

YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

As believers in Christ, we are NOT actually in the kingdom yet. However, positionally we are already in the kingdom just like positionally we are already in heaven (cf. Eph. 2:6; Col 1:13). Our purpose as “kingdom citizens” is not only to bring flavor and a preservative quality to the world (Matt. 5:13); but we are also to shine the light of God’s truth in how we live. We ourselves are to be the light.

Matthew 5:14 (NKJV)

14 “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Once again Christ speaks emphatically, saying to His disciples, “You” are the light of the world. Prophetically, the OT prophets said the Messiah would bring the light (cf. Isa. 9:1-2; 42:6; 49:6). Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (cf. Jn. 1:5-9; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36, 46).

So which is it? Is Jesus the light of the world or are we His people? The answer is Jesus is the SOURCE light with a capital “L”. We are in effect His light REFLECTORS (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). We are light with a small “l”. In a sense, we are an extension of Christ’s ministry (cf. Eph. 5:8-9; Phil. 2:15).

“Worldly mindedness or secularization is here condemned, but so also is aloofness or isolationism.” – **William Hendriksen**

Light makes things clear. It helps people to see. We are the “light” in that we are the means God uses to help people see His truth. This is our role. We are the only Bible some people will ever read!

“In the OT as in the NT, [light] most frequently symbolizes purity as opposed to filth, truth or knowledge as opposed to error or ignorance, and divine revelation and presence as opposed to reprobation and abandonment by God.” – **D.A. Carson**

Jesus compares the light of our witness to a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. He intends for our witness to be an obvious and open testimony and He emphasizes the point.

Matthew 5:15 (NKJV)

15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

The purpose of the lamp is to give off light, not to hide it under a basket. Rather it is put in a prominent place to give off as much light as possible for all who are in the house. The idea is that we as believers should seek as much exposure as possible for the giving off of our light – not to draw attention to self but to reflect the truth of Christ to the world. The light of our character, attitudes, and actions should be obvious to all around. If we are kingdom citizens, the beatitudes should shine brightly in our lives.

Matthew 5:16 (NKJV)

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

The emphasis here is that our LIGHT is seen in the form of good works. This is the outworking of the beatitudes in our lifestyle.

The goal is not to draw attention to self for the sake of self. The motivation here is that God be glorified. This is letting your light shine for God's glory not your own.

“The emphasis is on the ministry of Christian character. The winsomeness of lives in which Christ is seen speaks louder than the persuasion of words.” – **William MacDonald**

Yes, God uses words too, but the real power-punch is words that are shared through the prism of a life of integrity – a life of good works that point to God. Words without the good works of light in the life are probably going to fall on deaf ears. Only a life-changing kind of faith really makes an impact.

“A holy life will make the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns: They just shine.” – **D.L. Moody**

This is the emphasis here in Matthew 5:16. Matthew 5:16 gives the first of 16 references to “**your Father**” in the Sermon on the Mount. Clearly, this is directed to disciples who know God as their Father. The goal of those who know the Father is to bring glory to Him by letting our light shine before the world!