



# THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

APRIL 9 - MAY 24

## (3) "Light on a Hill"

### HIGHLIGHT: *Matthew 5:14-16 NLT*

H

*Below are excerpts from the overall passage for use with the APPLICATION and RESPOND. It will be beneficial for the group to read the whole passage to understand the entire context.*

**14** "You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. **15** No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. **16** In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

## E

### EXPLAIN

*The purpose of this section is to deepen everyone's understanding of the Word.*

C. S. Lewis (*Mere Christianity*) writes, "Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage." John says that "the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). Evil has long been aligned with "darkness" (Colossians 1:13). The best way to sabotage darkness is with light. As long as Jesus was here on earth He was the light of the world that could never be extinguished by darkness (John 9:5 and 1:5). Before He left the planet He made it clear that His followers would carry on the campaign of sabotage—defeating darkness.

#### Matthew 5

**v.14** **You are the light of the world.** What a great compliment—what a great challenge—Jesus issued by telling us that we are to be like what He is himself. While on earth Jesus was the light; now that He is back at the right hand of God in heaven we, his followers, have the task of "shining like bright lights in a

world full of crooked and perverse people” (Philippians 2:15)—**like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden**. To preserve the cultivatable land the cities and villages of Jesus’ day were built on hillsides. They could not be hidden. The white stone houses glistened in the light of the sun. They could not blend into the darkness at night any more than cities can be hidden from a plane flying at 35,000 feet on a clear night. Light can be seen; light is meant to be seen. Light dispels darkness.

**v.15** When stormy weather seems likely I get the flashlight and lay it down next to my bed. I put it where I can find it in the dark, otherwise it is useless as a **lamp that is put under a basket [earthenware grain measure]**. Secretive discipleship is not an option any more than not having my flashlight handy when the storm hits. Light is to be seen so it is **put on a stand so that it gives light to everyone in the house**. Does my life give light to the world of which I am a part? Does my life help straighten the things around me that are crooked? Does my life show a better way because Christ is living in me? Does the way I treat the waitress make her want the light? Do my employees walk a straighter path because my light is shining? Does the check-out clerk at the hardware store look forward to the light I bring into his life? Is my family excited to see me walk into the house? is my light bright—or is it hidden? Light guide. Light exposes danger. Light—or the absence of it—reveals who I am.

**v.16 Let your good deeds shine out.** There are two Greek words for “good.” One defines a thing that is “good in quality.” The other means that a thing is not only good, but winsome, beautiful, attractive (William Barclay). Matthew uses this second word. There is a charm in true Christian goodness that makes it attractive. In Revelation 2 and 3 Jesus is walking among the lamp stands of the churches. Ephesus has a lot of good qualities (Rev. 2:1-3, 6). But the church has lost its love for Jesus and one another that they had at first. And if they don’t repent and start loving again Jesus says that He will remove their lamp stand (vv.4-5). He didn’t say He would remove their light. He said that He would remove their lamp stand. It sounds like the light had already gone out. So many good qualities, but no love. So **the heavenly Father was probably not receiving the praise He expected**. One of the most beautiful verses in Scripture is Matthew 12:20 - “A smoldering wick He will not snuff out.” Our lights may be dim—almost to the point that there is nothing. Ah, but repentance brings the sweet breath of the Spirit. And as He blows on us we begin to feel the embers heating up with His fire. We may be broken jars (2 Corinthians 4:7), but the light can shine through the cracks and chinks. And God will get the glory for what He can do when it seems like nothing can be done (see Ephesians 3:20, 21).

## A

## APPLY

*Be comfortable with some silence as people think back to the sermon or reread the text. Answer honestly. You don’t have to answer every question.*

1. What stuck out to you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?
2. According to these verses, why do we do good deeds?

3. Read Matthew 6:1-4. What is the difference between letting our good deeds shine for others (Matthew 5:16) and doing good deeds to be seen by others (Matthew 6:1-4)?
4. Read Ephesians 2:1-10. How are we saved? How do good works evidence our salvation?
5. Last week, we talked about repentance. How does confession of sin and repentance from sin help us to shine as lights?

## R

## RESPOND

*The purpose of this section is to take action with the truths you're learning. Answer honestly. Find someone who will hold you accountable to living out your response to Scripture.*

1. What are some ways you have kept your lamp "under a basket"? (v. 14)

How can you let the light of Jesus, your good deeds (v.16), shine in those areas of life? (Be specific, with measurable steps)

Now that you have your steps, who will hold you accountable to them? Ask this person this week to be praying for you and check on your progress.

2. Ultimately, your good deeds (v. 16) are not about you. They can't earn you eternity with God. They can't make up for sins. They can't bring others into God's kingdom (only the blood of Christ does that). Yet your good deeds are a testament to God's relationship with you and your relationship with Him. The ultimate goal is bringing God glory through what we do. How has your doing good for others to see brought glory to God?

How can you shine out the goodness of God and the Gospel so more people will praise His holy name?