

THE CHURCH IS LEAVING THE BUILDING!

LIGHTS SHINING IN THE DARKNESS

Matthew 5:13-16

ATTENTION:

Video – “Your Light”

The Bible often uses the image of darkness to illustrate evil/lostness

- Examples:

Jesus sent Paul to turn people from darkness.

I am sending you to them ¹⁸ to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

Acts 26:17-18

¹⁹ *This is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the light and avoids it, so that His deeds may not be exposed. ²¹ But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light, so that His works may be shown to be accomplished by God.*

John 3:19-21

- The scriptures also speak of the Christians as being lights.

you shine like stars in the world
Philippians 2:15

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.*

Matthew 5:14-16

ATTUNE:

Can you picture yourself that way?

- To do so, I’m thinking you have to take account of the darkness.
 - It’s all around you.
 - You see it every day.
 - It hangs heavy like a fog over everything.
- That’s why there are lighthouses along the coasts around the world = Because there is/was a need for them to guide ships through the dangers of the night – the darkness.
 - What do we do about the spiritual fog that makes it hard for people to see the hazards souls have to navigate?
 - We need churches—we need our church—to be like *a city situated on a hill*, so that wanderers can be guided to safety.
 - We need people like you to *light a lamp* and NOT *put it under a basket*, but *on a lamp stand*, so that it *gives light to all who are in the house*.
- **God is at work in the world to push back the boundaries of evil, and He has called us to join Him.**

BODY:

God’s mission always takes us into the dark, into places where people need the light.

- God has placed in your hand a torch, lit by the flame of truth, and He has sent all of us into the dark places of life.
- We are sent on mission:
 - Mission isn’t just a program we participate in.
 - This mission is to show up at work, school, golf course or talking to your neighbor over the back fence as lights
 - We are on mission 24/7, 365 days a year.
 - We are agents of the kingdom cleverly disguised as a homemaker or a clerk or a teacher or retirees or whatever.
 - Every place you go, every person you meet, every conversation you have
 - You’re there to dispel the fog, to illuminate the darkness, with the torch of truth, the Gospel.

- We need a wartime mentality:
 - During World War II everyone had a part.
 - Some went to fight, but those who stayed home had a role to play, too.
 - There were rations of food.
 - Items made of certain materials were not available to the public so they could be used in the war effort.
 - Business and industry was turned toward supporting military needs.
 - All of life was organized around the mission.
 - And everybody shared the mission to win the war.
- You know what we need?
 - We need to know the mission, and we need to organize our lives—and our church—around the mission.
 - The church is the instrument of the mission
 - The church isn't the target of the mission. The church is the instrument of the mission.
 - The target is the city in which the church is located.
 - The schools in that city
 - The hospitals
 - The military installations
 - The industries
 - The marketplaces
 - The institutions in that city.
 - The target is the world out there.
 - That means the people out there
 - the confused
 - hurting
 - fearful
 - guilt-laden
 - distressed
 - troubled people.
 - The darkness has captivated them
 - They need you and me to shine among them *like stars in the world*
 - They need us to *light a lamp and put it...on a stand to give light to all who are in the house* throughout the dark backdrop of their lives.

So, how do we do that

- **First**, recognize that the light we bear is a reflected light.
 - When the moon shines brightly at night, it isn't moonlight we're seeing it is the light of the sun reflected off the moon.
 - Jesus is the light we reflect like the moon reflects the sun!
 - We orbit around Jesus and the light we shed is His light or it is no help at all.
 - Our mission is to live with Jesus being reflected in everything we do and say!

¹² Jesus spoke to them again: "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."

John 8:12

BUT experience the light so you can share it!
- **Second**, always be on mission.
 - Sent by God into every arena where life takes us.
 - We need to see every person we encounter with fresh eyes.
 - Not as if they were a project we're undertaking.
 - Nobody is going to stand for that.
 - But we need to see them as people God loves
 - Ask God to show us—"What am I called to say or do or be in this encounter that will honor You and bring blessing to this person?"
 - The church is leaving the building to enter their mission field.
- **Third**, order our lives not around getting but around giving, not around being served but around serving.
 - We need to be an alternative society.
 - The world says, "Look out for number one" we need to "Look out for the last and the least"

PROJECT:

You are the light of the world, Jesus says let your light shine...so that [others] may...experience/see your good works and give [the] glory to your Father who is in heaven.

That's the mission: shine brightly with the glow of Jesus till the darkness takes flight and people see the glory of God!