

Being a Light to the World

Jesus Christ stated that we are to be the “light of the world”. A light shines forth energy from its source to illuminate things around it, and is visible to everyone who has eyes to view it. Jesus further said that we ought to make that light visible to others.

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a basket, but on a candlestick, and it gives light unto all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).

Notice that it is one’s “good works” that are to be shown to the world as a light, or a witness, to all of those around us. This requires us to *not* live as hermits, removed and separated from the world, but to mingle with the world and its people who need to see our “light”. We are to be living *in* the world, but not be *of* the world, as Jesus said in his last words (John 17:14-16). We are to be living as ambassadors for a nation that is not yet here (II Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 6:18-20), preaching the truth for others to see in both our words and our deeds ... for like Paul we are all “ambassadors in bonds,” and we need to speak boldly the mysteries of the good news.

How are we to accomplish this audacious plan that God has for us, to be ambassadors that are to “Go ... therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ...” (Matthew 28:19-20)? How are we to accomplish this when we are told to not love the world, or the things in the world (I John 2:15), and we know that the world hates us (John 15:18-19)? The word for “world” here is *kosmos* (2889), meaning “the present orderly arrangement of the world,” which we understand is of Satan the devil (II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2), who has tainted the world with his way of get and sensuality (Revelation 12:9; Galatians 5:19-21). We know we are not to participate in this diabolic orderly arrangement that is ultimately going to be abolished from the earth and be replaced by the reign of Jesus Christ.

So, how are we to be lights in a world system that does not care for our love of our heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the brethren? As always, the answers are given in Scripture, and in particular by the example of our Savior Jesus Christ. He set the example for us when we read,

“And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them; but His mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:51-52).

We all face many people in the world, at work, within our families, when we travel, and in many other situations. I personally have traveled, and still do travel, to many places throughout the world; and I meet many people. Actually, I have found meeting and associating with people is one of the real joys of traveling ... and a person meets all sorts of individuals wherever he goes. As Jesus Christ set the example for us in living and interacting with others, I have found that it is a joy to cultivate friendships with people in the world without in any way compromising God’s principles. Those friendships will not be on the same level as the friendships we have with those in the ecclesia, but they are rewarding and instructive. Moreover, they give us the opportunity to let out light shine. As we read in Galatians 6:9-10,

“And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we have opportunity let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

Let me give you an example. During a recent trip to Chile I had the opportunity to speak to several groups of agricultural advisors on both a group and a personal basis. One individual in particular showed a special affinity to me, and we rode out to a potato field together in his pickup. On the way we talked about a variety of things, and in the process of our conversation he mentioned he was a Mormon. That gave a direct lead-in to my own experiences with Mormons in several places in different countries. They are as a group very dedicated to their families and work, and to their belief system as flawed as it may be. We spent the major part of two days together, exchanging ideas and philosophies. By the time I was ready to leave the area he had brought his entire family to meet me at the hotel — his wife and three daughters — and while I was aware that Mormons tend to proselytize most of the time, by sharing the truth of the Sabbath and Holy Days, the hope of the age to come, and even giving him a copy of my book *The Bridge to Eden*, I was able to be a light to this highly dedicated person whom I noticed began devouring the contents of the book even as we sat at the dinner table. Before I left the hotel he had me stand along with his entire family for a photograph, which he quickly and proudly displayed on his social media page.

I mention this example because we need to understand that every person is operating on the basis of what he or she understands is truth. God may not have revealed all truth on all things to that person, but we ought to respect his level of understanding for what it is. After all, we also were strangers to the truth at one time, and God revealed the truth to us in the times and places and ways only He could design. God shows the light of truth to us through other light-givers over the years. For Sandy and me that was initially *The World Tomorrow* radio broadcast back in 1968, shortly after we were married. That light shone into our lives in incredible intensity, and from that humble beginning it grew through 47 years to the light of God's abundant truth that we now experience.

We need to realize that God has not revealed all truth to all people, but has reserved that truth which is essential for salvation to a people He knows He can entrust it to with absolute certainty that such truth will grow and blossom on fertile ground. We are that fertile ground, and as Paul said in Philippians 1:5,

“For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”

We should rejoice in this wonderful truth of sonship in God's government, whereby we know the way to live God's commandments through the spirit of God placed within us.

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days’, says the Lord; ‘I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, “Know the Lord”; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest” (Hebrews 8:10-11).

We know that we have yet to arrive at the day when “every man” will know God, and that only the firstfruits have that spirit now, and the knowledge of His plan (James 1:18; I Corinthians 15:20-23). So until the day when all of mankind on earth will possess the knowledge of God's truth, we are to be lights, ambassadors of Christ, and witnesses to that truth of God's great plan of salvation, and of His marvelous way of life. We *are* lights to the people in the world around us, and people notice us because we are different. We stand out because we are clothed in white, and shine out to the world in all directions. We are the light of the world, following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Our light cannot be hidden, and we should not want it to be, even if some people around us will hate us for shedding that light.

“The wicked plot against the just, and gnashed upon him with his teeth” (Psalm 37:12).

Read what the next verse says.

“The Lord shall laugh at him, for he sees that his day is coming” (Psalm 37:13).

We should not be afraid to be different, to be standouts and lights in this world, shining forth in ways that cannot be hidden, showing love and kindness to everyone we meet, doing good to everyone, even to those who spitefully use and persecute us (Matthew 5:44). We need to do as Paul said, to let God take vengeance whenever and wherever that may be required, and to “Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

Let your light shine, and be an ambassador of the soon-coming Kingdom of God on the earth.