

Light that shines in the darkness – Sunday 18th May 2014

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”Matthew 5:14-16).

Beloved in The Lord,

Light is more powerful than darkness. The tiniest of light can be seen in a dark room. Teaching His disciples about the Christian life, Jesus said to them: ***“ You are the light of the world.”*** He didn't say you will be, you may be, no, He said you are. Every single believer in Jesus is a light in this world.

Jesus taught about Himself: ***“I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life”***(John 8:12)

The one who follows Jesus, does not live in darkness, but has the light of life. This also means then that the opposite is also true. The one who does not live in Jesus, is walking in the darkness. The majority of people in the world are walking in the darkness, because they do not believe in Jesus Christ. We see this darkness all around us. It is interesting that the very people who profess to be enlightened are in fact in the dark. They do not know that without God they are fools. They do not see this because the darkness has veiled the truth.

Paul wrote: ***“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves”*** (2.Cor.4:3-7).

Paul clearly tells us that the god of this world – Satan – has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they do not see the light of the Gospel. The god of this world is doing everything in his power to keep people in the dark. He does all that he can to veil the truth of God's Word.

Satan devotes a lot of time and energy to the Church; he is working day and night to make sure that the light of the Church is dim, and if he can, to make it go out altogether. I have here in my hand a torch. It is quite effective, the light is bright. However, if I unscrew it and take out the batteries, then the light no longer shines. This is what has happened to many churches and congregations today. This is happening in the lives of so many who profess to be “Christian”. The batteries are empty or taken out and the light no longer shines because the power source is gone.

What do the batteries represent? What is the power source? God The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit works in, through and under God's Word - The Bible. If we read the Book of Acts we soon discover that the early Church was a powerful Church whose light was shining brightly. That was because there was total reliance upon God's Word and the leading of The Holy Spirit.

Slowly things began to change. People began to water down God's Word and began to rely upon human wisdom and power rather than on The Holy Spirit. The light began to dim.

Today there are many Churches that are not worthy to bear the name Christian. They are little more than social clubs that pay lip service to God and His Word. The god of this world is happy. Where the light of God does not shine, the darkness prevails. Where the light is not shining God's Word is compromised, sin is winked upon and the seriousness of sin and judgement is laughed at. In poor light you do not see the stains on your shirt. Shine a bright light on it and it becomes so very obvious.

People like the dim light. They like twilight - living in the dusk when it is neither light nor dark. The conscience is eased and the heart is deceived into thinking everything is ok because God is love. They go on living in their self righteousness and indifference. This is what Satan wants.

This is not what God wants. When He created the world, the first act of creation was to bring light into being. Light was created on day 1. God is a God of light. Christ Jesus is the light of the world, and He said that those who follow Him are also lights of the world.

Jesus said: ***"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven"*(Mt.5:16).**

Our light will only shine if the batteries are in place and if they are fully charged. The main way we charge them is by reading God's Word - The Bible. We need to do this every single day. I already said that God The Holy Spirit works in, through and under God's Word. If we do not read God's Word and apply it to our lives, then our light will be dim. If our light is dim, darkness will prevail. This is why I remind you, urge you regularly to read God's Word daily.

God's Word is light. We read in Psalm 119:105 ***"Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path."***

God's Word is like my torch here. If I am walking in the dark, I can easily trip over an unseen obstacle. If, however I use this torch it illuminates my path and I can see what lies ahead. Walking becomes a whole lot more pleasant and also safer.

We need to use God's Word like a torch. Allow it to illuminate our pathway, allow God to show us how to walk, where to walk, when to walk. Then we will live a blessed life that honours Him.

God's Word is a light in every situation and time of life. There are answers to all of our problems and needs. His Word is a light to our path. None of us in our right mind would drive down a dark road at night without switching on the headlights in our car. That would be plain stupidity, and also very dangerous.

It is just as stupid and dangerous to drive through life without the Word of God shining ahead of us. Not only can you hurt yourself and stray off the path in this life, you can end up in total darkness in eternity.

God gives us His Word, so that we may have light. We need to use it, and not reject it. Let us read His Word everyday and as we do we will find that our batteries are fully charged and that our light shines brightly.

If we are truly Christians then our life should be reflecting Jesus. Our life should be a strong and powerful witness to God's love and His truth. God's light should be glowing in us and emanating from us.

Light is attractive. It has a certain magnetism. Where there is darkness, but then some light appears, we are naturally drawn to it. Our life should have this sort of magnetism that attracts people to God. Our lives should be different to those who do not have Jesus Christ in their hearts. We should be different, not to draw attention to ourselves, but to point to Christ Jesus, to bring glory and honour to God. Listen again to what Jesus said:

***"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."*Matthew 5:14-16).**

Our lives should be full of good works, full of light. Good works do not save us, only the blood of Jesus saves us – but good works bring glory to God. Good works are lights that shine in a dark world, and that testify to God's presence, to His love and goodness, and His amazing grace.

I quoted this passage from Paul earlier, but would like to just draw out one point: ***"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves"*(2.Cor.4:7).**

You see we are just the vessel, through which the light of God shines. That is why absolutely all the glory goes to God and none to us. All the praise and thanksgiving goes to Him alone. Please understand this. Nothing will dim our light quicker than pride. God hates pride. When we become proud and our ego puffs up, God The Holy Spirit moves away into the background and the light grows dim and goes out.

So that our light would neither dim nor go out, but that it may shine brightly all the time, we need to give God all the glory all the time. It is that simple.

We need to be like the early Christians who said: ***"in Him we live and move and exist"* (Acts 17:28).**

That being the case, your light will shine brightly and God will be glorified and people will be blessed.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.