

- Rev. Grant Mangold, www.RiversideChurchIowa.com

LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

Jesus is the "***light of the world***" - He says so in John 8:12, and we looked last week in some depth at how Jesus fulfills this truth. But in Matthew 5:14 Jesus told His disciples, "***You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before others.***" Children in Sunday School sing "*this little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!*" But how are adults lights in the world?

This is a powerful metaphor which speaks of deep spiritual truths. Jesus, our Creator and Savior, the Creator of light and of the world, is the ***light*** of the world, and promised to pierce the darkness of sin and despair with His ***light*** and life. He fulfilled the prophecies by living a perfect life, dying a perfect death, and raising a perfect resurrection. And all who believe in Him are indwelt and empowered to shine His ***light*** through their lives. Let's look at three truths associated with being God's lights in the world.

1 - The *light* of Jesus brings NEW SPIRITUAL LIFE to you - When you receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, you are spiritually re-born as a child of God (John 1:12-13, 3:3). In John 12:36, Jesus said, "***Believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.***" This is an echo of the many other "believe" passages in John's gospel.

"God has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light," explains Colossians 1:12. ***"He has delivered us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."***

God's ***light*** in Christ enlightens you to new life. Scripture says all who put their trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior become God's adopted children. These children of light have been rescued from the darkness of sin, and therefore now live as people of light rather than darkness.

2 - The *light* of Jesus brings a NEW WAY OF LIVING for you - In John 8:12 Jesus said, "***I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.***" When you believe in Jesus, the light of God's grace and truth has brought new spiritual life to you. His light now shines through you, showing you the way to live. God's ***light*** shows you the path of life.

The Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 5:8, "***now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.***" In Romans 13:12 he says, "***cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light... put on the Lord Jesus Christ.***" Because of the light of Christ within you, you no longer have to live in darkness and sin. You can say no to sin and yes to God's truth, and then your life truly shines the light of Jesus.

In Philippians 2:15 he says, "***you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life.***" Not only does your life shine the ***light*** of Jesus, but you are like a lighthouse of truth and hope for the people around you, as you show and tell the good news about Jesus.

3 - The *light* of Jesus brings a NEW MESSAGE OF LIFE through you - Yes, your changed life speaks volumes to others. But a big part of your new life purpose now is that you also speak the words of life about Jesus. It's not just the job of preachers to proclaim Jesus, it's the life calling of every believer.

God's ***light*** gives you a new understanding about real life. 1 Peter 2:9 says "***you are a royal priesthood - that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.***" The light of Jesus has made such a difference in your life that you want to tell others about Him. 1 Peter 3:16 instructs you "***in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.***"

God will give you many chances throughout any given day to shine His ***light***. And just like it's the ***light*** of Jesus shining through you, it's His ***light*** proclaiming through you, as Acts 26:12 says "***so that Christ would proclaim light through you to open the eyes of the nations, that they may turn from darkness to light.***"

And as John 1:5 says, the good news is that the true ***light*** of Jesus will never be put out or overcome by any kind of darkness. So, be God's lighthouse. Let your ***light*** shine!