

Shine – 4

Matthew 5:14

“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.”

We are called to be light to a world that desperately needs a relationship with God

- Light has some interesting properties and characteristics
- Light always affects and changes the environment it is released into
- When light stands next to darkness, light always wins!

Matthew 5:14–16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 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. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

- We have been promised light and we have been empowered to make a stand against darkness

We cannot deny we live in dark times

No Slide: 2 Timothy 3:1–3; 4:1-4 (NLT)

- Immorality, Cultural decadence, Infanticide, Racism
- Pornography, Unbridled consumerism, Voyeurism, Materialism, Terror, Jealousy
- Spiritual apathy, False prophets, Watered down preaching
- Hypocrisy, Moral relativism, Discord, Division strife
- Intolerance and unbelief

We are all familiar with a solar eclipse

- The moon partially or *fully* blocks (*occults*) the sun
- Eclipse meaning – “to obscure anything”

Have you fallen victim of a “spiritual eclipse”?

The dark forces of this world can eclipse the light of God from our lives

Sin can be the “dark body” that moves across the sky of our lives

- It can grow imperceptibly
- We can find ourselves in the shadows of death
- Far from God

John 3:19 (NLT)

¹⁹ And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.

- We all have some measure of the light of God in us
- It shines to expose evil in our hearts and turn us to the light
- We can either respond to the light or remain in darkness
- Just as light produces more light darkness produces more darkness
- We emit the light of God when we are near Him
- We lose that ability when we are far from Him
- Darkness produces darkness

A “Black Hole” in space has such a strong gravitational pull it is said it can deform the space-time continuum

- “Spiritual Darkness” will similarly deform your life

It is important that we surround ourselves with people of light if we are going to increase our ability to “Shine”

1 Corinthians 15:33 (NLT)

³³ “bad company corrupts good character.”

- When darkness is falling on us chose to not absorb it
- Replace it with God’s restorative light
- Absorb the blessings and goodness that comes from light
- And then emit that light of life and grace to all around us

Am I a flashlight or a lamp?

Acts 13:47 (NKJV)

⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, *That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.*’ ”

- Flashlights shine for a moment – until they run out of batteries
- They are activated or turned on by a touch
- A lamp produces constant light because its, “plugged in”
 - Its connected to the source
- Be a lamp
- Stay connected to Christ
- As long as the source produces power your lamp will shine!

Psalms 56:13 (NLT)

13 For you have rescued me from death; you have kept my feet from slipping. So now I can walk in your presence, O God, in your life-giving light.

Science tells us that “the amount of thermal radiation emitted by an object depends on its internal temperature, area, and characteristics.”

- How can we increase our spiritual, “surface temperature”?
- Our “area and characteristics”

1 Timothy 4:8 (NLT)

⁸ “Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.”

- Even as physical exercise produces heat so spiritual exercise produces spiritual heat

When scientists create nuclear fusion they use completely impermeable materials to shut out all objects and ensure that fusion will occur and produce power

- Fusion – “the act or process of fusing or melting together”
- We must have a time each day to “shut out” the distractions of life and have “fusion” with the Spirit of God
- Just as daily exercise produces a healthy body
 - Produces serotonin and dopamine, improving our mental state
- Spiritual exercise produces a healthy spiritual body

Ephesians 6:11–12 (NLT)

¹¹ Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all **strategies** of the devil. ¹² For we* are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

In addition to daily spiritual activities we need to eliminate those things from our lives that bring our spiritual temperature down

Just as a bad diet of junk food and lack of exercise will promote poor health, allowing circumstances or others to limit what we believe or what we can do will keep us in a lifestyle that is less than God's best for us!

- Don't allow the words of others hamper what you know to be true
- Eliminate negative words we speak about ourselves
- Eliminate destructive relationships
- Eliminate habits that you know prevent you from your destiny
- Stop taking the easy way

All of these things affect your “internal temperature” hindering our ability to shine in the lives of others

Max Planck – “*3200 Kelvin*” – identified the optimal temperature for a light bulb to reach maximum efficiency

What is your maximal efficient temperature?

- Strive to increase your internal heat
- Eliminate cooling distractions
- Glow with the light of God

Ephesians 3:20 (NLT)

²⁰Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

LASER – Focused for the Lord

The concept, yet to be invented was realized in 1957 by a Columbia University student named Gordon Gould

Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation

From a spiritual perspective the laser represents the ultimate expression of the impact we can have in a world in need of light

A laser is a device that projects a highly concentrated, narrow beam of light

- Has great brightness – using stimulated radiation
- Laser light is quite different than normal light

The light released is monochromatic

- It contains one specific length and color

The light is coherent – it is organized

- Each photon moves in step with the others
- All the photons have wave fronts that launch in unison

The light is directional

- A very tight beam
- Strong and concentrated
- When one photon encounters another atom that is in an excited state, stimulated emission can occur
- The biggest difference between normal light and laser light is UNITY

Matthew 18:19 (NLT)

¹⁹ “I also tell you this: If two of you **agree** here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you.

John 17:11 (ESV)

¹¹ And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

- The light that emanates from us when we are in unity will have a distinct and transcendent power
- When we unify our lights it flows into His
- Our lights are concentrated and then beamed out to the world
- Lasers are used to...
 - Heal damaged skin
 - Improve hepatitis C
 - Cut away disease
 - Even used to switch a laboratory mouse's memories from negative to positive

The light God has given us has that same power and more if we direct it and join with others to produce an impenetrable beam of light

- We must be intentional and refine the use of our light
- We must not allow anything to eclipse that light
- We should walk in the light and with each other
- Our light must shine before all people

We must have oil for our lamps if we're to keep them burning

Matthew 25:1–13 (NLT)

“Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids* who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³ The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps, ⁴ but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. ⁵ When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. ⁶ “At midnight they were roused by the shout, ‘Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!’ ⁷ “All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. ⁸ Then the five foolish ones asked the others, ‘Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ “But the others replied, ‘We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ “But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. ¹¹ Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, ‘Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!’ ¹² “But he called back, ‘Believe me, I don't know you!’ ¹³ “So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.

It was typical for the bridegroom himself to go in person, often at night and without notice to bring his new bride home for the wedding festivities

- Before leaving she would receive the blessing from her relatives
- Often there would be a procession through her home town to her future home

“Normally the bridegroom with some close friends left his home to go to the bride’s home, where there were various ceremonies, followed by a procession through the streets—after nightfall—to his home. The ten virgins may be bridesmaids who have been assisting the bride; they expect to meet the groom as he comes from the bride’s house.... Everyone in the procession was expected to carry his or her own torch. Those without a torch would be assumed to be party crashers or even brigands. The festivities, which might last several days, would formally get under way at the groom’s house.”

– D.A. Carson – The Expositors Bible Commentary

In this story it is clear that each person meeting the Groom is responsible for her own lamp

- It’s also clear that having a lamp is not enough
- She must also have enough fuel (oil), to keep it burning brightly
- The original word for lamp is more like the word we would use for torch
- These “Lampas” were little more than a rag soaked in olive oil sitting in a ceramic bowl
- They would periodically have to fill the bowl
- Probably would have carried a flask with extra oil
- It was the realization that the lamp would become dim or even burn out
- You would have to plan for the journey

We want to be like the five bridesmaids who were wise
The oil in our lamps is both the Word of God and the Holy Spirit

Zechariah 4:1-3, 4, 6 (NLT)

Then the angel who had been talking with me returned and woke me, as though I had been asleep. ² “What do you see now?” he asked. I answered, “I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl of oil on top of it. Around the bowl are seven lamps, each having seven spouts with wicks. ³ And I see two olive trees, one on each side of the bowl.” ⁴ Then I asked the angel, “What are these, my lord? What do they mean?”

⁶ Then he said to me, “This is what the LORD says to Zerubbabel: It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.

- It would have been normal to see the lampstand in the temple
- The unusual thing were the two olive trees
- God was showing Zechariah, and us that The Holy Spirit is enough to keep our lamps full and burning

Isaiah 54:5 (NKJV)

⁵ For your Maker *is* your husband, the LORD of hosts *is* His name; and your Redeemer *is* the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.

- If Christ is the bride groom, then what are we?
- Hopefully we are the wise bridesmaids who have enough oil for the journey
- To keep our lamps burning bright!
- The groom is coming for a glorious church!
- What am I willing to do for Him?

Am I willing to let Christ make me pure and holy with the light of His word?

Ephesians 5:25–27 (NIV)

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

- A glorious church!
- A triumphant church!
- A pure church!
- A worshipping church!
- A shining church!

Exodus 27:20 (NLT) *Light for the Tabernacle*

²⁰ “Command the people of Israel to bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to keep the lamps burning continually.

- It’s time for the church to rise from her slumber
- We don’t need more preachers
- We don’t need more churches
- We don’t need more ministries
- We need preachers, churches and ministries with *fresh oil* in their lamps

Ephesians 5:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”