

March 26th, 2023 – (full sermon notes)

“Showing God’s Light”

Luke 8:16

Last week we studied the parable of a sower casting seed onto soil. Jesus often used parables [analogous stories] to teach sovereign truth to those who could hear and understand what He was talking about.

Read **Luke 8:16**... Here we have a parable about the proper use of a lamp. You normally light a lamp in order to make use of the light given off by it. Once you have lighted it, you wouldn’t think of covering it up; but you might raise it up and put it on a stand or a wall-mounted holder, in order for its light to cover a larger area of the room.

Our power goes out from time to time (here on the coast), so many of us have a few battery operated and/or oil filled lanterns available, and perhaps an assortment of long burning candles, so that we are prepared when the lights go out. When that happens, I really like the smell of lamp oil burning, along with the ambiance created by a lighted wick under a glass globe [or chimney] as light radiates into the room.

But is Luke talking about something other than the proper use and benefit of a lamp? Yes he is! Last week in **Luke 8:8**, after Jesus had told the parable of the sower, and before He explained it to His disciples, He called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” [or Listen! Hear!]. **9-10**, “His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable meant. And He said, ‘To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’”

Then Jesus explained the parable to His disciples; revealing to them the spiritual truth it contained.

He was not just talking about a sower casting seeds onto soil, He was talking about how human hearts respond to the Word of God concerning the gospel. The gospel is as Paul expressed it (**1Corinthians 15:1-4**),

“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

At the moment of genuine belief you are born-again by God’s Spirit, and you will indeed bear fruit, i.e., do the things that please God, for you have become a child of God, a believer and follower of Christ.

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In the Bible, light is often used as a metaphor for the spiritual truth and spiritual life that comes from God, referring to all things that reveal and exemplify God; whereas darkness, in the Bible, is usually symbolic of those things that are void of God’s character, i.e., the revelation of His presence, pleasure, and power.

Psalms 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

John 8:12, “Jesus spoke to them saying, ‘I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.’”

John 1:1-4, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.”

John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” **18**, “No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained [revealed or shown] *Him*.”

John 14:6-7, Jesus said to Thomas, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.”

1 Peter 2:9-10, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God’s* own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

When Paul stood before King Agrippa (**Acts 26**) making a defense for the charges brought against him by the Jews, he recounted what had happened on the road to Damascus (cf. **Acts 9**), when he was confronted by Jesus and fell to the ground and became blind (**Acts 26:15-18**), “The Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.’”

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Wow! Paul was blind and Jesus is telling him that he will be sent to the Gentiles “to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God.” Do you see that? Those who belong to God are Light in the Lord, those who reject Christ are darkness with the devil himself.

In **Acts 9:8-9** we read, “Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.”

See **Acts 9:10-20...** Saul’s spiritual vision is healed completely, yes he regains his physical sight, but more importantly, he is granted spiritual life and his spiritual sight is clear, for (**verse 20**) “immediately he *began* to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, ‘He is the Son of God.’”

2Corinthians 4:3-4, “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” **6**, “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

In Matthew (**5:14-15**) and Mark (**4:21**), we find parallel passages to the what read earlier today in **Luke 8:16**, but Matthew’s account is much more revealing, so let’s take a look and see what it reveals.

Read **Matthew 5:14-16...** Jesus illustrates God's Church as a lighted city on a hill; travelers in the valley below or on hills far away can see the lights of this city, it serves as a beacon to them. Believers are like individual lamps in individual homes, providing light to the occupants, who would otherwise be in darkness.

Christians are to shine God's light, for we were all, at one time, living in darkness, guilty of sin, separated from the light and life of God. Believing in Christ brings you into the Light, where you receive Life from God.

John 12:46, “*I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.*”

1John 1:5, “God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.” “Light” = God’s righteousness and truth; “darkness” = all that is false, all that does not please nor honor nor reflect God.

Hebrews 1:3 declares God's Son to be the “radiance of God's glory,” the very “Light” of God; and if Christ is in you, His light will shine in and through your life.

God's original plan included separating Light from Darkness; He will one day remove darkness forever.

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Genesis 1:1-4, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.”

Revelation 21:1-4, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”
23, “And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb.”

Revelation 22:5, “And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them.”

Hear again **Matthew 5:16**, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Our purpose as Christians, is to let God's Light shine through us, so that those living in darkness might find their way to God's love and forgiveness.

1Peter 2:11-12, “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

1Peter 3:15, “Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

As God's children, we are to live in such a way that unbelievers see the Light of God in us, for Christ is our example (**1John 2:4-6**), “The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.”

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Ephesians 5:1, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.” **6-13**, “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.”

Paul offers an invitation (**Ephesians 5:14-17**) to those who have not believed and received Jesus Christ, to those who do not have the light and life of God, “For this reason *it says [Isaiah 60:1]*, ‘Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’ Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is,”

(**Romans 12:2**), “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

1John 1:5-7, “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Pastor Mike

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