

## Light and a City

Matthew 13:34 “*All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them.*”

### Light and a City

Matthew 5:14-16 provides the scripture for this parable. Like the parable of the salt spoken by Christ in Matthew 5:13, this parable deals with the influence and witness of the Christian unto the world. This makes this parable of interest to all saved folk. We know Jesus is Savior of the world, but what are Christians to the world? What is the influence of the Christian in the world? Jesus Christ is all things, but what are Christians? What is the role of Christians in this world? I have often said, and it bears repeating, “if we had no role in this world, God would have raptured us to Heaven the moment he saved us.” He left us here, but why? Part of the answer to that question lies in understanding the parable of “Light and a City.”

Christ admonishes his children to be light. Isn't it amazing that God only asks us to be something simple? He did not ask us to be explorers or scientists. He asked us to be simple light. I am sure he knows our frailty. Though simple and common, light is important. Man cannot exist without light. Place an animal or human in darkness and disease will attack and death will come. Christians are believed by the world to be simple and common and unnecessary. Yet, Jesus said “*ye are the light of the world.*” There is no other source of light for this world. Light is not found in the government. This world exists only because there are Christians. When Christians are removed, goodbye world. One day Christians will be removed (read I Thessalonians 4:13-18). “But preacher,” you may say, “I am nothing in God's kingdom.” Yes you are- you are a matter of life and death for the world. When there are no longer Christians, there will no longer be a world as we know it.

Every light has a source of energy. Light is energy. The lights in our homes are connected to electrical wiring from the utility board. The utility board reminds us of this every 30 days. A lamp in days of old

had kerosene or perhaps, as in Bible times, olive oil for fuel. My flashlight has batteries. There must be a source of energy or there is no light. The sun is the great light placed in the universe by creator God. It is not a secret that every planet and star that gives off light must thank the sun! The Christian's source of energy is the Son of God. John 8:12 Jesus proclaimed "*I am the light of the world.*" Our energy is not self-derived. Our energy is not collected from man. Our energy is not bought with money. There is one source, and that source is the Son of God. That sounds simple, but yet is one of the hardest lessons for a Christian to learn.

The world needs Christians desperately but does not care for Christians. John 3:19 "*men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.*" Never expect the world to like you. If you are saved, you are light. Remember too, that the world hated him before they hated us. How could men hate a healer, a prophet, a Savior? For the simple reason he is *light*. He exposed their sin!

The ending of verse 14 speaks of the "*city that is set on a hill.*" Let us not miss this important lesson of working together. Have you seen a city at night? A city is not one light, though it appears as one. At night, I can see my home city of Athens from my house though it is 6 miles away. There is a glow along the horizon. If all the lights of the city were turned off excepting for one, the city could not be seen. That glow of the city at night is thousands of lights working together! We are a city only when we work together. Our potential working together is unlimited. What good does jealousy do in God's family? What good does division do among Christians? It only serves to weaken the light of the city. I need you. You need me. We need each other.

The hill the city sets on is Christ, for only he can lift up. A group of Christians working together comprise a city that "*cannot be hid,*" verse 14.

"*Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel...*" verse 15 says. What stops you from serving God? Why are you, as a Christian, not faithful in your walk? Have a thousand reasons gone through your mind? Dismiss them all, for there is only *one* reason for faltering- you. Yes, *you*. Only you can put your light under a

bushel, i.e., a basket. Mother and Father can't stop you from being a light- you stop yourself. The employer can't stop you from being a light- you stop yourself. The drug dealer cannot stop your light. Not even the devil, a superpower, can snuff out your light. You and you alone are responsible for your Christian life. I know many folk who are saved, but they hid their light. It is getting harder and harder to build a city for the Lord. The gays "come out." I wish Christians would "come out." Whatever is hiding your light, with the help of God, remove it! What is your "bushel?" Family? Job? Finances? Bad habits? Lack of education? Shyness?

What does a person do with a light? He lifts it up so he *and others* may see. Verse 15 speaks of placing the light in a good place- on a candlestick. A candlestick is a light holder. Revelation 1:12-13 tells us John saw 7 golden candlesticks, and these were the seven churches. Individuals are lights but are placed collectively in a candlestick. I believe in the church- both the local church and the church when spoken of as the body of Christ. I am a "church man." I got saved in a church because of the light the church showed me. A man is to lift his light up on a candlestick for the entire "house" to see, verse 15. When the Philippian jailer got saved in Acts 16, up went his light. His entire household saw his light and were saved and baptized before daylight! If your house, that is, husband, mother, father, son, or daughter, get saved you will be the one that wins them for Christ. You are the light that is closest to them.

How do we know when the light is visible? Verse 16 says two things will happen: one, the world will *notice* in the fashion they noticed the blind boy in John 9 and secondly, the Father in heaven will be *glorified*. Both of these are good- the world *notices* and God is *glorified*. These are the simple reasons our light must shine.

How hard is it to be a light? However hard it is for you to control yourself. Self is the only one who can place the light under a basket. By the way, the darker the world gets, the easier it is to be a light. I collect flashlights. Some men collect knives and guns. They are too expensive for me. Some flashlights are tiny, the size of a man's finger. The small ones are only good when it is really dark. They are no good in dim light or at a great distance. However, the large ones can even be seen in daytime. The darker the world gets, the easier it

is to be a light. Even children can shine! Don't make excuses for not shining. God will not accept them.

The world is blind and dark and in need of a light. The government is not the answer; Christ said "*ye are the light of the world.*" Religion is not the answer, for Christ spoke "*ye are the light of the world.*" The only "Bible" the world has is the "light" of a Christian. II Corinthians 3:2 "*Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men.*" Dear saved person, get busy today letting your light shine.

*True story:* Mike (not real name) worked in a large factory. Mike was a Christian. He was not a preacher or teacher. He was hardly able to give a spoken testimony. He was a quiet man who hardly spoke until spoken to. However, in all Mike did on the job and in life, he gave the glory to God. The boss told Mike to slow down for he was working too fast. Mike replied "I can't slow down for my Heavenly father is watching me. I must work diligently for Him." Mike came to work early. When asked by his co-workers why he did so, he replied "my Heavenly Father would never be pleased with me being slothful and tardy." The entire company was puzzled, yet amazed when they beheld Mike as his light shined for God. One day he retired. In a few years, he passed away. At his funeral, a large crowd gathered. The minister asked everyone to stand that had been influenced to be born-again by Mike's life. One hundred eighty three (183) souls stood up. Wow. Mike never said much; he just let his light shine among men. At least, one hundred eighty three saw it.

Dear saved person, let us all remove the bushel and let our light shine today unto this lost, dying world.