

# “Let There be Light!”

Matthew 5:14-16

**Intro.** – Lucy and Charlie Brown were arguing. Charlie Brown was trying to convince Lucy that birds really did fly South for the winter. She responds, “Chickens are birds, aren’t they? I don’t see them flying South. Have you ever seen chickens fly South? Another panel shows the two walking together. “I asked my teacher about this bird business.” “Oh?” “She said you were right, Charlie Brown. Know what?” “What?” “I think I will see if they will let me change teachers.”

Talk about a “backhanded” compliment. Have you ever received one of these yourself? Kinda of like, “My, you’re looking heathier.” or “Aren’t you getting mature looking!”

As a young preacher I would often get, “You’re going to make a pretty good preacher, some day.”

Our text records a compliment. Not only is it a call to duty, but it is also a compliment. I believe it is one of the greatest compliments ever given to Christians for in it Jesus commands us to be what He is. Jesus said as recorded in John 9:5 “*While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*” You see, when Jesus commands you and me to be lights of the world, He demands nothing less than we should be like Him!

What all is entailed with our being *lights of the world*? Does our Lord really expect us to be like Him? In what way(s) are we to be like Him? Are we expected to be perfect as He is perfect?

*Purpose: to better understand what is involved with our being the light of the world*

## I A Light to SEE

- such is the nature of light – to be seen. The only time we don’t want light is when we are doing something we ought not to be doing

### A. Lights in Palestine

1. Housing at this period of history was dark – there were little if any windows. Lamp(s) was the main source for light.
2. Lamp stood on a lamp-stand; unless, it was needed for going outside and other such matters.
3. No easy matter in starting this lamp – no matches, bic flicks etc. – necessary to guard THE source for light carefully – Illus. like watching a woodstove and keeping it lit in the winter...
4. The primary duty of a lamp was *light* = meant to be seen!

### B. Lights in Modern Times

1. Although the uses for light have increased, its main purpose remains the same = intended be seen
2. Not everyone today likes light. Why? Because light has a way of exposing things...
  - John 3:19-21 “*And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light; lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.*”

### C. Our Lights Must Shine

1. Our faith and hope is meant to be seen – this is the very nature of light!
2. Christianity by its very nature is highly visible:
  - a. there is no such thing as a “secret or in the closet Christian”
    - secrecy destroys discipleship and discipleship destroys secrecy.
  - b. Illus. – years ago had a lady say, “I just want to go to church and then leave without any connections.” That’s the problem – Christianity is all about connections – connected to God...
  - c. “religion” confined to a building is NOT Christianity. Just too many trying to be like the politician who never won an election until he changed his name. Changed it to “None of the Above”
  - d. our faith/hope must be visible – especially in ordinary activities:
    - 1) how we treat store clerks = let your light shine
    - 2) how we drive our automobiles = let your light shine

- 3) how we do our work = let your light shine
- 4) how we speak, think and act (habits) = let your light shine
3. Jesus didn't say, "You are the light of the church" – "You are the light of the world!"
  - a. is it evident we are His = evidence must shine...
  - b. faith/hope by their very nature will be seen!

God intends for us to be the light of the world = light by its very nature is to be seen!

## II A Light to GUIDE

- light is something to make the way clear and certainly as servants of the Lord, we must be used of Him to make clear to those around us the way back to God:

### A. By Our Good Deeds

1. Two Greek words are translated "good":
  - a. αγαθος = literally means "good in quality"
  - b. καλος = literally means "not only good in quality, but also attractive..."
2. Word here is καλος – deeds of Christian must not only be good – must be appealing/attractive...
  - a. there is a certain winsomeness/attractiveness in Christian goodness.
  - b. Illus. – nobody has more genuine fun together than do Christians...
  - c. Illus. – need we have here to promote through every activity, study, worship time...
3. Tragedy of so much so called "goodness" = element of hardness/coldness/mechanical/plastic...
  - there is, however, goodness that attracts/appeals to that which God created in everyone's heart
4. What a thrill to attract and lead someone to Christ...

Men, women, young people need to be guided/won to Christ – as light of the world, we are meant to shine!

### B. Unto the Glory of God

1. Our good deeds are meant to draw attention – NOT to ourselves, but to God alone!
2. Serving our Lord has no place for *theatrical goodness*:
  - a. Illus. – couple of old-timers on the bench listening to a candidate appeal for votes. "Whose is that fellow anyway?" "Don't know, but sure does recommend himself highly enough."
  - b. Illus. – D.L. Moody met young people thought highly of themselves because they held an all night prayer meeting. Moody asked what they'd been doing. They responded, "Mr. Moody, see how our faces shine?!" "Moses didn't know his face shone."
3. Goodness that is conscious/draws attention to itself is not, I repeat, is not Christian goodness.
4. We must never think of what we have done; instead, we need to wonder at what God has enabled us to do!
5. In short, we must never seek to draw attention to ourselves; instead, we are created/meant to draw all the attention to God!

Our lights are meant to be a guide!

## III A Light to WARN

### A. Lights Often Used in Warnings

1. Everyday – traffic lights, lights on appliances, cars, machines etc. ...
2. Great when they are working – watch out when they are not!

### B. Christians Are Meant to Give Warnings

1. This isn't easy. Why?
  - a. isn't easy to do this in the right manner and with the right motive... Note: always must do this for the good of the person(s) and their relationship with God...
  - b. often is resented = for some reason people don't take kindly to being told they are wrong...
2. Such is so important – had we not heard the warnings, had we not seen our need for forgiveness of sins, where would we be today?

3. Such is so needed:
  - a. family and friends need to be restored to Christ...
  - b. there are souls to rescue there are souls to save, send the light!
  - c. one of the most serious errors we can and do make – we fail to warn of sin’s price...
  - d. our love or the lack thereof is revealed warning or failure to warn of sin’s wages...

Our lights are meant to warn!

**Conclusion:** We are the light of the world. A light which can be seen, which guides and warns.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light.’ And there was light. God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness.”

Our God is still saying, “Let there be light!” He desires light:

In this local Church...

In our homes...

In our lives...

*This little light of mine,  
I’m going to let it shine,  
This little light of mine,  
I’m going to let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!*