

# Sermon on the Mount: Light to the World, Glory to God

by J. Glyn Owen

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*As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to be the light of the world, shining in the darkness to expose and expel evil, and fulfilling our universal mission to make disciples of all nations.*

**Duration:** 56:05

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:14

**Topics:** "Sermon on the Mount"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the incredible story of how the followers of Jesus spread the gospel and brought light to the world. Despite their natural reluctance and the opposition they faced, they became emissaries of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The speaker encourages the audience to read the book of Acts to truly grasp the thrilling nature of this story. The apostle Paul's job description, as given by God, was to open people's eyes and turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, so they could receive forgiveness of sins and be sanctified by faith in Jesus.

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## Transcript

You will find the words of our text this morning in St. Matthew's Gospel in chapter 5, and we shall read verses 14 to 16. These words follow from the subject we were considering last time, and you will notice as we proceed that there is a very close, a very intimate link between the two designations of the subjects of Christ's kingdom that we have in these verses. Beginning with verse 14 then, You, says our Lord, are the light of the world.

A city on a hill cannot be hidden, neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and praise or glorify your Father in heaven.

Light to the world, glory to God. Now this text, as I've already indicated, needs to be seen in closest proximity to the words that precede it, referring to believing men and women as the salt of the earth. Important as it is to recognize that if we are truly the subjects of God's kingdom, then we qualify to be known as the salt of the earth, and should function as such.

Important as that is, it is nevertheless a mere aspect of Christian duty. As a matter of fact, to act as the salt of society is simply to act as a kind of temporary stopgap in preparation for something else that our Lord requires, requires us to do, and desires to bring into the situation of need in this world of ours. Simply to frustrate evil from spreading, important though that may be in itself, it is only a preparatory measure.

The world needs light. Light that will disperse the moral and the spiritual darkness that has made it corrupt in the first place. And so we are to act as salt particularly in order to prepare the way for the bringing in of the light that will illumine the darkness, and show the way out of the world's exigency and plight.

And believe it or not, that is your task and mine today. Jesus turned to a group of his followers 2,000 years ago, and he said to them, without exception, he said to them, you are the light of the world. You're it.

I utter these words to no one else but to you, my people, my followers, my disciples, subjects of my kingdom. You, he says, are the light of the cosmos. I'm particularly grateful to God for the providence that has arranged for us to be meditating on this particular passage today on the occasion of our 164th anniversary.

There have been here over the years those who have acted together in concert as the light of this society, and their light has been spread far abroad. We thank God upon every remembrance of them. But we need to be reminded that this is the ongoing task of those of us who may already know what it is to be the salt of society.

Being salt, acting as salt, we are nonetheless over and above that to bring something into our human situation which Jesus speaks of as light. You are the light of the world. It's very apposite, it seems to me, that we should be thinking of this here on the occasion of our anniversary, and also particularly perhaps at the commencement of our missionary conference.

May the Lord in his goodness enable us by the Spirit to understand something of what Jesus had on his heart and on his mind when he sat there on the hilltop and gathered some men and women together and addressed these words to them on that first occasion. That was a very fruitful sermon. It has borne fruit down through the centuries.

As we consider these words this morning, may they be fruitful today in each of our lives. Now there are many things here that are important. I would like to confine myself this morning to three main points.

One, and the first, I would like us to look again at the designation of the subjects of the kingdom of God, how Jesus addresses them, what he calls them, how he designates them. Does this startle you? You, says Jesus, you are the light of the world. Who are they? Let me just summarize very briefly, but we've got to be clear about this.

We've already indicated that they are the subjects of his kingdom, his followers, but who are they? What is there to characterize them? Well, you read back into Matthew's Gospel or one of the other Gospels and you don't have far to go. You will discover that there are men and women who have responded to the summons to repent of their sins, to turn away from them in faith to the Lamb of God who had come to bear away the sin of the world. There are men and women who've repented of their sins, come to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and are now under the yoke of King Jesus.

Use any language you like, but they've come into the kingdom of God, under the rule of God, and they've submitted themselves to that rule. And part of the discipline involved, of course, is that of moving along the

lines of spiritual experience enumerated and outlined in the Beatitudes that we took some time considering. Putting their necks under the yoke of King Jesus, the subject of his rule here upon earth, that they began to move by his grace and by his help and by his teaching and inspiration.

They began to move along the line and the level of experience enumerated in those Beatitudes. Now, Jesus looks into their eyes as it were and he says, look now, he says, you. They were not perfect yet.

I, well, don't let me exaggerate, but they were far from perfect. Nevertheless, the Savior looks at them and says, you are the light of the world. What do we have to say about this designation? Well, the first thing and the point I'm convinced where we should begin is this.

Light is an appellation of God. It is a name given to God. It is a description of God.

In our invocatory prayer this morning, we thought of God as light because the apostle John, the apostle of love as he is generally called, introduced his first epistle with these startling words. This is the message that we have heard of him, that is of the Lord Jesus Christ, and declare to you, God is light and in him is no darkness at all. God is light.

So this is a title, this is a designation of God, of deity. Now, if you want to analyze this, which I am not going to do this morning, but you will find that the designation light is given to the Father, to the Son, and the functions of light at any rate are attributed also to the Holy Spirit. But here in our text, our Lord Jesus is looking into the faces, looking into the eyes of men and women made of the same stuff as you and of me, fallen human nature, who had sinned as you have and I have, who had gone astray, and who had been recaptured by his grace, and heard the call of his gospel, and repented of their sins, and turned to him, and he says to them, now listen, he says, you are the light of the world, and the designation elsewhere given to God, he gives to his people.

Now, whatever you make of that, you must make this much of it. He thought of his people as God-like, and fulfilling in this world a function that is according to the nature and the purpose of God. He is almost saying, you are to act as God to those who know him not.

You are to bring the knowledge of the unseen God to those who don't know he exists even, and certainly know next to nothing about him. You are the light of the world. Not only is it a divine appellation, but I want you to notice that it is a derived qualification.

How did these men and women of yesteryear, those that stood around our Lord Jesus, how did they come here? Well, we've indicated that in one way already. How did they come to qualify for this title? But let me stress something rather different now. Not one of them, not one of them had such innate spiritual qualities as to constitute them the light of the world when they were first born, or as children, or as young men, or older.

This was not something innate to human nature, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, whether they were cultured or uneducated. That which constituted them light was something rather that they had derived. They had gotten on the way.

It had been given to them rather than produced by them. This is very important, very important. The Apostle Paul brings it out in a number of places.

Let me just refer to one of his very conclusive passages, Ephesians 5.8, where he puts it beautifully like this, and this is the point I want to make. Once he says, you were darkness, but now, but now you are light. He didn't finish there.

You are light in the Lord. You see, he didn't say you were a special species or you are light because you're Jews or because you're Gentiles. He didn't say you were born as lights into the world.

He didn't say you had this always. It was innate in your very nature. No, no.

What he says is this. You are the light of the world, and if we may take Paul's words as explaining that and expounding that, it is in terms of your relationship with me, with Jesus. And that, of course, is true here.

But what the Beatitudes and the spiritual experience outlined by the Beatitudes, what they all lead to is this, is to a submission to the lordship of Jesus Christ and of God the Father in Jesus Christ, and thus to a knowledge of him, an experiential knowledge of God in Christ. And this is whence the light comes. It is as we walk with him under his rule, going his way, depending upon his provision, walking with him, for him, he constitutes us as light.

But notice, it is exclusively because of our union with Jesus Christ. See, we still have people, still have people who come to Knox. I'm sure they're found in every other church, and they think that because their parents brought them early 50, 60 years ago, and they were baptized with a few drops of water, they believe that they really have got it.

Though, in terms of a confession of faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, they've never confessed him as saved. And they are suggesting, therefore, that any light they have is innate, inherent, something they brought into the world. No, no, no, says Paul.

No, no, says Jesus. This is derived. It's yours in the law.

Let me put it to you like this. There are bulbs in these lights. I take it.

I can't see it. Yes, I can see one or two, but the light is not in the bulb itself. You take those bulbs out.

I don't know how you're going to get up there, by the way. Don't start imagining things now, but however you get up there, you get hold of these bulbs, take them out. There'd be no light in them, not a spot of light, not a ray of light.

There's only light there insofar as they are in touch with power. And that's true of every believer, of every man or woman who is the light of the world. We are just like dead bulbs, light bulbs.

There is no light in us. But bring us into touch with the light giver and the life giver, and that very moment the light comes on. It's derived.

It's a derived qualification, as well as a divine appellation. Then the third thing here in this connection is this. It's very distinctive.

What did Jesus mean by saying that his subjects were the light of the world? And what does he mean still when he continues to say to us, you are the light of the world? What does he mean by that? Now let me divide this up a little. First of all, I believe he meant that his true followers are men and women who have been intellectually and morally illumined. Now you notice I link together intellectually and morally.

Doesn't mean to say that you become a great intellectual at once, but it does mean to say that you've come to understand something about God and about his son and about the way of salvation. So that in terms of the New Testament, you have come to believe the truth as it is in Jesus. Now, if you live on a very high intellectual level, that may mean more to you than it may mean to somebody else.

But every man or woman has to satisfy his own mind that the Christ of the Gospels deserves to be trusted. And every man or woman, boy or girl must satisfy himself that it is a reasonable thing to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. And to that extent, every Christian is intellectually illumined of God.

But now that doesn't come alone. The intellectual illumination is accompanied by a moral illumination. It's not only a knowledge of truth as distinct from error, but also of right as distinct from wrong.

And this is a characteristic of every true Christian. He has come to know the truth as it is in Christ and he believes it. And he has come to know what is right in the light of what God has revealed.

And he knows the right as opposed to the wrong. And he's dedicated to the side on the side of the right. So that you see, a subject of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the light of the world, par excellence, a subject of the kingship and the rule of God in Christ by the Spirit, according to the word, is someone who has light in him.

He's illumined. She's illumined. Paul speaks of it very graphically in these words.

2 Corinthians 4, 6. God, he said, sorry, I should have put it like this. For God who said, let light shine out of darkness, made his light shine in our heart to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God who said, let light shine in the darkness on the first day of creation.

God, that same God has said, let light shine into their hearts to give them the light of the knowledge of myself in my glory as it is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. And this is part and parcel of the genuine Christian experience. A knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Into the innermost soul of a believer comes light. Jesus is different from everyone else, and he knows why. He has light on the subject.

But a point that must be stressed, I say it again, is that such light meant as much the alerting of the conscience to know right from wrong as the quickening of the mind to recognize truth from error. It is both moral and intellectual. The second thing I want to say about that is this.

It is a distinctive connotation because starting there, we have to go on to say that being intellectually and morally illumined in this way, such people are thus because they have come to share in the very life of God. Have you noticed the way John, in John's gospel, specially proclaims the gospel? It is invariably in terms of offering eternal life as the gift of God. Life is his great word.

Some people have designated their commentaries on John the gospel of life, life, life. He that hath a son hath life, he says in his epistle, and in other places of course. It's all about life, the life eternal.

My friend, when you and I are rightly related to Jesus Christ, we have the life of God. The gift of God is eternal life. He gives us life, and that life, to go on from Paul's reference in 2 Corinthians 4, 6, to go on to verse 7, that life of God we have in our souls, and it's like having this great treasure of life which is light in jars of clay.

Our bodies are like brittle jars of clay. They may last 60, 70 years, 80 years even, but they get very brittle somewhere around mid years there, and they begin to get a little bit weaker, and you know what happens. I don't need to exaggerate.

It's a brittle jar, but inside it is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The life of the believer is a lamp illumined by the light within, and the life within. In practice, the person who is light, when he moves into circumstances of darkness, creates an awareness of an altogether new dimension.

Now we're so familiar with this, it's difficult to get it across, but when you go into a place that is in total darkness, and if there is electric light there, and there's a switch, and you know where it is, and you put the switch on, should there be someone there that's been living in that condition for a couple of years, man alive. It's unbelievable. It's a terrible shock.

It's really something that cows you, something that sends you down on your knees. The light has come, and I'm in darkness. When a Christian believer, man or woman, moves into a situation of darkness, it is like the light coming on where there has been nothing but unrelieved darkness.

Now, of course, that's not always going to be received kindly. Indeed, there will be times when if you go into a situation like that, you're going to have a slap in the face, and more than a slap in the face, Jesus died on the cross for that. He brought light where it wasn't welcome.

Light has come into the world, he says, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Everything, everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. See, when the light comes in, you see yourself, assuming that you've been in a dark place, and somebody switches the light on.

It's not been on before. You look at your hands, they're dirty. You didn't know they were dirty.

If there is a mirror, you look at your face, and it's smudgy. You didn't know it was smudgy. And you look at your clothes, they're dirty too.

And you didn't know you were dirty, but when the light has come on, you know where you are, you know where you're at. And if there are anybody, if there's anybody else with you, the same goes, you see where they are, who they are, what they are, how they are, their condition. And listen, if you shine as light in a dark place, and there is a way out of it, the light will show the way out of it.

Now, a person who has begun to move the way of the Beatitudes will have begun also to assume this moral quality as light. And wherever he goes, he will go as light into the darkness, sometimes making people uncomfortable, at other times being the answer to their prayers and the means of leading them out into the glorious light of the kingdom of Jesus. One contemporary writer puts it like this, your presence will help expose and sometimes expel the darkness of this world.

It may not make you popular as you will illumine dishonest practices in business, gossip in the secretarial pool, loose talk and still looser morals at parties, corruption in local politics, racial prejudice, greed, selfishness, and other things. And they will come to appear much darker even to non-Christians because of what you reveal of the holy character of God in Christ in you, the designation of the subjects of God's kingly rule. You are the light.

Now, let me turn to the second thing I want to stress, the location of the present service of those who are thus designated. Notice Jesus puts it like this, you are the light of the world, of the cosmos, of the creation. Two basic concepts claim our attention here this morning.

First of all, the concept of universality. I stress this not just because it's the beginning of our missionary conference, but brothers and sisters, we need to be reminded of it. The concept of universality, you are the light in your little corner.

Yes, blessed be the name of the Lord. First in your little corner, but you are the light of the world. And that puts some responsibility on your shoulders and mine for the condition of the uttermost parts of the earth, of the world.

The subjects of the kingdom of heaven or of God or of Christ have a universal mission to perform, and it is as wide as the world. Not only is it as wide as the world, but these disciples of our Lord were later to hear from the lips of the same Lord, the same master, these words, which shows them that it is to continue. The light is to shine.

His people are to shine as long as the age lasts. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, said Jesus. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age. You notice? All nations to the end of the age till the climax come when Jesus comes to consummate his purposes. As long as time is given us, the whole world awaits the shining of our light.

I don't know whether there is anybody in Knox who is not involved in a missionary venture. I don't know, but there may be in a church where so many people are so dedicated, blessed be the name of the Lord, and where so many people are prepared to give sacrificially. Could it be that there is one man and woman here, or woman, in the heart of this congregation, and frankly, you've never begun to tithe for God, you've never begun to give sacrificially or to pray sacrificially for the work of God to spread to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Is there one? I tell you, friend, you're out of step with God. You're out of step with God. There is a fellowship with God you cannot know until you begin to move with him.

Enoch walked with God. You've got to walk with him to have that quality of fellowship with him. Next to the account of the invasion of planet earth by the Son of God, I don't suppose there is a more wonderful and exciting story than that of how these subjects of the heavenly kingdom, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of his Christ, and those that gathered around them as the days went by, moved against all national impulses, moved against the tide, and went out into all the world spreading the gospel, sharing their light, shedding their light.

It's a most wonderful story. Against their natural and national reluctance, they became emissaries of the king of kings and lord of lords and went out to shed their light anywhere, everywhere. Read the story.

If you really want something thrilling in these days, read the book of the Acts of the Apostles again and read it all through and see what it's saying and sit down where you've gone through five chapters and make notes of the outline and you'll see there's something marvelous here. As they move out from

Jerusalem to Judea, from Judea to Samaria, from Samaria to Syria, from Syria to Cyprus, from Cyprus to Proconsular Asia, from Proconsular Asia to Europe, down to the very heart of the Roman Empire to Rome. What are they doing, these people? Who's paying them? No one is paying them.

Who's seeing to their pensions? No one is seeing for their pensions. What are they doing then? They're being the lights of the world. They're obeying their lord.

They're going where they've been sent. Where there's darkness, they go into it. And in the darkness they shine and some of them die.

It was all because they loved their commander-in-chief. The apostle Paul refers to his job description as God gave it to him. And in the midst of it he says this.

He reports the Lord of glory saying to him, I am sending you to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me. Have you got it? Why are you going, Paul? Well, I've been sent. What have you been sent for? To open their eyes.

They're sitting in darkness. To open their eyes that they may see. Have you been the instrument of opening anybody's eyes? Have you set out on one of your many days in 18, 20, 30, 40, 50 years to open the eyes of a blind man or woman spiritually? You call yourself a follower of Jesus Christ? The universality of it.

But there is also along with the universality of this the concept of antipathy. You are the light of the world. I want to bring this out.

We've referred to it already. You cannot read the gospels and the epistles without recognizing the fact that from the point of view of Christ and his followers, mankind is divided into two. Two camps.

And a deep hostility, a hostility of the kind that occasioned a calvary divides the two. What's the difference between the world and the church? The world and the true church? This. The world will always crucify God incarnate insofar as it can.

And once in time, the almighty God allowed it to happen in flesh. That's the world in its darkness. It will crucify the Lord of glory.

And if God were here today, the people of Toronto would want to get rid of him if he came down as a man among us. And they would put the church has received him, loves him, honors him. He's under his rule, wants to obey him and to represent him.

And that's the difference. So you see, what I want to stress is this, if you are going out as the light into a world which is so different, you're going to feel the antipathy. You're going to feel the opposition.

I say this because I talk to some young and older people who occasionally show a surprise that when they stand for the Lord Jesus Christ and witness for him, they're not received all that joyfully. Well, that should be no surprise. It proves the theology of the Bible to be accurate.

It proves that the word of God is true. This is exactly what the word of God says. You are going as light into the darkness and people don't like to be shown up for what they are and where they are and where they're going.

They don't want to be there in the darkness of death. And if you're going to disturb them, you'll have more than a slap on the cheek. There's an antipathy here.

And you see, this is all important. If the Lord is calling you to Christian ministry, there are people who have a concept of Christian ministry at home or abroad, which is almost like that of a philosopher teaching, who can say his piece and leave people take it or leave it just as they like. My friend, that's not it at all.

We are here to persuade men. We are here to declare the word of God, to represent the God of the word. And if that is the case, we're going to get hurt.

You're going to get hurt. I have known young theological college students and prospective missionary candidates looking for the easiest place because this has begun to come home to them. And they've been frightened.

Thank God for that fright, because it's true to reality. And our Lord would have us realistically facing a world that crucifies his son. And he says to us, if you're following me, take up your cross daily and follow me.

You've got to bargain with that. There is no service for God and his Christ that does not bargain for a cross. Let me come then, let me move to the last thing I want to stress this morning, away from the designation of the subjects of heaven's rule as light in their location.

Stressing these two matters, we have now stressed to this last thing, the dedication required of them. And that's brought out here in verses 14 and 16. The second part of verse 14, neither, sorry, a city on a hill cannot be hidden.

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on a stand and it gives light to everyone in the house in the same way. Let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise or glorify your father in heaven.

Now, the first thing I want to stress on the basis of those words is this, a Christian is the light of the world or the church is the light of the world. God sends us out into the darkness and he warns us beforehand that we're going to be ill-received at the hands of many. Nevertheless, and this is the first thing I want to stress, it is our most reasonable command.

And I can't deal with that as it deserves to be dealt with in total. But the one thing I want to say is this, when the Lord Jesus Christ said to his disciples, you are the light of the world, he was not saying anything unreasonable. He was saying something which was most reasonable.

And for this reason, he was telling the Christians to be exactly what he had made them by his grace, nothing more, nothing less. What is a Christian? Well, we've already said, we've already referred to that. Well, let's refer to it again.

What is a Christian? What happens to the man or woman that walks the way of the beatitudes, that he is the call to repent and to believe in the Lord Jesus and to put your neck under his yoke and obey him? What does that make of you? Says Jesus, it will make salt of you. It will make light of you. It will make you a luminary in the world.

It will not only illumine you, it will make you a lamp. It will make you a luminary. And you see, Jesus is only telling us to be what he has enabled us to become.

He's not telling a carpenter to be a mason. He's not putting any square pegs in round holes. He's not asking you to do something that is contrary to your new nature.

He's saying, look, you've changed. You've moved the way of the beatitudes. You've seen yourself to be poor in spirit.

You've mourned for your sin. You've become to hunger and thirst after righteousness. You become meek.

You become merciful. You become in some measure, pure in heart and so forth. You've gone this way.

Now he says, all that constitutes you as light. And the only thing I want you to do is this. Be yourself.

Just be what I've made you. And what you're still in process of becoming more and more perfectly, more and more adequately as the days go by. For there are levels to the experience of the beatitudes.

My friend, this is what Jesus is asking of us in the first place. It's to be what he has made us. Be what we've become by his grace.

Just be a believer. Be what you are. Now, of course, here's the rub.

If there is no desire in you to shine, and if really when you come to weigh it up, you feel, well, I can't shine. Perhaps you've never been illumined. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God may still be in your head as an intellectual concept, but it's never come through to your soul, to your heart, and you've never been illumined, and you've never thus become a luminary.

My friend, this is the hour to open the whole windows of your soul that the light of the knowledge of God in his son should come in and bring light into the darkest. If you have no desire to be light when your Lord says you are the light of the world, and if you are feeling it's totally alien to my spirit to be a light in a dark place, my friend, question your real experience. For this is what the real saving experience of God in Christ will make of a man or a woman.

He will make you salt. He will make you light, and if he does not make you salt and light, it doesn't matter what else it makes of you. It's short of the mark, and it's better to know it in time than in eternity.

Make sure of the fact that you're truly regenerate of God, that a deep work of God has begun in your soul, and you become salt. It is reasonable also, and it is something for which we are responsible. I like the way our Lord does this, and with this I'll be through.

I like the way he says this. There was no teacher like the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, a city that is set on a hill, it just can't hide it.

I don't dogmatize here. I'm telling you what I think the Lord Jesus meant, and if you don't agree with me, I'm willing to talk about it, but I think this is what he meant. Interpretations vary, but this is what I humbly think.

I believe that Jesus was addressing the whole of the disciples as one body now. He didn't say to them, now you are the lights of the world in the plural. He said, you are the light, and that meant that he

envisaged them being as one coherent unit.

Now fellows, he says, and women, if you cling together and walk in my ways and live under my rule and obey what I tell you, you, he says, as a body will be like a city set on a hill. You'll be evident everywhere. Even by day, anybody passing can see a city on a hill, but at night, provided people, ordinary people are living there and they have little lamps in their homes, however little the lamps, if every home has its little light, no one can miss it.

If you're set on a hill, it'll be evident for everybody. I was interested, I was reading something written by a Canadian who's now domiciled as a professor in the United States, and I want to quote a few lines from him because it's on this very point. In Canada, he said, referring to his native heath, native land, in Canada it is possible to go camping hundreds of miles away from any city or town.

If it is a cloudy night and there is no phosphorus in the area, the blackness can be total. A hand held three inches from your face cannot be seen. But if there is a city nearby or even 100 miles away, the darkness can be relieved.

The light from the city is reflected off the clouds, and the night, once perfectly black, is no longer quite so desolate. I like that. You, says Jesus, are the light of the world.

It's a dark night through which we're passing. Men need darkness, need light in the darkness. Cling together, says the Lord, and each individual believer will add to the intensity and the immensity of that light.

Keep clinging, keep near, keep as a city. You belong to the one city under the great King, under the sovereign Lord, in the kingdom of your Father in heaven. Keep together, and you will shine.

And then he goes on, and he gives us something different. He says, people don't light a lamp. Generally, he says, in order to put it under a bushel measure.

Some texts have a reference to the bed, but I don't know where that's come in. It's not in the earliest texts, and you notice that the NIV has left it out, because it's not found in some of the most early texts that we have. And I don't know that I'd put a candle or a lamp under the bed anyway.

I wouldn't go to sleep with great peace if I put my lamp there. What about you? Well, says Jesus, people don't light, at any rate, this is the point. I might have to push a candle under my bed occasionally for some reason or other, but what he says is this.

People don't light a lamp or a candle to put it under a bed, to put it under a bed. You don't light it for that reason, that's not the point. See, their lamps or their candles, King James, their little lamps in those days was just a saucer-shaped thing with a little bit of a wick and olive oil in it.

And sometimes they did put their lamps, as they called them, under a bushel measure, an earthenware bushel measure, like a flower pot upside down. And they did do that. The reason they did that, because before matches were available, it wasn't always easy to rekindle a bit of a wick in olive oil.

And sometimes it took quite a long time. So if you're only going down the street for a jar of marmalade or something like that, you weren't going to put the light out, you were going to put something over the lamp. And so it was safe, and when you came back you only had to lift it off again and you had light for

everybody in the house.

You didn't have to spend a long time puffing and blowing in order to try and relight the thing. So there were times when you did put your light under a bushel or whatever, but says Jesus, you don't light a lamp in order to do that. You light it in order to put it on a lamp stand so that everybody can see it and everybody can profit from it.

Now listen, he says, you were lit not to be hidden. Your good works, and this is important. Somebody may ask, what is the light that is seen by men that makes them praise or glorify God? Jesus says so.

Your good works, your good deeds were kindled by heaven and made possible by the Holy Spirit, and you were instructed to do them by the Lord of the church in order that men should see your good works and say what a good boy you are or a good girl. No, no, no. In chapter 6 we are told not to pray to be heard of men, not to give our arms to be seen of men, not to behave in order to be seen of men.

That's not the motive, but the motive is that God should see or that men should see what God has done in us and God be glorified. You are the light of the world. You are the light.

I conclude. How far does our light shine? How far really does our light shine? Can it be said of us as someone was saying? It should be of all of us who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior. I read here from one of the commentators.

He says, the norms of the kingdom worked out in the lives of the heirs of the kingdom really constitute the witness of the kingdom. Such Christians will refuse to rob their employers by being lazy on the job or to rob their employees by succumbing to greed and stinginess. They are first to help a colleague in difficulty, last to return a barbed reply.

They will honestly desire the advancement of the other's interests and honestly dislike smutty humor. Transparent in their honesty and genuine in their concern, they reflect both the easy answer of the doctrinaire politician and the laissez-faire stance of the selfish secular man. Meek in personal character, they are bold in righteous pursuits.

For a variety of reasons, Christians have lost this vision of witness and are slow to return to it, says Dr. D. A. Carson. But in better days and other lands, the faithful and divinely empowered proclamations of the gospel of Jesus Christ so transformed men that they in turn became the light of the world. Prison reform, medical care, trade unions, control of perverted and perverting liquor trade, abolition of slavery, abolition of child labor, establishment of orphanages, reform of the penal code.

All these areas were covered by men and women who acknowledged Jesus Christ as the Lord and walked the way of the beatitudes and became salt and light. Brothers and sisters, this is the challenge to us. Has Jesus Christ changed and lost his saving power and his sanctifying grace with the years? Or have his people somehow blunted the impact of all that he has said and all that he has given and become worldly and somehow incapable of being what he is? Oh God, have mercy upon us.

If the salt can lost its savor, we can put our light under a bushel. May the Lord enable us on this anniversary occasion to go to the source whence the whole process, where the whole process began and to begin afresh if that is necessary in order to come where he would have us be as a people and as individuals among his people in 1984 and until he calls us or comes for us. Oh Lord, let your word illumine our hearts and our minds afresh today.

We are awed by the sense of privilege that is ours. We have entered into a very large spiritual inheritance passed down to us at the price of sacrifice and service, the kind of which we are almost too ashamed to think about because it was so costly and it shames us to see how little we do in comparison with those that have gone before us. Our Father, grant us the privilege yet of growing up toward the fullness of the stature of Christ, that by your grace and your renewing mercy we may be in our own day and age light to the world and glory to yourself.

That we may be the salt of the earth, and in so being serve your unchanging purpose for your creation and your church. Oh Lord, hear us through Christ your Son our Savior. Amen.

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