

The Greatest Life Ever Lived

A Study in the Incarnate Life of Jesus Christ and An Exposition of the Four Gospels

LESSON XL : THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT — PART 4: THE CHARACTER OF THOSE WITHIN THE KINGDOM

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	related passages
5:10-16		6:22-26		

This first section of the Sermon on the Mount describes the characters of the kingdom (the Beatitudes, see last week's lesson) as well as their relationship with the world (salt / light). As we consider Christ's words, several questions come to mind: *Am I happy in my Christianity? Am I content? Is Jesus satisfying my emotional and spiritual needs?* If the answer truthfully to those questions are "no" then we must be brave enough to ask, "Jesus, I'm yours. You saved me years ago yet in my heart there's still this unrest. You've promised peace yet my heart is not peaceful. You promised satisfaction yet I find myself still searching at times. Your Word is truth so the problem must be with me ... please, what's wrong?" And Jesus as it were stands in heaven scratching His head and replies, *"Have you ever read Matthew 5?"* This is vitally important: **ONCE CHRIST HAS TOUCHED A PERSON'S HEART AND SOUL, THERE IS NO FULFILLMENT IN LIFE WITHOUT CONFRONTING THE DEMANDS OF THE BEATITUDES!** That cannot be over-emphasized. Each of the Beatitudes begin with "blessed be" meaning "happy, spiritually prosperous". The key to a prosperous spiritual life is found in the Sermon on the Mount, and to reject that is to condemn ourselves to a life of mediocrity, searching, dissatisfaction and unfulfillment.

- Am I proud? Do I refuse to "play second fiddle"? Am I pleased with my efforts in the kingdom of God? Are the things I accomplish for the Lord always in the fore-front of my mind? Am I quick to remind others of the extent of my service? *Then I'm not poor in spirit!*
- Do I reject self-examination? Do I refuse to accept responsibility for the darker side of my heart? Am I always blaming others for the short-comings and failures in my life? *Then I'm not a spiritual mourner!*
- Am I easily offended? Am I willing to stand up in church and "humbly" confess that I'm a sinner saved by grace yet am willing to fight when another questions my character? Am I only willing to "serve the Lord" as long as I can choose how and when to serve? *Then I'm not meek!*
- Is my spiritual appetite waning? Is any excuse to not attend services enough to stop my attendance? Do I find it easy to live without prayer and studying the scriptures? *Then I am not hungering and thirsting after righteousness!*
- Am I self-righteous? Do I have a "holier-than-thou" attitude? Am I carrying a grudge? Am I unforgiving? When I look at another's sin, can I see myself or am I so disgusted with the other's character that I cannot understand how one could "stoop so low"? *Then I'm not merciful!*
- Is my worship hypocritical? Is my church attendance done out of obligation? After the service, is my time spent criticizing the Sunday School, the Pastor, the music, something or someone in the church? Is Sunday the only time I touch my Bible or pray? During the service, do I see the Lord or do I only see men? *Then I'm not pure in heart!*
- Do I refuse to "give in" to another? Has another wronged me and they're going to pay? "I can forgive but I cannot forget"? "I'm right and I know I'm right and I won't rest until others know my side of the story"? Do I gossip? *Then I'm not a peace-maker!*

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake ...

Matt 5:10-12 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Lk 6:22,23 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

"At first, this beatitude seems to be rather different from all the others in that it is not so much a positive description of the Christian as an account of what is likely to result because of what has gone before and because the Christian is what we have seen him to be. Yet ultimately it is not different because it is still an account and description of the Christian. **He is persecuted because he is a certain type of person and because he behaves in a certain manner.** The best way of putting it therefore would be to say that, whereas all the others have been a direct description, this one is indirect." [Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon*] "Such is the enmity of the human heart to every thing of God and goodness, that all those who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution in one form or other. As the religion of Christ gives no quarter to vice, so the vicious will give no quarter to this religion, or to its professors." [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Note the **CHANGE IN THE NARRATIVE** beginning with Matt 5:11. Jesus had been speaking in the third person (“blessed is *he*”) but now changes to the second person (“blessed are *you*”). This continues throughout most of the rest of the Sermon.

While this is a familiar teaching to us this was a **NEW CONCEPT TO THE JEWS**. The Jews of that day believed suffering to be a sign of God’s displeasure but Jesus says persecution endured because of Him was a blessing. We may use this as a reminder not to be too quick to judge the troubles of others.

Critical to the text is **THE CAUSE OF OUR PERSECUTION**. “The persecution to which Jesus refers does not spring from purely social, racial, economic, or political causes, but is rooted in religion. It is because the men to whom reference is made wish to be and to live in harmony with God’s holy will that they endure persecution and continue to hold out under it no matter what happens to them.” [Hendriksen, *Matthew*] “Let us start with a few negatives. **It does not say, ‘Blessed are those who are persecuted because they are objectionable.’ It does not say, ‘Blessed are those who are having a hard time in their Christian life because they are being difficult.’ It does not say, ‘Blessed are those who are being persecuted as Christian because they are seriously lacking in wisdom and are really foolish and unwise in what they regard as being their testimony.’** It is not that. There is no need to elaborate on this, but so often one has known Christian people who are suffering mild persecution entirely because of their own folly, because of something either in themselves or in what they are doing. But the promise does not apply to such people.... **“We are not told, ‘Blessed are the persecuted because they are fanatical.’ Neither does it say, ‘Blessed are the persecuted because they are over-zealous.’** Fanaticism can lead to persecution; but fanaticism is never commended in the New Testament.... We are to be ‘wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.’ God forbid that any of us should suffer because we fail to remember that.... **“We must also realize that it does not mean suffering persecution for religio-political reasons.** Now it is the simple truth to say that there were Christian people in Nazi Germany who were not only ready to practice and live the Christian faith but who preached it in the open air and yet were not molested. But we know of certain others who were put into prisons and concentration camps, and we should be careful to see why this happened to them. And I think if you draw that distinction you will find it was generally something political. I need not point out that I am not attempting to excuse Hitlerism; but I am trying to remind every Christian person of this vital distinction. If you and I begin to mix our religion and politics, then we must not be surprised if we receive persecution.... [note: I agree with this distinction but believe we must be careful about what he is saying, what he is *not* saying, and the application of this truth. Is it correct to sit and watch the moral decay around us? Are believers to be passive to the point of non-involvement? I believe there is the place for *individual Christians* in politics and more need to be involved to that level (e.g. the abortion issue). But an argument may be made for Paul and Peter not spending time with the social issues of their days (e.g. slavery) knowing as the gospel spread the society would change as well. Where is the line to be drawn? Let every Christian seek the Lord’s guidance as to their particular involvement. And if I understand the gist of Lloyd-Jones’ teaching here, if one is persecuted for their political involvement, that may not be wrong but it also may not be what Christ is speaking of in this Beatitude. Later in his book Lloyd-Jones makes this comment: “The Christian as an individual, as a citizen in a state, is to be concerned about {social, political} things.... As Christians we are citizens of a country, and it is our business to play our part as citizens ...”]

“What then does this Beatitude mean? ... Being righteous, practicing righteousness, really means being like the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore they are blessed who are persecuted for being like Him. What is more, **those who are like Him always will be persecuted....** The good and the noble are very rarely persecuted because we all have the feeling that they are just like ourselves at our best. We think, ‘I am capable of that myself if I only put my mind to it,’ and admire them because it is a way of paying a compliment to ourselves. **But the righteous are persecuted because they are different. That was why the Pharisees and the scribes hated our Lord. It was not because He was good; it was because He was different. There was something about Him that condemned them.** They felt all their righteousness was being made to look very gaudy, showy and cheap. That was what they disliked. The righteous may not say anything; they do not condemn us in words. But just because they are what they are, they do in fact condemn us, they make us feel unhappy, and we shrivel into nothing. So we hate them for it and try to find fault with them.... “Do we know what it is to be persecuted for righteousness’ sake? ... **We are not to be offensive; we are not to be foolish; we are not to be unwise; we are not even to parade the Christian faith. We are not to do anything that calls for persecution. But by just being like Christ persecution becomes inevitable....** [Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon*]

Different types of persecution are mentioned:

- **reproach** : heaping insults upon believers; cp how they treated Christ and His followers: “you were born in sin and you teach us?” (Jn 9:34) and “are we not correct in saying you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” (Jn 8:48; cp Jn 15:20).
- **slander** : lying concerning believers; e.g. the early church was labeled as *atheists* because they did not worship a visible God, *immoral* because they met in private secret places, *unpatriotic* because they confessed Christ as King and refused to worship the emperor, and even *cannibals* since they professed to “eat and drink” Christ’s body and blood during the Lord’s table. “Persecution of the tongue is more common, but not less cruel than that of the hand. Slander is unscrupulous and indulges in accusations of every kind: ‘*all manner of evil*’ is a comprehensive phrase. No crime is too base to be laid at the door of the innocent; nor will the persecutor have any hesitation as to the vileness of the charge. The rule seems to be, ‘Throw plenty of mud, and some of it will stick.’ “ [Spurgeon, *Matthew*]
- **excommunication** : Luke adds that those following Christ will be “separated from their company”, the word meaning “separate” and having a reference to being excluded from the synagogue. “Cast out your name as evil” may go along with this. It is a strange expression, explained by some to mean to *pronounce the name with disgust*, others say to *refuse*

altogether from pronouncing it. Godet says it refers rather to *the expunging of the name from the synagogue roll of membership.* “Diōzōsin, which we render to *persecute*, is a forensic term and signifies legal persecutions and public accusations, which, though totally unsubstantiated, were the means of destroying multitudes of the primitive Christians ... No Protestant can think, without horror, of the great numbers burnt alive in this country, on such accusations, under the popish reign of her who is emphatically called Bloody Queen Mary.... *They shall separate you* — meaning, They will excommunicate you, or separate you from their communion. Luke having spoken of their separating or excommunicating them, continues the same idea, in saying that they would cast out their name likewise, as a thing evil in itself. By your name is meant their name as His disciples. As such they were sometimes called Nazarenes, and sometimes Christians; and both these names were matter of reproach in the mouths of their enemies. So James (James 2:7) says to the converts, Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called? So when St. Paul (in Acts 24:5) is called a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, the character of a pestilent fellow and that of a mover of sedition is joined to it; and, in Acts 28:22, the Jews say to Paul, As concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against; and this is implied in 1 Pet 4:14, when he says, If ye be reproached for the NAME of Christ, i.e. as Christians; agreeably to what follows there in 1 Pet 4:16, If any man suffer as a Christian, etc.” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

OUR RESPONSE to such persecution is to rejoice, be exceeding glad (KJV), be tremendously glad (Phillips), keep on ... leaping for ecstasy (Williams). The same word is used of David’s reaction to the fact of the resurrection (Acts 2:26), used when the Philippian jailer was saved (Acts 16:34), used to describe Abraham as he saw Christ’s day (Jn 8:56), with Peter and other believers as they contemplate the risen Lord (1 Pet 1:8), and with the heavenly multitude as the Wedding Feast commences (Rev 19:7). “*Be exceeding glad — leap for joy.* There are several cases on record, where this was literally done by the martyrs, in Queen Mary’s days.” [Clarke, *Commentary*] **“The Christian must not retaliate...** We must ‘stay the angry word’; we must not reply. To retaliate is just to be like the natural man who always does reply ... **He must not feel resentment ...** We may have come to see long ago that to lose our temper over a thing, or to manifest annoyance, is dishonoring to our Lord. But we still may feel it, and feel it intensely, and be hurt about it and resent it bitterly.... **We must never be depressed about persecution ...** It is not that you feel any resentment to a particular person; but you say to yourself, ‘Why should it be like this? Why am I being treated such?’ ... That is something which our Lord denounces. He puts it positively by saying explicitly, ‘Rejoice and be exceeding glad’. “ [Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon*]

Jesus graciously gives us several **REASONS FOR REJOICING :**

- **Persecution indicates the genuine character of their faith.** As the prophets of old were persecuted for their faith’s sake, so are we persecuted and so are we to rejoice. Aside from the multiple scriptural references we could reference (cp Jeremiah thrown in the pit, Elijah condemned by Ahab, Amos commanded to flee, etc.), tradition also records for us that Isaiah was placed in a log and cut in two, and Jeremiah was stoned to death.
- **Persecution purges and matures the Christian’s character.** (Rom 5:3,5; James 1:3,4; Job)
- **Persecution is rewarded with heavenly rewards.** Not won by human merit yet given by grace, the reward is proportional yet much greater than the suffering (Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 4:17,18).

“Why is the Christian to rejoice like this, and how is it possible for him to do so? ... The Christian is not to rejoice at the mere fact of persecution.... My whole outlook upon everything that happens to me should be governed by these three things: my realization of who I am, my consciousness of where I am going, and my knowledge of what awaits me when I get there.” [Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon*]

FOUR WOES

Luke alone adds four woes to his four (recorded) blessings. As with the “blessed be’s ...”, these woes are directly opposed to the world’s teachings. The world teaches us “woe be unto the poor but envy the rich” while Christ states the opposite. (The rich as such are not cursed for Christ welcomed both Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea; so this richness here implies something else than mere material gain.) The true believer is an oddity, someone to be persecuted (v22,23) while the “spiritually rich” (e.g. the Pharisees, the worldly religious leaders, those with the money and power, etc) are looked well upon by the world. Again, Christ says the exact opposite is true in His Father’s Kingdom.

Some take these “woes” to mean something as “alas” (NEB) or “how terrible” (TEV). “It is an expression of regret and compassion, not a threat.” [Morris, *Luke*] Others give it the sense of a warning: “What we have here, in both the Beatitude and the Woe, is *an authoritative declaration*. Just as for believers the Beatitudes are effective pronouncements of blessing, so also for impenitents the woes are effective pronouncements of the curse. **The element of warning and threat must not be excluded from the Woe.**” [Hendriksen, *Luke*] The Greek word used here is *ouai* and is used forty-five times in the NT, all but six is translated as “woe”. In Rev 18:10,16,19 it is translated six times “alas” in reference to the great city Babylon as it is destroyed. Note how the word is used the thirty-nine times it is translated “woe”: most of the incidences in the gospels are “woes” against the Pharisees and Scribes (e.g. Mt 23:13-16,23,25,27,29; “woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees...”), it is used once by Paul to pronounce woe upon himself if he does not preach the gospel (1 Cor 9:16), Jude uses it once to pronounce woe upon the false teachers (Jude 11), and John used it in conjunction with the great tribulation to come (e.g. Rev 8:13, *woe, woe, woe* to the inhibitors...; 9:12, one *woe* is past, there are two more...; 11:14, the second *woe* is past, the third cometh...). While it should not be denied that in all of Christ’s

pronouncements there is an element of compassion (cp Ez 33:11; Jn 5:34), it would be incorrect to read into this too much “compassion” and thereby remove the force of the denunciation.

Note Jesus avoided extremes: Jesus never just pronounced blessings nor just woes but a balance of both. So should we.

But woe unto you that are rich ...

Luke 6:24 But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. : woe to those who trust in their earthly riches, either materially or spiritually. If they do, they have their reward in full and have nothing eternal to look forward to. “To the rich Jesus says, *you have received your consolation*. His verb is one often used in receipts with a meaning like ‘Paid in full’. “ [Morris, *Luke*] “The verb ... literally means *to have nothing left to desire*. Thus in Phil 4:18 when Paul says ‘*I have all things*’, he does not mean merely an acknowledgment of the receipt of the Church’s gift, but that he is *fully* furnished, ‘I have all things to the full’.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

Woe unto you that are full ...

Luke 6:25a Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. : woe to those who have always trusted in material things for they will in eternity discover how desperately poor they are. Woe be to those whose lives are lived to please themselves, their goal being pleasure and self-satisfaction. The tears they will cry will never be wiped away. “Yet, having never shown any appreciation for the higher values of life, these gluttons, unless they are converted, face the never-ending future with a maddening ache that can never be assuaged, a burning thirst that can never be quenched, a ravening hunger that can never be alleviated.” [Hendriksen, *Luke*] Whether this is true physically or purely spiritually, I do not know. There are those who believe that the lusts and appetites of the lost’s physical being will carry over into eternity so the drunkard will always desire alcohol yet will never be satisfied, the immoral will always desire sex yet will never be satisfied, the drug addict will crave his drugs yet will never be satisfied. Whether that is so or not I don’t know, but the possibility is there. I do believe however that once the veil of this life is opened and the lost see their true spiritual condition, they will cry out to have their soul satisfied with forgiveness yet will stand condemned. Eternally they will suffer the pangs of hell, aware of their separation from a holy God and will forever cry for mercy. It will be too late and that need will not be satisfied (Heb 10:28-31 — note the emphasis upon the words “without mercy” in v28).

Woe unto you that laugh now ...

Luke 25b Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. : “Obviously Jesus is not objecting to laughter as such. His whole ministry was a protest against the killjoy attitude. He enjoyed life and must have laughed often. So did His disciples. But there is a laughter that is the expression of superficiality and it is this shallow merriment that will have to give way to mourning and weeping.” [Morris, *Luke*]

Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you ...

Luke 6:26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets. : the danger of all men speaking well of you is that this can scarcely happen without the sacrifice of principles. Being well thought of by outsiders is important and is even a condition required for the pastorate (1 Tim 3:7) but that is different than universal popularity which accompanies compromise.

Ye are the salt of the earth ...

Matt 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. : because of the character of true believers (Matt 5:3-9) Christ gives the world’s reaction (persecution, Matt 5:10-12) and the believer’s reaction (salt and light, Matt 5:13-16).

Characteristics of salt:

- **salt is essentially different from the medium into which it is put** and its power lies precisely in this difference. This speaks of the Christian being different from the world by definition.
- **salt’s function is unique**, likewise the sense of the verse is “you and you alone” for the believers being salt / light. Therefore the ones that the world hates the most is the ones that it owes the most.
- **salt’s flavor is distinctive** which is its purpose for being used. In like manner a Christian living as he should cannot help but stand out and be different. No conscious effort is required.
- **salt provides savor, gives flavor**; thus only Christianity gives fulfillment and meaning to life.
- **salt is not necessary in large quantities to be effective**; thereby even an individual Christian or a small church can be used of the Lord to make great change.
- **salt is a preservative, used to arrest decay, to act as an antiseptic** so that the germs, for example, in meat may be rendered ineffective when salt is rubbed into it. While hated, it is the Christians that prevent moral decay, if not actively then at least passively for God blesses the nation that prays.

- **salt's function is primarily a negative one;** salt doesn't provide health, it prevents putrefaction. In like manner the efforts of Christians and the Church is often mocked and unwelcomed.
- **salt acts secretly.** We know it combats decay though we cannot see it perform its task; in like manner the believer's greatest works are those which are hidden: secret prayer and study of His word.
- **salt that is not salty is worthless.** "There was a species of salt in Judea ... easily rendered vapid and of no other use but to be spread in a part of the temple, to prevent slipping in wet weather. This is probably what our Lord alludes to in this place." [Clarke, *Commentary*] This is not true of all things; e.g. a flower may be pretty and give an aroma while alive, but if it dies it may still be placed on a compost heap as fertilizer. Other things do not become useless when their primary function is gone. **"There is nothing in God's universe that is so utterly useless as a merely formal Christian ... who has the name but not the quality of a Christian."** [Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon*]

There is a discrepancy here if pure sodium chloride is the reference since salt does not decay. Hendriksen mentions a meetings of a science club in which some chemists made mention of the inaccuracy of the scripture at this point. In response to that some maintain Christ here is using a figure even though "it is something which does not occur in nature". A more probable solution is the fact that salt of the middle East at the time came from the Dead Sea which made it of inferior quality and more readily subject to spoiling. **Pure salt remains salt, but salt contaminated with foreign substances becomes tasteless.** This makes more sense, especially since Christ continues to comment what happens to such salt as if referring to something commonly known among His hearers. The picture being given is also enhanced in teaching that the Christian is only as effective to the degree of which the world is kept out; i.e., a *pure* Christian is salt but a *worldly* Christian has lost his effectiveness.

Ye are the light of the world ...

Matt 5:14-16 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. : while salt is primarily negative in its function and works secretly, light has a positive function and shines openly. Light in scripture symbolizes true knowledge of God (Ps 36:9; Matt 6:22,23), goodness, righteousness, truthfulness (Eph 5:8,9), joy, gladness, true happiness (Ps 97:11; Isa 9:1-7). Christ here is speaking collectively of Christians taken as a whole are the light ("ye are the light"), elsewhere individual believers are spoken of as lights as well (Phil 2:15; "luminaries").

Things implied in this statement:

- **The world is in darkness** while it says they are enlightened and believers are the ones in the dark! The world experienced what it called the Renaissance in the 15th and 16th centuries which some refer to as the beginning of modern civilization. Then in the 18th and 19th century the Enlightenment movement began in which humanism became the driving force and the authority of the scriptures was cast aside. So ironically the world believes they are "enlightened" while the scriptures says it is darkness. "The tragedy of our century has been that we have concentrated solely upon one aspect of knowledge. Our knowledge has been a knowledge of things, mechanical things, scientific things, a knowledge of life in a more or less purely biological or mechanical sense. But our knowledge of the real factors that make life life, has not increased at all. That is why the world is in such a predicament today. For, as has often been pointed out, **we have failed to discover the most important thing of all, namely, what to do with our knowledge....** When you come back to the great basic and fundamental problems of life and living, of being and existence, is it not obvious that our Lord's statement is still true, that the world is in a state of terrible darkness?" [Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon*]
- **The Christian alone has the solution to the problem.** Our greatest thinkers are baffled at this present time, and our society is always passing new laws and regulations in an effort to battle society's ills. All this is done with the best of motives, yet all is done in darkness without submitting to the authority of the Word of God. **"The ordinary Christian, though he may never have read any philosophy at all, knows and understands more about life than the greatest expert who is not a Christian."** [Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon*] Therefore Buddhists, Muslims nor even the Jews have the truth necessary to solve mankind's problems. *"Light of the world"* was a title applied to the most eminent rabbins. Christ transfers the title from these, and gives it to His own disciples, who, by the doctrines that He taught them, were to be the means of diffusing the light of life. [Clarke, *Commentary*]
- **The Christian is the light of the world because of Jesus Christ.** It is only our relationship with Him that enables us to be the light. Those who follow Him have the promise that we won't walk in darkness but shall have the light of life (1 Jn 1:5-10). Not only do we receive light but we are light in the Lord (Eph 5:8). "It is this extraordinary teaching of the mystical union between the believer and his Lord. His nature enters into us so that we become, in a sense, what He Himself is.... As those who believe the gospel we have received light and knowledge and instruction. *But* in addition it has become part of us. It has become our life so that we thus become reflectors of it." [Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon*] As Christ is the sun, Christians are the moon. As an electric bulb does not shine in and of itself but requires electricity, so Christ's followers are only effective as they remain in living contact with their "source of power".
- **The Christian must be something prior to doing something.** Note the order: we are first the salt of the earth, which is more or less a negative constraining factor. We are to live like Christians first, we must *be* something first. Then after

the world notices we are different and asks why, then we can speak and shed the light. This is always the scriptural order which is ignored by some believers today. **Some want to share the light prior to that light having the effects in their own life that it should, and what they call “witnessing” is actually just another opportunity for the world to mock the commands of Christ.** While what they say may be true, their whole life and demeanor implies it is not true.

- **Light exposes the darkness and the things in the darkness.** By living in the light, our very lives reveal that others are living in darkness, and without our lives they would never know there is a different way of life. The Christian cannot help it; just by our different manner of life we show the true character and nature of the other way of life. **“In the world he is like a light being put on, and immediately people begin to thing, and wonder, and feel ashamed.** The more saintly the person, the more obviously will this take place. He need not say a word; just by being what he is he makes people feel ashamed of what they are doing, and in that way he is truly functioning as light.” [Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon*] Christ’s whole life was so pure and holy that it made the Pharisees see themselves as they really were and they hated Him for it.

- **Light explains the reason for the darkness.** Only in the scriptures do we see the true reason for all the world’s problems for everything can be traced back to sin, selfishness and self-seeking. Only the Bible give this to be the problem of nations as well as individuals, and only the Bible gives the solution. “Man has been so made by God that he cannot truly live unless he is in the right relationship to God.... **He was made by God; he was made for God.** And God has put certain rules in his nature and being and existence, and unless he conforms to them he is bound to go wrong.” [Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon*]

- **Light provides a way out of the darkness.** Humanism fails, science fails, education fails, political enactments fail; only the Word of God has the answer. **One of the Christian’s main purpose in life should be to show those in darkness the way to escape into the light.**

- **Light initially bothers those used to the darkness.** When the light is first turned on, there is a period of adjustment and at first our eyes are bothered by the light. For this reason **the Christian will not find a place of acceptance in this world,** and it is for this reason that many Christians try to hide the light within so that the darkness will accept them.

- **Hiding the light is unfortunately easily accomplished.** “*A bushel*, Rev., rightly, ‘*the bushel*’; since the definite article is designed to indicate a familiar object — *the* grain-measure which is found in every house.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*] If a believer so desires, all that is necessary to hide the light is to laugh at the wrong jokes, go to the wrong places, agree to the things of the world and the light is slowly concealed to where none see Christ.

- **Totally hiding the light is impossible.** As a city on the hill cannot be hidden, a true believer will show some reflection of Christianity regardless of his relationship to the Lord. Therefore while the light may be easily hidden there will always be glimpses which shine forth in the life of a true believer. Once saved, the believer cannot extinguish the light fully. “A few points toward the north of Tabor appears that which they call the Mount of Beatitudes, a small rising, from which our blessed Savior delivered His sermon in Matthew 5-7. Not far from this little hill is the city Saphet, supposed to be the ancient Bethulia. It stands upon a very eminent and conspicuous mountain, and is SEEN FAR and NEAR. May we not suppose that Christ alludes to this city, in these words of His, A city set on a hill cannot be hid?” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

- **Attempts to hide the light is foolish.** The whole purpose of light is to not live in darkness and none would light a lamp just to cover it. The Christian is just as foolish to attempt to hide his Christianity for it is one of the reasons God placed him where he was in the first place.

- **The reasons for hiding the light are sinful reasons.** “From some ancient writers we learn that only those who had bad designs hid a candle under a bushel; that, in the dead of the night, when all were asleep, they might rise up, and have light at hand to help them to effect their horrid purposes of murder, etc.” [Clarke, *Commentary*] While perhaps not for murder, the only reasons for a believer to hide the light can be disobedience and worldliness.

- **The motive for the light shining is important.** Christ here commands believers to do our works before men yet immediately adds that we are not to receive their praise (Matt 6:1). An important factor therefore must be that of our motive.

- **The results of the light shining with the proper motives is that the Father is glorified.** Believers are being watched and when we live as lights others will take note and by doing so will be glorifying God in heaven. This is what the Father desires, and when our motives are correct, it is something Christians rightfully desire as well.

Therefore His disciples must live and work in places where their influence may be felt, and the light must be seen; not for personal glory but to glorify Christ. “The business of each church is to shine for Jesus and we cannot allow ourselves to be thrown off its course. **“The great hope for society today is in an increasing number of individual Christians. Let the church of God concentrate on that and not waste her time and energy on matters outside her province.”** [Lloyd-Jones, *Sermon*]