



As Shining Lights

Matthew 5:14,16 -- *You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden... Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

Introduction

1. Many people do good works, hence we come to think that anything that might be good, or anyone doing what is good, as a thing that is a shining light.
2. Yet even Satan, the ruler of darkness, presents his works as though he were an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13-15) and by deception presents "powers and signs and lying wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9). Even false religions are based, in part, upon the word of God, which the Devil admixes with doctrines of demons.
3. Thus we need to reconsider just what is an example of the true light shining in a world so critically in need of it. Historically, many a wayfaring mariner has been lead to his destruction by his enemies putting false lights along the shore.

A. So How Do We Make True Lights Shine?

1. Jesus tells us that we glorify God by showing people our gracious and morally "good" works.

Matthew 5:15-16 -- *Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

2. People can do many wonderful works, but they will be, in the final analyze, lawless and therefore works of iniquity.

Matthew 7:20-23 -- *So then you will know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."*

3. Christ did not deny that they did good deeds. After all, is it an evil deed to cast out demons? Can it be denied that many benefited from the efforts of these who did the "many wonderful works?" Yet they were still done in some way, outside the will of God, and were therefore unacceptable.
4. The Scriptures define and establish all "good works." Hence, what was done by the "many" was done without authority. Also, even good works can be done from wrong motivation. If we are doing it for personal glory, pride, honor seeking, recognition, selfish ambition, or any other reason than out of loving obedience, we may have no authority to do them.

Matthew 6:1-3 -- *Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven...*

B. Our Light Should Only be a Reflection of God's

1. If one is in darkness, there is no light in them. One in Christ walks in the light, and his walk should be as a child of light, the light of God.

Ephesians 5:5,8 -- *For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God... for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light...*

2. Christ is the light of men, the only light that shines in this dark world. Even the sun is not the originator of light, it is only a light container; it contains the light that God created and placed in it.

John 1:4-5,9 -- In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it... There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

3. The apostles did not originate the light of the gospel. They only shine forth the light of the gospel contained within them.

2 Corinthians 4:6-7 -- For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves.

Psalms 119:105 -- The word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.

C. Light Disperses Darkness

1. There is no darkness that light cannot penetrate as long as light shines. A dark room is lighted when the light is turned on. The light of the gospel will dispel the darkness of any ignorance or speculation.
2. The early church, as long as it worked, and preached with zeal the pure light of the gospel, dispelled the darkness of Judaism and heathenism.

1 John 1:5 -- And this is the message we have heard from Him and announced to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

D. Light Is Powerful

1. Light rays (laser light), so minute, are being used to penetrate through thick metals, and can cut through and disintegrate anything that crosses their path.
2. Spiritual light, the truth of the gospel, is even more powerful. It is the very power of God. It is *dynamis*: dynamic, dynamotic, dynamighty.

Romans 1:16 -- For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

3. The power of God's light (His word) was and is keenly felt in the lives of men.

Hebrews 4:12 -- For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

- Felix trembled when Paul preached to him concerning righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come. Yet it says that he feared no man.
 - Nebuchadnezzar lived as a ruler that no earthly power could overthrow. Yet the spoken word of God humbled him to the position of a brute beast in the field.
4. And not only men are humbled.

James 2:19 -- You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

5. Hidden truth cannot enlighten and teach. When a man is afraid or unwilling to teach God's truth, he is as one who hides the light under a bushel. Hence, one who does not shine the light of truth is automatically in darkness himself. A life without the truth of God radiating from within is a life without power, a life swallowed up in darkness.
6. Many times people feel that they should not cause trouble over differences and unscriptural practices. Yet those in darkness do not feel that way. They are more than willing to spread and teach and practice openly their error and wickedness. Every time we yield to, or fail to reprove them, we are allowing the darkness to remain and grow thicker and stronger.

Ephesians 5:11 -- And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them...