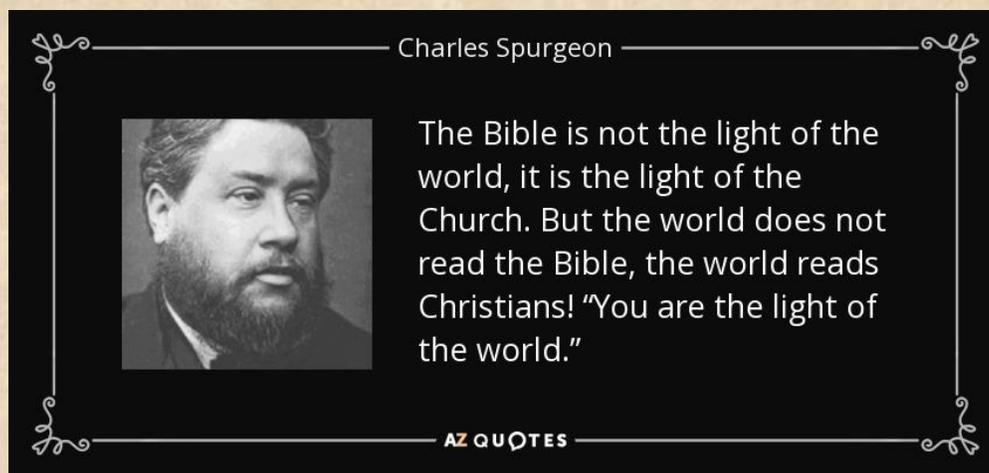


THE PARABLES OF JESUS, #02 A Chronological Study

*"To Him who opened His mouth in parables and
uttered things hidden since the creation of the world."*

Psalm 78:2



"You Are The Light Of The World"

Matthew 5:14-16; Mark 4:21-25; Luke 18:16-18

Charles Spurgeon's interesting comment.

Today Christ's earthly work is accomplished through His people here on earth - that's us - The Church, not the institution, but the collection of living believers here on earth. It's referred to as "the universal body of Christ" or as "the Church Universal."

SOME BACKGROUND

We had a fair amount of CONTEXT material that had to be gone over in the previous lessons in order to set the backdrop for our all of our lessons. In a quick review...

Jesus has come to offer the Nation of Israel one more chance at fulfilling their "contract" with God for the spreading of what amounts to the content of their *Shema*, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind." It is known to Almighty God that this offer will not only be refused – but the leadership of the nation will both seek the death sentence of their Messiah, and also, with the help of the Roman occupation government, put Him to death.

Jesus is speaking to 4 basic groups:

A. His disciples - He needs to train them so that after His death, resurrection, and ascension back into heaven, they would be able to begin the task of setting up the Church as the "Body of Christ" here on the earth.

B. Those just following Him - They need the Gospel of Grace. All of their lives, as Jews, they have been taught a perversion of God's intention of His Law. God's Law is not a system of "Works" in order to acquire holiness and acceptance. His Law was to teach THEM just who God was and what was His true nature, and to learn their responsibilities to their people and the nations of the world around them.

Instead, the religious leadership over centuries re-wrote "the Law" so as to make it a perversion of a "works" system, whereby the people were put under a tremendous burden and the leadership were freed from keeping God's Law.

C. The Pharisees, Sadducees, Priests, Scribes, etc. - The Jewish religious establishment – simply put, were out to have Jesus killed. He was an enormous threat to their way of life, their government standing, and their nation's security amongst the Powers of Rome - they were an "occupied country," and had been except for brief periods during the time of the Kings. A religious uprising would cost the Jews everything. Oddly, aside from desiring their salvation and faith, Jesus knew that the end result of His life and ministry would end in the dissolution of the nation of Israel by the Romans... within 40 years of His death, and the establishment of His plan of Grace upon the rest of the world's peoples.

D. You and I - Since His Ascension and the start of "The Church" until now - All of "Us" should be HEARING, UNDERSTANDING and ACTING ON Jesus' words.

So, for all of us, our first responsibility to Christ, after getting saved of course, is to understand that...



"YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

What it Means to Be the Light of Christ



INTRODUCTION

So far in our series we've been instructed to know that we are the "Salt of the Earth," a people who have a "salty quality" for the work of the grace of God and Gospel of Salvation.

And now we are... the "Light of the World." That is what we are, and who we are, In-Christ. This lesson is found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

This series, the Parables of Jesus, is about... Bringing CHANGE into YOUR LIFE.

As Jesus leads us into and through the New Testament, we learn of four "High Callings" of God. **The first** was the High Calling of the Angels - and how some of them "fell" from their high calling to eternal punishment, because of their high calling.

Secondly, was the High Calling of the Human race - and how we failed that calling in Adam and Eve. We "fell" from our high calling, but God's plan for us included a savior who could bring the grace of God into our lives and "save" us from eternal punishment. It would require our absolute commitment to that savior in love and devotion.

Third was the High Calling of the Nation of Israel. Bible history records the continuing cycle of commitment as Israel attempts to serve the Lord... Israel's leadership turned to Idolatry. Then, Israel's people followed their leadership into idolatry.

The Lord brought judgment upon Israel, Israel cried out to the Lord because of their judgment, and the Lord brought deliverance to Israel... over and over again until they completely failed, and God finally removed His presence from the nation. The image that we see in Ezekiel 9-11 is heartbreaking. First the Lord God is seen in the temple exiting the Holy of Holies, then He moves to the main door of the temple and exits it, He then moves to the side of the temple, He exits the outer temple walls, He moves to the edge of town and looks back, then to the hills that surround the city and He turns one last time and looks at the city of Jerusalem... and then He is gone. We are still waiting for Israel's final judgment of the Lord, their final crying out to the Lord, and His final deliverance of them spiritually and delivering them into their Promised Kingdom.

And fourth was the High Calling of the everyday believer. Looking back at the other three High Callings... we often wonder, "Can I lose my High Calling, can I lose my salvation." Paul talks often about "falling away." In order to understand what he means, we need only to look upon the world around us. Take marriage for example. Often it is, and may have affected one or more of you right here in this class, that the Love that buds and materializes into marriage... often fails in our reality. The emotional movement of the human heart is so often intent on self-satisfaction. "Oh, this is the best, I'm in love with him or her, Oh I can't live without them," is so often nothing more than the seeking of self-satisfaction, not the total commitment to the other person. Then the day comes when self-satisfaction is no longer realized, and the marriage ends. The only way to see the difference between self-satisfaction - failing marriage - and the real thing... is the end result... falling away. And so, it is

with Christian salvation. We cannot know the inner heart of another person - Jesus told us to "Not Judge" another, for we cannot know the real inner truth of another person. One person may "say" they are saved and have only a self-interest in their "decision." And another may seem like the worst sinner... and have a strong inner loving relationship to Christ. We just can't know. Jesus tells us to not judge but to put others first, even the worst sinners, because Jesus may have a life-long plan that results in that person being His forever - and we can't see it. So it is with salvation - like marriage - you can only really know by knowing the end result. Can a true believer lose their salvation and fall away - the answer is simple... NO. If God calls you and you embrace Him, even if it takes a lifetime, you are saved... forever.

In Parable #1 (You are the Salt of the Earth) we added our first "commands of Jesus" and they told us how we should begin to change as individuals In-Christ. We are to be like salt, "spicy and flavorful" in our lives and ministry, and our job is to get out there and bring that **spicy** flavor of Christ into everything we do. We are to be like salt and **preserve** the spiritual lives of those around us. We are to be like salt in our manner of sacrifice to the Lord in our own lives, "**with all your offerings you shall offer salt.**" [Lev 2:13]. We are to be like salt in the **judgment** of sin and workers of righteousness. And finally, we are to be like salt as we **fertilize** the "soil" around us, leading others to Christ by "making straight the path of the Lord."

Bringing Change into Your Life by **Listening to** and **acting on** The Words of Jesus.

This lesson (You are the Light of the World) is the second of two introductory ideas from Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount..." In our last study we noted that there in Matthew Chapter 5, Jesus stood addressing His disciples explaining the blessings to be found in His Kingdom and just a few verses into His sermon, Jesus turned to His

disciples and said, "**But I say to you....**" Jesus, the almighty God who breathed the universe into existence, turned His attention to His earthly disciples who had been taught and were under the influence of unrighteous leadership, and began teaching them about the long-expected King, His coming kingdom, and the grace of God.

So far in our series we've been instructed to know that we are the "Salt of the Land," and now... the "Light of the World." What we are, and who we are, In-Christ. This lesson is found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

This series, the Parables of Jesus, is about... Bringing CHANGE into your life.

In our first lesson we explored what Jesus meant by telling them, "You are the Salt of the Land." We found that this was a two-edged sword. First, we as His disciples were to be "salty" in our witnessing, testimony, and ministry - we were to be full of vigor, flavor, and truth. Then, the other side of the sword, we were to be always aware of our spiritual self-condition. For many who begin this Christian adventure... drift away, and as Luke said of our spiritual condition, having not the saltiness of Jesus makes us "not fit for the land nor the manure." So, as we move from Salt to Light, we need to look at ourselves as the Light of the World.

The Light of the World

THE TEXT

Once again, we're going to combine our three important texts into a single narration so that we can see all the details of Jesus teaching in one place. **Matthew 5:14-16; Mark 4:21-25; Luke 18:16-18 [NASB]**

[Mark 4:21a] He said to them, [Mt 5:14a] "You are the light of the world.

A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

[Mk 4:21b] Do you [Lk 8:16a] light a lamp and hide it in a clay jar, [Mk 4:21b] put it under a bowl or a bed?

[Mk 4:21c] Instead, don't you put it on its stand? And it gives light to everyone in the house, [Lk 8:16c] and those who come in can see the light.

[Mk 4:22a] For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open.

[Mk 4:23a] If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear, [Lk 8:18a] and consider carefully how you listen.

[Mk 4:24b] With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. ²⁵ Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, [Lk 8:18c] even what they think they have will be taken from them.

[Mt 5:16] In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

And remember, always, You are the Light of the World.

Comments from Matthew 5:14-16

Jesus is setting the groundwork for His disciples by telling them things they won't fully understand until after His death and resurrection. It was apparently His Father's plan for them to "get it" only after the whole plan of God for His Son's ministry on earth was completed. Those of us with some age on us have probably had the same revelations about things our parents taught us that we didn't

really get until much later. I'm constantly amazed that my parents loved me so much... and I wasn't cognizant of their sacrifices until much later in life - even after they had gone home to be with the Lord themselves.

May we be smarter than the disciples. May we pay attention to Jesus' words and take them to heart. We can now see Jesus' story in in the Bible. We don't have to wait the three years of traveling all over Israel to do so. So let us remember Jesus' words from the last lesson... "You have ears to hear, listen, and be hearing."

And remember, always, You are the Light of the World.

Now, on to the verses from each of the texts, and let's look carefully at the Words of Jesus.

Therefore:

1. *[Mark 4:21a] He said to them, [Mt 5:14a] "You are the light of the world,"*

If you have been called by Christ to be His witness, testimony, minister, etc., you are right now being the light of the world. Whether you want to be or not, you are "The Light" in this dark world. As you identify with Christ - the World sees your glow. Many will not like your glow. Some will even hate you for glowing. Many around the world will even lose their lives because of that light. So, make your light count!



3. [Mk 4:21b] Do you [Lk 8:16a] light a lamp and hide it in a clay jar, [Mk 4:21b] put it under a bowl or a bed? [Mk 4:21c] Instead, don't you put it on its stand? And it gives light to everyone in the house, [Lk 8:16c] and those who come in can see the light.

Such a simple illustration from the days before gas or electricity. Right off, Mark changes the context of his statement from that of Matthew...who asks, "does anyone put a lamp...". Mark starts off with the question, "Do you bring a lamp..." He puts his context right in his listener's lap... "Do YOU?" The question takes it for granted that "You" will already know the answer he is looking for.

Why do you light a candle, a flashlight, or a lamp in a darkened place? Because it's DARK there, and where is "there?" There is wherever you are.

You cannot be hiding your light (the Gospel) under a pail (a cushion or a blanket)! Why would you bring a lamp into a darkened place

and hide its light? Of course, you wouldn't - that would be silly. You'd place your lamp where it would be the most useful. Mark's point is well taken.

The point is... **You are the light, and God has put you somewhere - intentionally.** You can't hide, no matter how hard you try - you still are a lit-up city on a mountain top! So, let your light (the Gospel) be seen... as if you were putting it on a lampstand to be seen by all.

Here's a tricky one. If someone is walking along in the dark and comes to where you are, what happens? Where you are is being exposed to your light, and while they are there with you, they can see what your light exposes (whether they like what they see or not is not the issue). The issue is, "what do you see about them while they are in your light?" "What do they see about themselves and about you while they are in your light? And "what should you do about it?"

I'm often blessed by the casual meeting of another person who, upon parting our brief encounter says, "May the Lord Bless!" or "Have a blessed day." Such a simple thing to say, but suddenly there was "Light." I wonder, "Did they get any light from me?"

Do not try to keep your light from shining. When you enter a crowd of your peers - don't try to hide the witness and testimony of Christ from them - they will see you as a hypocrite if you do. Your "light" shines whether or not you want it to... so shine it with honor and purpose, so that others see a positive Gospel testimony from you - always.

Everything you do, say, write, etc., is a testimony. That means you had better be a good testimony of Christ and not a poor one. Being a good servant of Christ is your JOB! Be sure to put as much labor

and fervor into it (and more!) as you would any other part of your life that you depend on for life-support.

As a broadcast engineer working for a prestigious company, it was my responsibility to research and study every aspect of my responsibilities. My constant stepping up the ladder required enormous amounts of time and labor to keep advancing in my knowledge and skills. I found that to be true in my relationship to Christ as well. Knowing your bible, understanding the "hard parts." Worshiping through the Psalms, growing in the writings of Paul, being thrilled with prophesy. **All** - are absolutely necessary commitments of your life and time. Take the time to Grow In-Christ.

Jesus says, "YOU, DO THIS BECAUSE: It Glorifies your heavenly Father!" The **outcome** of your servanthood, testimony, and witness, is the Father's business - not yours. You cannot save anyone -- only God can do that, in His Son Jesus with His resurrection power, through His Holy Spirit. It's your job, as SALT and as LIGHT, to bring Glory to your heavenly Father... for the sake of Jesus, His Son. Spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ all during your life so that God's Word will be spread with the result that many will be saved.



4. [Mk 4:22a] For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. [Mk 4:23a] If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear, [Lk 8:18a] and consider carefully how you listen.

You are the lamp that is shining the light. The purpose of your shining light is so that things in the dark that are hidden, or concealed, would be exposed... brought out from the darkness and "into the open," manifested in your light. Is that the way you see what The Lord has given you. Is it part of your purpose to show forth those things which are hidden or concealed – both the bad and the good - to expose them.

Mark's message is very personal: A) If this is the word of God that you are hearing, concerning how God's light shines through you, then you'd better be listening and understanding the message; B) You, once understanding what you are hearing from God's Word, become responsible for what you are hearing!

Even though we won't be getting to the Parable of the Good Samaritan for a while yet, it should be familiar to you, and it serves as a great example for what this "Light of the World" parable

teaches us. If you are shining God's light, and you see the broken one on the side of the road... What should you do? You should do as Jesus, the Good Samaritan did. Because... at one time, you were the broken one at the side of the road... and He rescued you.

We'll see in just a minute that verses 24-25 teaches that you will be held responsible for what YOU do as the result of what you see - as a result of YOUR SHINING LIGHT. And, because it is God's Light shining through you, the STANDARD of how you respond to what you see and hear will be higher, much higher.

If you are "hearing," then it should already be obvious that "light" refers to the way that God works through His Holy Spirit when we encounter both other believers and unbelievers.

God's Holy Spirit is at work all around us and He uses His believers to encounter unbelief and "expose" their hearts to His power. The picture that the Gospel writers use is "Light." You enter a situation where another person is in darkness (without Christ, Ill, Troubled, Alone, Grieving, etc.,). God's Spirit uses you to witness, give testimony, minister (both physically and spiritually) and then uses those things to sensitize and change the other person's heart.

Then you are, in a special way, responsible for your part in this encounter with God. For you as the "Light," Who you are, how you act, what you know, how you love the other person will be judged and hopefully rewarded. For the other person, as the "hearer," how receptive they are to God's spirit, how they respond to the hearing of God's Word and the revelation of Jesus as their needed Savior, will also be judged. Both aspects will be judged by a both loving and righteous God.

[Mk 4:24b] "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. ²⁵ Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, [Lk 8:18c] even what they think they have will be taken from them.

Jesus gives us a really hard statement. It is God who gives you the ears to hear. He tells us, "Let them hear." From the biblical standpoint the most outrageous position to take when one hears the truth is... "No, I won't believe."

We were given the combination of the High Calling - the opportunity to become the absolute adopted members of God's immediate family, and He gave us Free Will for us to choose for ourselves. If we choose self and not God... everything, the high calling and everything else... is lost for all eternity. "That's not fair" we shout back. The high calling to the position of being a member of God's immediate family – refused over a lifetime is an immediate sentence to an eternal life completely apart from God and his family. **A quick clarification:** the once refused is your standing at your time of death. Your chance to take advantage of God's grace... is a lifelong chance. Refusing today, does not mean the end of God's gracious calling, but death seals the decision. This single decision is the most important decision in the human lifetime. That's why Jesus says, "consider carefully how you listen." For, as He continues, the answer you give brings its results and even more... both to the Yes answer and the No answer. Yes, I'm saved - for all of eternity... No, I'm lost, and I lose everything - for all of eternity.

[Mt 5:16] In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

"In the same way" because the stakes are so high, **"Glorify your Father in heaven"** with your shining light.

"Shine, Jesus, shine,
 Fill this land with the Father's glory
 Blaze, Spirit, blaze
 Set our hearts on fire
 Flow, river, flow
 Flood the nations with grace and mercy
 Send forth your word
 Lord, and let there be light
 Shine, Jesus, Shine,
 Shine through me."

"Shine, Jesus, Shine" AKA "Lord, the Light of Your Love"
 Graham Kendrick, 1987

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

1. Who, in this parable, does it call "The Light of the World"?

2. Are you to be hiding the light that God has endowed you with, and what symbol, according to Matthew, are we to be identified with?

3. According to Matthew 5:16 what are others to see in you because of your "Light" being shown?

4. According to Mark 4:22 what does the light of you lamp do?

- 5. Who can hear Jesus' messages brought forth by these parables?**
 - 6. What does that mean?**
 - 7. According to Luke 8:16-18, who puts a lamp in a dark place and hides it under a clay pot?**
 - 8. What does that mean in the context of these verses?**
 - 9. What is the warning concerning your testimony, witness, and ministry?**
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FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

- 1. Who, in this parable, does it call "The Light of the World"?**
All true believers
- 2. Are you to be hiding the light that God has endowed you with, and what symbol, according to Matthew, are we to be identified with?**
No, and we are to be as a city of light, on a mountain top.
- 3. According to Matthew 5:16 what are others to see in you because of your "Light" being shown?**
They are to see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
- 4. According to Mark 4:22 what does the light of you lamp do?**
Your light discloses whatever is concealed and brings it out into the light.

5. Who can hear Jesus' messages brought forth by these parables?

Those who have ears to hear them.

6. What does that mean?

Those who have been enabled by God's Holy Spirit to hear and understand the messages of the Parables.

7. According to Luke 8:16-18, who puts a lamp in a dark place and hides it under a clay pot?

No one!

8. What does that mean in the context of these verses?

God has prepared believers to be a method of communicating the very words of Jesus to a fallen world.

9. What is the warning concerning your testimony, witness, and ministry?

Your effectiveness as a believer will be evaluated by God, you were not called, chosen, saved, just for yourself!

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Jeremiah 18:15
"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path"
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