

Shine – Reflecting the Light

8/22/21

Matthew 5:13-14

Sunday AM

Light has many unique qualities. One of my favorites is its ability to *bounce* off another object – this is called **reflection**. When a surface is smooth and shiny or glassy, the light reflects at the same angle as it hits the surface and the light is unchanged by the surface – providing an **exact replication/mirror image** (see pic). This is known as **specular** reflection. But when the surface is wavy, choppy, or dense, the reflection, although present, becomes diffused and hard to see.

Over the past (3) weeks, we've been discussing God's calling on our lives to know/walk in the light – b/c God desires for us to walk in the light so that our lives might perfectly **reflect** Jesus in us to the world around us.

Yet, as we've been learning, to be an identical image or reflection of Jesus requires that we walk in intimate fellowship w/ God moment-by-moment every day to defeat the darkness in/around us by remaining in His Word, by depending on Him thru prayer/worship, and by engaging in true *koinonia* w/ one another as we spur each other along towards love and faithful fellowship.

This AM, as we close out this series, I want us to consider the **result** of such a life that knows/walks in the Light. Jesus spoke of this life in Matthew 5.

*You **are** the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It's no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You **are** the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:13-16*

What if I told you there's no such thing as personal evangelism and that for all of our efforts/programs we've missed Jesus' calling. It almost sounds heretical – but what if it isn't! Now, I'm not suggesting that we haven't been entrusted w/ the Gospel or that we have no responsibility in proclaiming Jesus to our world – we DO! Only maybe it's different than we're doing it.

If we back up to v. 3-12, we find Jesus sharing what we know to be the **Beatitudes**. *The Beatitudes are those qualities w/in a believer's life that testify to God's redeeming grace and our commitment to live a Kingdom-centered life under the influence of the H.S.*

DMT – this also means v. 13-16 aren't so much a call to be evangelistic as they are the **corresponding result of a truly transformed life**. Look at the Greek here.

you (emphatic) meaning – **you and you alone** are light b/c of what God has done and is doing in you.

are – signifies that we've **become** something new – as in, b/c you've believed, you're now a citizen/heir of heaven called to **reflect** the light of God. As a result, Christians are a continual *mobile* light called to reflect the nature/character of Christ to this dark/sinful world.

THUS – When I'm right w/ God, I can't help but to shine! When my attitudes, ambitions, and actions align w/ God's heart/will, Jesus in me can't be contained and His nature/character shows thru me.

It also means the power of a person's witness isn't in *their* initiative/good works, but in the reality/vitality of their surrender. It's God's work in me (not my talk) that matters. So, if our lives don't ooze Jesus thru our intimacy w/ Him, then our talk is meaningless. This is akin to – **your walk talks but your talk – don't walk**.

WTM – let’s dive into this statement to understand more fully what it means to SHINE for God.

I The **CALLING** to Light

You are the light of the world.

W/out a bit of **cultural context**, we can easily miss how bold/profound this statement is for us today.

In Jesus’ day, the Jews used the phrase – **light of the world** – to describe their most famous Rabbis. So, Jesus’ words would’ve caught the crowd off guard.

This is especially true for the religious leaders. For Jesus was telling the crowds that it was NOT the Rabbis, scribes, or Sanhedrin who were the light of God to the world, but actually, only His true followers.

LWF– we **only** become **A** light to the world **after** we’ve received Jesus as **THE** light of the world. Then once received, *w/ great privilege comes great responsibility* as we’re called into His service to shine!

Spurgeon – Only genuine faith in Christ turns a man from darkness to God’s marvelous light transforming him into light in the Lord; his aims/objects, his desires, speech, and actions all become full of Divine light that illuminates all the chambers of his soul, and then pours forth from the windows so as to be seen of men... In this, the believer is appointed to be a lighthouse to others – a cheering lamp and guiding star.

What does this mean? It means that while I’ve been entrusted w/ the Gospel, my job is to put myself in a position thru *surrendered followship* to allow God’s Light to *bounce* off of me so that others might see and experience the love, grace, and mercy of Jesus.

This idea is way contrary to our current evangelism efforts which place the emphasis on what we say/do for God *in our ability* instead of on the basis of who God is and what He is doing in/thru us. Yet it’s only Jesus in me living thru me that can actually make earthly and eternal difference.

Let me simply – **Can I save anyone?** NO – it’s all the work of the H.S. God *calls*. God *convicts*. God *convinces* – and only God *converts*. My role is to *convey* the message as I’m led by the Spirit.

Yet, we’ve crammed EE, CWT, FAITH, and Who’s Your Daddy down people’s throats to train them to share. **But witnessing is not a sales pitch to be learned – it is a lifestyle/intimacy w/ God to be lived** b/c a life that walks w/ God can’t help but to talk of God.

So, if you have a **talking** problem about God – it’s b/c you have a **walking** problem w/ God. Guaranteed!

And this brings us full-circle to the G.C. Jesus didn’t commission us to be **converts** but **disciples** who actually exude the characteristics (or beatitudes) of the kingdom. It’s b/c we **ARE** *beatitude bearing disciples* that we’re able to reflect Jesus that others *may see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven*.

Truth – If your **attitude** is anything but the **beatitudes**; then your witness will be wonky and counter Gospel.

This is b/c we can’t make ourselves light – *only God can do that*. Paul explained this in Ephesians 5:8 – *you were formerly darkness, but now you are light...* we’re light only b/c of Him and not b/c of ourselves. Our light comes only from the deposit of the H.S. And it’s this light that enables us *to always be ready to give and account of the hope that’s w/in us*.

Think of the believer's light this way – When Jesus walked the earth, He was the *light of the world*. He was like the sun. *As the sun goes down, the moon rises – but only to reflect the light of the sun*. Christians are little *moons* called to reflect the light of the S.O.N. His light shines on/in us, and we reflect His light to others.

Meaning – if a person is a true Jesus-follower – they will reflect Jesus for others to see – **they can't help it**.

II The NATURE of Light

A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven

What does light do? It shines, illuminates, and reflects. It enables us to see what's before us providing sight.

The nature of light is to shine. There's no such thing as light that doesn't communicate itself. Likewise, there's no such thing as self-contained light. Light may originate in a distant star and travel a span of light-yrs, but it doesn't get tired of shining nor ever cease to shine. Its nature is to shine. Christ says He's made us lights in the world, and we're not self-contained. It is the nature of the child of God who's been made light to communicate the light given to him. *Pentecost*

IOW – God's light in us cannot be hidden – if it's genuine, it has to shine.

hidden (*krupto*) to intentionally cover up/conceal – to *keep a secret for selfish reasons*. In this instance, Jesus was saying that a genuine believer can't fathom hiding the reality of their faith – they have to shine b/c the light of God in them can't be hidden.

In ancient times, cities were always built on a rise or high plateau – (1) for *protection*, and (2) for *visibility*. Unlike today, where no highway lights electricity didn't exist. Thus, travel by night was guided by the light emanating from these towns/villages. From great distances any hillside village could be seen from afar.

In Jesus' analogy, He is telling us that if we have the real thing – if we have a genuine faith – it can be seen by anyone/everyone even from great distances. It can't be hidden or kept secret – **it will be evident to all**.

So, **if it's not evident**, then something is wrong w/ our faith b/c there's no such thing as an *invisible* Christian.

FACT – if we find in ourselves a desire to hide or minimize our witness, it's likely b/c we either have no relationship w/ God or we've strayed into darkness.

Be Aware – a convenient/comfortable faith always leads to a conflicted *faith* and compromised *witness*.

In Jesus' metaphor of salt/light – salt is needed b/c the world is rotting/decaying, and if our faith is rotting too, it'll be good for nothing. Likewise, the light of Jesus in us living thru us is needed as our world gropes in darkness; thus, hiding His light in us would be savage.

Poor world. It's dark and gropes in midnight – and it can't get light except to receive it thru Christians! To be the light of the world surrounds life w/ the most stupendous responsibilities... Hear this, humble men and women, you who've made no figure in society – you are the light of the world. If you burn dimly, dim is the world's light, and dense its darkness. Jesus never contemplated the production of secret Christians – whose virtues would never be displayed – pilgrims who'd travel to heaven by night, and never be seen by their fellow-pilgrims or anyone else by day. What a lamp-stand was found for Christianity in the martyrdoms of the Coliseum, in the public burnings by the pagan/papists, and in all the other modes by which believers in Christ were forced into fame...
Spurgeon

Or as Francis of Assisi said – *Preach the Gospel at all times; when necessary... use words.* **SHINE Jesus!**