son has done, that's not good.

Todd Fletcher [00:51:01] But a good question is, is what is your wattage right now? If you were to take an honest evaluation of your life, what is your current wattage? One are you the light? Are you saved? Have you embraced Jesus as your Lord and Savior? If you haven't done that, all you have to do is confess Him as Lord. That is, you are not Lord, bow to King Jesus. Say Your way, not my way, and believe in His resurrection and you will be saved. Cry out to Jesus and He will answer. And if you want to know how to do that, talk to one of our elders and we can help you with that. But if you have received Jesus Christ, a good question is, is how bright are you? Are you letting your light shine like Moses, like Jesus, and like Stephen? I pray you are. We must shine Christ in our lives. Be who you are. Don't hide, don't fit in, shine the light. I'm going to end with DL Moody, he says this, this is so powerful. Listen to this quote by DL Moody, the great evangelist, "we are told to let our light shine. And if it does, we won't need to tell anybody it does."

Lighthouses don't fire cannons to call attention to their shining they just shine." That's what we're called to be.

Todd Fletcher [00:52:20] Let's pray. Father God, I pray that our light would shine before man. Lord that in our among our friends, among our family members, among our coworkers, that our light would shine. Lord the holidays are coming up and there are many opportunities for us to let our light shine and to tell people about Jesus Christ. I pray that everyone in this room would be faithful to stand up and stand out for Christ. Lord as we consider what DL Moody said that lighthouses simply shine. Lord, I pray that as a church we would shine and that we would show people the way to salvation. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen.