

# LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

PHILIPPIANS 2:15; MATTHEW 5:14-16

Text: Philippians 2:14-15; Matthew 5:14-16

## **Philippians 2:14-15**

*<sup>14</sup> Do all things without murmurings and disputings: <sup>15</sup> That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*

## **Matthew 5:14-16**

*<sup>14</sup> Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Introduction:

In verse (14) we see a command given. Though this verse is a short verse, it provides a lifetime goal for the believer.

Christians are to face their problems without murmurings. This is a good command for all of us

because Christians can be the biggest murmurers in the world.

Not again verse 14:

***Philippians 2:14***

<sup>14</sup> *Do all things without murmurings and disputings:*

The word “all” strongly emphasizes “Don’t murmur and dispute.

This is what we are to “DO”.

The word “Do” speaks of a habit, practice, or doing something continually.

The word “murmurings” is a reference to the murmurings of Israel.

***Numbers 16:41***

<sup>41</sup> *But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD.*

It describes the low, behind the back, discontented murmuring of a mob on the verge of an uprising.

Quote:

“Murmuring Christians are seldom of any use in the cause of Christ.”

The Christian who is characterized by a complaining attitude is not properly demonstrating and expressing the salvation he possesses.

This ends up hurting his testimony and efforts to reach the lost for Christ. The Christian who gripes and complains does not have the confidence he should have in God's ability to use everything in his life to bring about his good and God's glory.

As believers we should never join the devil's crowd because engaging our energy is stirring up bitterness and strife.

There is no way of living blameless and harmless in the midst of a crooked and perverse world.

***Philippians 2:15***

*<sup>15</sup> That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*

If murmuring is allowed to continue in our lives it will lead to disputings.

The Lord spoke of this as well in the Sermon on the Mount.

### **Matthew 5:13-16**

*<sup>13</sup> Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. <sup>14</sup> Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

The Lord states that we are not only salt but also He states that we are the “Light of the World.”

While salt deal with the moral, light deals with the spiritual. Salt relates to our character, but light relates to our conduct. Salt deals with what a person is, light deals with what a person does.

We certainly know what light does – it removes darkness.

The Lord said:

### **John 9:5**

*<sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

Then in this message He states that “We are the light of the world.”

Notice:

## **1. THE POWER OF THIS LIGHT (vs. 14A)**

Light is an amazing thing.

While it does not have physical properties, it can have a profound effect on physical objects.

Light is basically a wave of energy that can be seen by the naked eye.

Let's look at a few ways light affects our world.

Notice:

### **A. Light Conquers Darkness**

Wherever there is the least bit of light, darkness is forced to flee.

You can be in the darkest place imaginable and just a tiny match, when lit, has the power to drive away all that black, oppressive darkness.

Thought:

The same is true in the spiritual realm.

The Bible says:

***Psalm 119:130***

*<sup>130</sup> The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*

***Psalm 119:105***

*<sup>105</sup> Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

When the light enters, darkness flees!

By the way, a godly Christian can bring rays of light into the darkest of situations!

We should thank God for light.

It can save us from making the kind of mistakes we would only make in darkness.

Illustration:

Back in the days before electricity, a tightfisted old farmer was taking his hired man to task for carrying a lighted lantern when he went to call on his best girl.

“Why,” he exclaimed, “when I went a-courtin' I never carried one of them things, I always went in the dark.”

“Yes,” the hired man said mockingly,” and look at what you got!”

We have considered the Power of this Light.

Note secondly:

## **2. THE PLACES OF THIS LIGHT (VS. 14B-15 & PHILIPPIANS 2:15)**

### **Matthew 5:14-15**

*<sup>14</sup> Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup> 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.*

### **Philippians 2:15**

*<sup>15</sup> That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*

Since this light is so precious and so powerful, where and how are we to let it be seen?

Notice:

## A. There Is the Light of an Institution

The Lord refers to “a city set on a hill.”

A city is not a single light, but a collection of many lights.

The cities in that day were often constructed out of white limestone.

Imagine a limestone city sitting on top of a hill.

The sun rises and reflects off that city.

It could be seen for miles in the day time. It could not be hidden!

When night falls, the moon would also light that city.

Even if there was no moon to shine upon it, the lights of the city and in the windows of the houses could be seen for many miles around.

It could not be hidden at night, either.

Illustration:

The image of “a city on a hill” speaks of us letting our lights shine as a church.



It speaks of the influence of the church in the world around us.

As a church we let our light shine by our standards, our style of worship and by the things we stand for.

You can tell most everything you need to know about a church by the preaching they have; the Bible they use; the songs they sing and the activities they engage in.

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Temple Baptist Church is to be a city set on a hill here Salem.

We are to be a vocal, visible, vibrant witness for the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of the gathering darkness of this town.

God did not establish this church so that we could do our own thing and drift away from Him like so many other churches have.

He established this church to be a light for Him in the darkness of this place.

Not only is there the Light of an Institution but notice also:

## B. There Is the Light of an Individual

### **Matthew 5:15**

*<sup>15</sup> 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.*

The Lord speaks here of a candle.

This was a reference to the oil lamps used in that day.

These were usually clay containers filled with olive oil in which was placed a piece of twisted flax to serve as a wick.

Since most houses were windowless, an oil lamp was necessary for the occupants to be able to see.

No one lit a lamp and then hid it under a basket. To do so would have been foolish!

The lamp was lit so that the people in the house could receive the light and see other objects and people in the room.

Thought:

This verse is speaking about the power of the individual believer's witness. Just as a church has a testimony, so do we as individuals.

Jesus saved us to be a light for Him.

As He shines His light through us, those us around us who are in darkness are helped to see their way to God.

So many people think they have fulfilled their calling to be a witness when they head off to the church house.

When you come in here, it is to worship Him and to be equipped to go out into the darkness world.

When you leave this place you are entering into the mission field.

We are to go out from this place into a dark, dead, deceived and doomed world and we are to point people to the Saviour Who loves them and will save them.

It is interesting that the Lord spoke of some who hid the candle under a bushel.

Some Hide Their Candle under the Bushel of Fear

Some Hide Their Candle under the Bushel of Apathy

The truth is that either the bushel will extinguish the candle, or the candle will consume the bushel.

We have considered the Power of the Light and the Places of the Light.

Let's consider one final thought:

### **3. THE PURPOSE OF THIS LIGHT (vs. 16)**

#### ***Matthew 5:16***

*<sup>16</sup> Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

The Lord answers the question of why we should shine before men.

God wants them to see our good works and glorify God the Father.

Remember the Sermon on the Mount was not a man-centered message but rather a God-centered message.

- That Men May See Your Good Works

There are two words for good in the New Testament.

One simply defined a thing as good in quality.

There is another word that means a thing that is not only good but is winsome beautiful and attractive.

This is the word used here.

The good deeds of the Christian must not only be good; they must also be attractive and winsome.

Now these good deeds are not for self-glory or attention to one's self.

**Matthew 23:5**

*<sup>5</sup> But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,*

Illustration:

At a conference at which D. L. Moody was present, there were also present some young people who took their Christian faith very seriously.

One night they held an all-night prayer meeting.

As they were leaving it in the morning they met Moody, and he asked them what they had been doing.

They told him they had been praying all night and then they continued by saying, "Mr. Moody, see how our faces shine."

Moody answered very gently, "Moses wist not that his face shone."

That goodness which is conscious, which draws attention to itself, is not Christ-honoring goodness.

Why should we shine before men?

- We Must Shine to Exalt God or So Men Might Glorify God

The world dishonors God. The world needs a light that puts honor upon God. Christians are that light.

Holy conduct will put the spotlight of honor upon God.

Our good works are to magnify God's grace and power.

This is the supreme calling of life: glorifying God.

Everything we do is to cause others to give praise to the God who is the source of all that is good.

The way we live should lead those around us to honor and glorify Him.

The word “glorify” means to praise, magnify, draw attention to, to cause dignity and worth for a person or thing to be acknowledged; to honor.

This sums up the purpose of the Christian life. In what way is God glorified in our lives?

## How do we Glorify God?

- By Our Contribution in Service and Compassion for Others

### Illustration:

A pastor once dreamed a dreamed that took him back to his childhood. He dreamed about a nine-year-old boy named Joshua who decided to skip church and go for a long walk.

His mother frequently told him that if he skipped church, he would miss a chance to see Jesus.

Joshua had been going to church his whole life and had never seen Jesus there before, so he didn't think he'd be missing much.

Besides, his church was an old, small, run-down building, just a little too confining for his desire to run and play.

Joshua's walk took him across the railroad tracks in town for the first time in his life.

He noticed that the houses on the other side of the tracks were much bigger and much nicer than any in the poor neighborhood where he lived.

A few blocks later Joshua found himself in front of the biggest, most beautiful church he had ever seen. The steeple alone looked as tall as a mountain.

As he got closer, the big church bells stopped ringing and the last people filed in from the parking lot.

They all had nice cars and wore nice clothes.

He didn't see any people from his side of the tracks going to this church.

"This must be the church where Jesus goes," Joshua told himself. "It's so big and nice."

As he walked closer, he could hear the music coming from inside.

He remembered hearing his mother talk about how angels sing to Jesus in Heaven.

"Wow!" said Joshua as he listened to the choir.

"I'll bet those are angels singing to Jesus!"

He walked up the steps, through the big front doors, and into the spacious lobby.

He continued through another set of doors and entered the sanctuary.



It was the biggest room he had ever seen. "This must be where Jesus is!"

Joshua whispered to himself. He noticed an empty seat a few rows from the back, so he sat down to scan the crowd, so he could find Jesus.

The choir stopped singing and a large man in a black suit tapped Joshua on the shoulder.

The man leaned down and asked Joshua if he could speak with him outside.

In the lobby, the man asked, "Son, where do you live?"

Joshua answered, "Well, if you go down the hill, take a left at the corner, cross the railroad tracks, and head down that street a few more blocks, that's where I live."

"And where are your parents?" the man asked.

"They're probably at church right now," Joshua replied.

"Well, son, don't you think it would be better for you to go to your parents' church today?"

"But I saw this church, and I knew Jesus was here," Joshua said. "So I came to see him!"

"Well, son, I think it would be best if you were to run along home and go see Jesus in your own church in your own neighborhood," the man said. "You really can't stay here."

Realizing what the man was trying to do, Joshua got upset.

"You just don't want me to see Jesus!" he yelled as he turned and ran out the big doors leading to the street.

Sobbing as he returned home, Joshua shouted, "God, it isn't fair! All I wanted to do was see Jesus, and they wouldn't let me in!"

Joshua shuffled along, staring at the sidewalk through his tears. Suddenly he heard footsteps behind him and felt a hand on his shoulder.

He turned around, wiped his eyes, and stared in amazement.

It was Jesus! The Lord smiled at Joshua, gave him a big hug, and said, "Don't be too upset, my son. They wouldn't let me in there either."

May that never be said about our churches.

Amen!

We also glorify God:

- By Commending and Cheering the Lord

***Psalm 34:3***

*<sup>3</sup> O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

Exalt means "to lift up, talk about, or brag about" the Lord. Don't be afraid or ashamed to brag about what Christ has done for you and others.

***Psalm 50:23***

*<sup>23</sup> Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.*

We also glorify God:

- By Our Consistency in Spiritual Growth and Fruitfulness

***John 15:8***

*<sup>8</sup> Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

Christ is glorified when we are controlled by the Holy Spirit and point others to Christ.

We also glorify God:

- By Our Consecration to Christ

**1 Corinthians 6:20**

<sup>20</sup> *For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

When we give the Lord our all, we demonstrate His worth to us.

We also glorify God:

- By Our Concern for Others

Illustration:

At a fund-raising dinner for a school that serves learning disabled children, the father of one of the students delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended.

After commending the school and its dedicated staff, he offered a question. "When not interfered with by outside influences, everything nature does is done with perfection.

Yet my son, Shay, cannot learn things as other children do.

He cannot understand things as other children do.

Where is the natural order of things in my son?"

The audience was stilled by the question. The father continued. "I believe, that when a child, like Shay, comes into the world, an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself, and it comes, in the way other people treat that child."

Then the father told the following story:

Shay and his father had walked past a park where some boys that Shay knew were playing baseball. Shay asked, "Do you think they'll let me play?"

Shay's father knew that most of the boys would not want someone like Shay on their team, but the father also understood that if his son were allowed to play, it would give him a much-needed sense of longing.

Shay's father approached one of the boys on the field and asked if Shay could play.

The boy looked around for guidance and, getting none, he took matters into his own hands and said, "We're losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning.

I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him in to bat in the ninth inning."

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shay's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three.

In the top of the ninth inning, Shay put on a glove and played in the outfield.

Even though no hits came his way, he was obviously thrilled just to be in the game and on the field, grinning from ear to ear as his father waved to him from the stands.

In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shay's team scored again.

Now, with two outs and the bases loaded, the potential winning run was on base and Shay was scheduled to be next at bat.

At this juncture, the father wondered if they would let Shay bat and give away their chance to win the game?

Surprisingly, Shay was given the bat.

Everyone knew that a hit was all but impossible because Shay didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, much less connect with the ball.

However, as Shay stepped up to the plate, the pitcher moved in a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shay could at least be able to make contact.

The first pitch came and Shay swung clumsily and missed.

The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly towards Shay.

As the pitch came in, Shay swung at the ball and hit a slow ground ball right back to the pitcher.

The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could have easily thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shay would have been out and that would have been the end of the game.

Instead, the pitcher took the ball, turned, and threw the ball on a high arc to right field, far beyond the reach of the first baseman.

Everyone started yelling, "Shay, run to first! Run to first!"

Never in his life had Shay ever made it to first base.

He ran down the baseline, wide-eyed, shocked, and startled.

Everyone yelled, "Run to second, Shay. Run to second!"

By the time Shay rounded first base, the right fielder had the ball.

He could have thrown the ball to the second-baseman for the tag, but he understood the pitcher's intentions and intentionally threw the ball high and far over the third-baseman's head.

Shay ran toward second base as the runners ahead of him circled the bases toward home.

Shay reached second base, the opposing shortstop ran to him, turned him in the direction of third base, and shouted, "Run to third!"

As Shay rounded third, the boys from both teams were screaming, "Shay, run home!" Shay ran to home, stepped on the plate, and was cheered as the hero who hit the "grand slam" and won the game for his team.

"That day," said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, "the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love, encouragement, and humanity into this world to a struggling, yet bright-eyed, little boy.

Want to glorify God?

Love people!

Note John 13:35, 15:9:



**John 13:35**

<sup>35</sup> *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

**John 15:9**

<sup>9</sup> *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.*

There are many more ways that we can glorify God, but remember again the goal of our good works or deeds is so that other may glorify God.

Close:

To be the light of the world, we must know the light of Jesus Christ as our Savior.

To be light in this world is a great privilege and a great responsibility!

To those here who have never trusted Christ as their Savior, the invitation is to come and trust the Saviour today.

To those who are Christians today the invitation is decided or determine to let you light shine.

To those who have dim, darkened or hidden lights may we allow the Lord to do a work in our hearts so that our lives as well as others will glorify our Father which is Heaven.