

Matthew 5:14-16 "Jesus Is The Light of The world" March 10, 2013

A tourist was being led through the swamps of Florida. "Is it true," he asked, "that an alligator won't attack you if you carry a flashlight?" "That depends," replied the guide, "on how fast you carry the flashlight."

This is the transcript of an actual radio conversation of a US naval ship with Canadian authorities off the coast of Newfoundland in October, 1995. Radio conversation released by the Chief of Naval Operation 10-10-95

Americans: Please divert your course 15 degrees to the North to avoid a collision.

Canadians: Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees South to avoid collision.

Americans: This is the Captain of a US Navy Ship. I say again, divert YOUR course.

Canadians: No...I say again, you divert YOUR course.

Americans: THIS IS THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER USS LINCOLN, THE SECOND LARGEST SHIP IN THE UNITED STATES ATLANTIC FLEET. WE ARE ACCOMPANIED BY THREE DESTROYERS, THREE CRUISERS, AND NUMEROUS SUPPORT VESSELS. I DEMAND THAT YOU CHANGE YOUR COURSE 15 DEGREES NORTH, THAT'S ONE FIVE DEGREES NORTH, OR COUNTER-MEASURES WILL BE UNDERTAKEN TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THIS SHIP. Canadians: This is a lighthouse.... Divert YOUR course.

With out proper lighting, we can easily get into trouble can't we? God has given us proper lighting; Jesus is the light of the world. Christians are His reflection. We are to show people the light and we are to walk in it ourselves. All Christians have been commissioned by Jesus to go and be a light to the world. Some times we too can get pumped up on power and prestige and lose sight of the mission at hand. Are we being good reflections of Jesus?

A small child was taken to church for the first time. It was a big cathedral with stained glass windows. The sun was shining brightly through the windows. Mommy, the little girl asked, who are those people whose pictures are on the windows? Those are the saints the mother replied. Oh I see said the little girl, saints are people who let the light shine through them. Do we let the light of Jesus shine through us? Is our life a living sermon for Him? Does our light so shine before people that they see Jesus working through us and glorify our Father which is in heaven?

[PRAY]

Jesus says that we are the light of the world. Actually He is the light of the world. Jesus said in John 8:12 "I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." Jesus is the light; Christians are the reflection of that light. Does His light shine through us?

He is telling us here that it does. He says we are like a city on a hill; on display for all to see. Whether we like it or not, good or bad, Christians reflect Jesus to the world. We are the lamp which is lit and put on a on a lamp stand so that we can illuminate the whole room. Our job as Christians is to show the light and love of Christ to the world.

Too many Christians are afraid to be the light of Christ. They do indeed hide their light under a basket. We must not hide our light under a basket; we need to remember that we are not the light; we are just a reflection of it. Therefore, we must not let anything get between us and Jesus if we are to be a true reflection of His light. Fear is one of the biggest reasons people give for hiding their light. Fear gets between us and Jesus and causes us to put our lamp under a basket. We have nothing to fear. David tells us in Psalm 27:1 "The Lord is my light and my salvation: Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?"

David describes God as his light and his salvation. In the bible, light equals goodness and darkness equals evil. Used together, the words light and salvation equal saving light. Since Jesus is light of the world and those who follow Him shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life, we have nothing to fear. We can let our light shine in confidence because Jesus tells us in John 12:46 *“I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.”* 1 John 1:5 says *“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.”* Are we abiding in the light? Are we reflecting that light?

If we follow Jesus everyday and study His word everyday, our life will reflect the light of Christ to the world. Paul tells us in Philippians 2:14-15 to *“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may be blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”* In verse 16 Paul tells us to hold fast to the word of life. The word of life is of course Jesus. Are we holding fast to Him?

If we are going to be light shining in this dark, crooked, and perverse world for Jesus, we need to be blameless and without fault. We will be the light of the world as long as we reflect Jesus to the world. We need to be a good light to the world because our lives are the only bible some people will ever read. People judge Jesus based on what they hear us say & see us do; upon how we act and react. Christians are indeed like a city built upon a hill, exposed for the whole world to see. We are to shine brightly and light up the whole world. God places us on a lamp stand, not under a basket. We are to shine brightly so that people may see Jesus in us; so that they will see His good works and Glorify God in heaven. Does our light reflect Jesus in a positive way? Does our light bring glory to God? Bringing glory to God is a Christian’s number 1 goal.

1 Peter 4:11 *“If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever Amen!”* We are each to use our talents to lead others to Christ. Our talents were given to us for His glory not ours.

Do we have trouble giving the glory to God? The Pharisees did. They liked the praise of men. They sought it every chance they could. We must not seek glory for ourselves; we must give it to God where it rightfully belongs. That is why Jesus tells us to let our light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven. Do we let our light shine so that God will be glorified or so that we will be glorified?

Hiding our light under a basket robs God of his glory. How do we hide our light? The easiest why to hide our light is just to go along with the crowd. Too often Christians remain quiet when they should speak. Some keep quiet because they don’t want to make waves; others don’t speak out because they don’t want to offend anyone. Still others remain silent because they are not willing to face the persecution that might come after taking a stand. Jesus told us in Matthew 10:32-33 *“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”* We stand up for Jesus by letting His light shine through us. We deny Him before men when we put a basket over our lamp. Are we shining or hiding our light?

We need to stand up for Jesus every chance we get. When we tell people what we believe and live according to those beliefs, we are shining our light for Jesus. When we do not explain our reasons or if we fail to meet someone's need when we have the ability to meet them, we are hiding our light under a basket. Do we hide our light or do we let it shine for all to see?

Christians need to be a beacon in the lighthouse on the shore of the sea of sin. We must always be shining for those who are seeking repentance and shelter in the arms of Jesus.

We are to show the world Jesus. A missionary once asked a Chinaman if he had ever heard the gospel. The Chinaman replied no I have never heard the gospel, but I have seen it. Then he went on to tell the missionary about the meanest man in his village. He was a terror to everyone. He smoked opium; was wicked, mean and hateful. Then one day he accepted Jesus Christ into his heart. He became meek and mild, friendly, helpful and no longer smoked opium. Lamps do not talk, they illuminate. Jesus tells us that we are a lit lamp, setting on a lamp stand to shine through out the whole house. Are we showing people Jesus?

At the end of a lecture, a lot of lecturers will ask if there are any questions. Author Robert Fulghum has a weird sense of humor. He often asks the lecturer what is the meaning of life. Usually there are just a few chuckles and everybody leaves but one day he asked a Greek Philosopher that question and he gave him a serious answer. Dr. Alexander Papaderos reached into his pocket and pulled out a small round mirror about the size of a quarter. Papaderos grew up during WWII. His family was poor and he had very few toys. One day he found a wrecked German motor cycle. He tried in vain to put the broken mirror together again. Finally he gave up and kept only the biggest piece. He shaped it with a stone until it was nice and round. He played with it as a toy. He was fascinated by the way it reflected light into the darkest places; deep holes, crevices and closets. The game was to see how much light he could get into the most inaccessible places.

As he grew up, the game became a metaphor of life. He said "with what I have I can reflect light into the dark places of this world- into the black places in the hearts of men-and change some things in some people." When he finished that sentence, he quickly caught the ray of sunlight shining through a window and reflected it into Fulghum's face.

Christians have been called, equipped, and entrusted with the mission of spreading the gospel light. Are we letting our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works and glorify your Father in heaven? Amen, let's pray.