

Go Deeper

Shine to Make a Difference

Matthew 5:14-16 (CSB) | 2026-09-06

01 Opening

Most opportunities to represent Jesus happen in ordinary moments: keeping a promise, responding to frustration, finishing a task, or noticing someone others overlook. The sermon calls us to let our relationship with Jesus become visible in those moments so that people are drawn to him.

As we gather, we will consider where we already have opportunities to shine, what might be covering our light, and how one practical response this week can honor our Father.

02 Ice Breaker

1. When has someone's small act of kindness or dependability made a difference in your day, and what made it memorable?

03 Opening Prayer

Father, open our hearts to your Word. Help us listen carefully, speak honestly, and receive one another with kindness. Show us how our daily choices can make Jesus visible to others. Give us courage to respond to what you reveal and humility to seek your glory. Amen.

04 Read Together

Read Matthew 5:14-16 together in the CSB. The following CSB text is supplied in the sermon outline:

14 "You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. 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 in heaven."

Pause after reading. Notice what Jesus says about who his followers are, how their light becomes visible, and whom their good works should honor.

05 Key Takeaways

Our light begins with Jesus. The sermon emphasizes that Jesus identifies his followers as light; we shine because he has changed us. Difficult surroundings become opportunities to make his goodness visible.

Faith should shape everyday conduct. How we respond under pressure, speak about absent people, and treat those serving us can reveal the difference Jesus makes beyond Sunday worship.

Our work is an opportunity to represent Jesus. Diligence means being dependable and following through. Integrity means being honest even when no one is watching. Joy means bringing gratitude and encouragement while still addressing legitimate problems.

Love makes our witness tangible. Patience, kindness, appreciation, and celebrating others matter, including when we receive nothing in return. We also keep our light visible by speaking openly about Jesus when opportunities arise.

The purpose of shining is the Father's glory. Our good works should help people recognize God's goodness. The sermon calls us to serve faithfully where we are without waiting for a platform or different circumstances.

06 Discussion Questions

1. In Matthew 5:14–15, what do the images of a city on a hill and a lamp on a lampstand help you understand about being Jesus' follower?
2. What connection does verse 16 make between visible good works and the Father's glory? How might that purpose shape both our actions and our motives?
3. The sermon highlights diligence, integrity, and joy in our work. Which of these most needs attention in your paid work, household responsibilities, study, or caregiving, and what would growth look like?
4. Think about a setting where complaining or gossip comes easily. How could you bring encouragement there while still speaking honestly about a legitimate concern?
5. How does your treatment of people who cannot benefit you reflect the love described in the sermon? What relationship or recent interaction comes to mind?
6. What makes it difficult for you to speak naturally about Jesus when someone asks about your hope? How could your words and conduct together help that person understand whom you trust?

07 Go Even Deeper

Could the desire to be noticed and the fear of being noticed both keep us from shining as Jesus intends?

For group reflection: Matthew 5:15 describes a lamp giving light to everyone in the house, and verse 16 directs the resulting glory to the Father. These details invite us to examine both our willingness to be visible and our reasons for being visible. The sermon addresses hiding our faith as well as seeking attention for ourselves.

Consider an ordinary opportunity to serve. How might seeking approval change your response? How might fear of attention change it? Discuss what serving for another person's good and the Father's glory could look like in that same situation.

08 Sermon Truths

Jesus is the source of the light his followers carry into the world. Read John 8:12 in your CSB Bible alongside Matthew 5:14.

Visible good works are meant to bring glory to the Father. Matthew 5:16.

Daily work is an opportunity to serve the Lord with wholehearted effort. Read Colossians 3:23 in your CSB Bible.

Love for one another identifies Jesus' disciples. Read John 13:35 in your CSB Bible.

09 Leader Insight

Leader guidance: Keep the discussion connected to the movement of the passage: Jesus identifies his followers as light, describes light benefiting others, and directs the glory to the Father. This can help participants move from pressure to impress toward a concrete response to Jesus.

The sermon explicitly distinguishes joy from pretending everything is wonderful and allows for addressing legitimate problems. Help the group explore that distinction without treating honest struggle as spiritual failure. Include participants whose daily responsibilities take place outside paid employment.

If someone is exploring faith, make room for the sermon's invitation to trust Jesus, who died for our sins and rose again. Explain that the light described here begins with him.

Follow-up prompt: What would faithfulness to Jesus look like in this situation, even if no one immediately notices or responds?

10 Application

Choose one responsibility to carry out faithfully. Today, identify an unfinished task, a promise to keep, or a mistake to acknowledge. Set a realistic time to take the next step. Tell a group member what you intend to do and ask them to check in before the next meeting.

Prepare one encouraging response. Before entering a setting where negativity is common, pray for patience and identify one person you can thank or encourage specifically. When a real problem needs attention, describe it honestly and propose a constructive next step. Share with your accountability partner how the conversation went.

Make room for both kindness and honest witness. Notice someone you often overlook and offer a practical kindness this week. Prepare a brief, truthful explanation of how Jesus gives you hope so you can respond naturally if asked. At the next gathering, reflect on what you did and learned without measuring faithfulness by another person's reaction.

11 Closing Challenge

Before the next meeting, complete one specific act of faithfulness in a place where you regularly feel tempted to complain, withdraw, or blend in. Choose an action that benefits someone else, such as keeping a neglected promise, offering sincere encouragement, or correcting a mistake honestly. Pray that it helps others see God's goodness.

Before leaving, each person can name the place, the action, and the day they will take it. Ask one group member to check in afterward.

12 **Closing Prayer**

Jesus, thank you for entering our darkness, dying for our sins, and rising again. Help us depend on you as the source of our light. Forgive our hidden faith, careless words, and desire for praise. Give us diligence in our responsibilities, integrity in our choices, joy amid difficulty, and love for the people around us. Help us follow through on the steps we have named and speak honestly about you when opportunities come. May our lives bring glory to our Father in heaven. Amen.

Leader Reminder: Our role is to facilitate discussion, not deliver the sermon again. Keep the group rooted in scripture, allow people space to respond, and help them identify a practical next step.