

Let Our Light Shine!

-If any of you saw the Olympics back in 1992, one of the most amazing openers occurred in the lighting of the Olympic Torch for the beginning of the ceremonies. The arena was *totally darkened* and all of a sudden, through the darkness, you saw one small flaming arrow spiral through the air and land on the huge Olympic Torch high above the whole stadium, lighting it afire, a blaze for all the world to see. From that one tiny flame, a torch was lit that gave light for so many others!

-Have you ever thought that you could possibly be someone's light in a dark world? That you may be the small burning flame in a dark circumstance that someone needs to see? (...)

-It can be as small as an act of kindness, an encouraging word spoken or a prayer for them that they may need at that moment. Can you think of someone right now that may need that? (...)

-I would like to encourage us today to actually enjoy being a light in someone's darkness.

-First of all, we really need to understand what true light is. To help us understand this we are going to look at some verses in the Bible. Let's start with verse #1 on our Verse Sheet: (Gen. 1:3 "And God said, 'Let there be light and there was light.'")

-Who was the One who thought of the need of light first? (God)

-What was earth like at this time of creation? (The earth was wrapped in darkness.)

-Can you think of what may be wrapped in darkness today? (Lost souls. Those who do not know the Lord and are wrapped in spiritual darkness.)

-Just as God saw the need for a physical light in the beginning, He also saw the need for a "Spiritual Light" for mankind so they may turn from sin. He made a plan to send that "Spiritual Light" when He knew the timing was just right. Who do you think that "Spiritual Light" was? (Christ Jesus, God's Son)

-Let's read our second verse together to confirm this: (John 8:12 "Jesus said, 'I am the Light of the world, whoever follows Me, will never walk in darkness but will have the Light of life.'")

-According to this verse, if we follow Jesus, what does He promise us? (We will never walk in darkness but have the Light of life.)

-What do you think this statement means? (When we repent of our sins and follow Jesus, we no longer have to walk in the spiritual darkness of this world but we can walk with the light of His Holy Spirit inside of us. He becomes the Light in our lives to help us *live* with a spiritual understanding of Who He is and Whose we are and the ability to see all of life through His eyes. It becomes *true living, joyous living* in a dark world!)

-But what happens when we take our spiritual eyes off of Jesus and put them on our circumstances? (We can be overwhelmed and start trying to rely on our own strengths to fix things or lose hope and faith in Him.)

-How much light would a small flashlight give in a huge, dark stadium? (A very small, narrow amount.)

-Relying on our own strengths in our circumstances would be like a tiny stream of light from a small flashlight flashing down a huge stadium filled with darkness. It only lights up a very narrow path in that very large stadium.

-That's what it is like when we take our lives off of Jesus and we tend to only look at the narrow path before us in our dark circumstances, and try to maneuver through it. Remember, God is at the top of this stadium called "life", and He's looking down and orchestrating where all the light should go.

-Just like the archer who shot the arrow, God guides it into the exact right spot to light up the world. He is doing that to each one of us if we will just realize it and relax and let Him lead, despite our circumstances.

-Can anyone remember someone in the Bible who was blinded by God's light to get his attention so He could lead him to a more meaningful life? (The Apostle Paul at his conversion. Acts 9)

-Do you remember what he was doing at that time to Christians and what happened to him? (From Acts 9. He was persecuting Christians. When he was on his way to Damascus to imprison more Christians, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around him and he heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, Why do you persecute me?" Saul said, "Who are you *Lord*." Then Jesus said, "I am Jesus –now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do." Saul found he was blinded and had to be lead into the city.)

-Does anyone remember whom God sent to be a "light" for Paul while he was blind and to teach him Christ's gospel and to be filled with the Holy Spirit? (It is also in Acts 9. After 3 days, the Lord sent a follower named Ananias to Saul. Ananias went to the house and placed his hands on Saul and said "Brother, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the Damascus Road has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately something like scales fell from Paul's eyes and he could see.)

-The Bible tells us that Saul's name was changed to Paul and Paul became the "*light to the Gentiles*".

-We too are called to be a 'light to the world'. What do you think that means? (Sharing the love of Jesus to others through our words, actions and deeds will hopefully lead others to want to know where that light comes from. Hopefully, we then will be able to share the true Light of the world with them, Jesus Christ!)

-To explain this a little better, let's read verse #3 together on our Verse Sheet: (Matthew 5:16 "Let your light shine before men, *that they might see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*")

-What can be some good deeds? (...)

-What is the true purpose of good deeds according to this verse? (So others will praise God, hopefully wanting to know Him personally.)

-What can happen if we do good deeds and look for others to praise *us* or affirm *us* instead of praising God? (We begin to seek our own glory and become self-focused instead of Christ-focused. Instead of people seeing Christ in us and looking for His eternal light they will instead focus on us.)

-To help us understand how meaningless life can be or non-memorable when we do things for self-glory instead of for God, can you name the top 10 richest people in the world and the last 5 Nobel Peace Prize Winners? (...) If you are like me, I can't.

-Now, can you name 10 people in your lifetime that taught you something worthwhile through God's love, whether it was someone helping you through a difficult circumstance or someone with words of wisdom or encouragement that helped you throughout different periods in your life? (...) Take a moment and name them. (.....)

-The people who make a difference are not the ones with credentials but the ones with godly concern, the ones who are being the light of God's love.

-Let's stop for a moment here and think about someone who you may know the Lord is asking you to be a light to today? (...)

-How can your good deeds be a light to that person? (...)

-What are some simple ways or "good deeds" we can do to be a light to that person? (...)

-It doesn't have to be difficult, it just needs to be led by the Holy Spirit in your heart.

-Sometimes we may be tired of being a light for others. Have you ever felt burnt out or used up? (...) Have you ever felt like you just don't want another person on your path to help light up because you are just worn out, that your own light is growing dim? (...)

-Let's read the next verse together, #4, which shows us where we can reboot our light when we are feeling weak. (Psalm 119:105 "Your Word is a *lamp* to my feet and a *light* for my path.")

-So what should we do when our light has run out and our lamp feels empty? (Run to His Word.)

-God gave us His word - the Bible - to be our lamp to our feet and His Holy Spirit to be the light for our path. Just like a lamp, if we don't plug into the source of His power, our light will grow weak and dim. So plug in daily!!

-We started off at the beginning of this lesson talking about the lighting of the Olympic Torch. When the Olympics are over, what happens to the flaming torch? (It will be extinguished.)

-Let's think a moment here. When our earthly bodies are extinguished, what happens to the light of Jesus that we shared with others? (It lives on in their lives.)
-And when life is said and done, and we reach heaven, Who will be lighting up eternity for us? (Jesus!)

-Let's read our last verse together that confirms this: (Revelation 21:23 "The holy city (HEAVEN) does not need the sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives it light and the Lamb (JESUS) is it's lamp!")

-We have a glorious promise here that at the end of our lives, when our earthly light goes out, we will have the greatest light of all, the light of Jesus, our Savior, lighting all of eternity with His love and we will be with Him at His side!

-Let's share that Light with those we meet today, whether it is in a smile, a kind word of encouragement or just a simple act of love.

“LET OUR LIGHT SHINE” VERSE SHEET

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3.Matthew 5:16 “Let your light shine before men, *that they might see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*”

4.Psalm 119:105 “Your Word is a *lamp* to my feet and a *light* for my path.”

5.Revelation 21:23 “The holy city (HEAVEN) does not need the sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives it light and the Lamb (JESUS) is it’s lamp!”