

The Golden Candlestick

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- [0 : 00] Welcome to our service and as we come together around the Word of God, let us seek his blessing to be upon his Word. Let us pray.
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- Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. a reminder to us that we are on a journey through this world and that we are travelling to our long home and that our long home depends upon our relationship with thee.
- Grant to us, O Lord, that we may have that assurance that through the Lord Jesus Christ we have peace with God. We pray that thou would bless our young people and our children.
- [3 : 34] O may thou raise up a generation that would fear thy name. Bless thy people. We pray that we indeed may be faithful witnesses for thee in our communities, in our homes, in our workplace.
- O Lord, that our light would shine forth. We pray that thou would bless thy cause among us as communities. Pray for thy servants who proclaim thy word, that they would be conscious of the help and the upholding of thine own spirit upon them.
- O that thou would bless the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ as it is proclaimed throughout our communities and throughout our islands and throughout our nation, even all nations of the earth.
- O that we would see days of revival in thy church and days of awakening among those who are dead in trespasses and in sin.
- O through the quickening work of thine own spirit upon the hearts of sinners. We give thanks to thee, O Lord, for the work of thy grace in the hearts of sinners such as we are.
- [4 : 48] O Lord, for the work of thy God, we pray, O Lord, that thou would bless all those who may feel lonely today. O Lord, that thou would draw near to them and may they know that there is one who will stick closer to them than any other.
- That there is one who has promised that those who will lean upon him, that he will never leave them nor forsake them. We pray that thou would bless thy word to us as we greet it and as we meditate upon it at this hour.
- O apply it to our hearts through thy spirit that we would see the glory of the incarnate word through the written word and that our hearts would rejoice.

And as we come to the end of another year, we give thanks, O Lord, to thee for thy goodness and kindness to us over many years.

And although this year has been a strange year to us, nevertheless we give thanks and we rest in the fact that thou art the sovereign God, that thou art the one who ruleth in heaven and on earth, and that all things are in thine own hands, and that thou art working out thine own purpose to the glory of thine own name.

[6 : 15] We ask, O Lord, that it may please thee to continue with us as we wait upon thee. And O Lord, we ask for the forgiveness of our many sins and for all our shortcomings, in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen. Let us now read from the New Testament, from the first epistle of John and chapter 1. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life.

For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with the Son, Jesus Christ.

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This, then, is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

[7 : 47] If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. May the Lord bless to us the reading of that portion of his word.

And seeking his guidance and help, we shall now turn to the Old Testament, and to the book of Exodus, and chapter 25.

And we shall read from verse 31. And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold. Of beaten work shall the candlestick be made.

His shaft and his branches, his bowls, his knobs, and his flowers shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it, three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side.

[8 : 55] Three bowls made like in two almonds, with a knob and a flower in one branch, and three bowls made like in two almonds, in the other branch, with a knob and a flower.

So in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like in two almonds, with their knobs and their flowers. And there shall be a knob under two branches of the same, and a knob under the two branches of the same, and a knob under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick.

Their knobs and their branches shall be of the same, all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof, and thou shalt light the lamps thereof, and that they may give light over against it.

And the tongs thereof, and the snuff dishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. And look that, thou make them after the pattern, which was showed thee in the mount.

Now as we continue to look at the furniture of the tabernacle, last week we saw, as we stood in the outer coat of the tabernacle, the altar of Brass, which is also called the brazen altar, and we saw the brazen laver for washing that stood between the altar and the door of the tabernacle.

[10 : 30] From the laver, after having washed his hands and feet, the priest would make his way a few feet forward, towards the tabernacle entrance.

And as he drew back the heavy curtain of the tabernacle, he would enter into the first room of the tabernacle, called the Holy Place.

Three pieces of furniture stood in the Holy Place. On the left, or the south side, stood the golden candlestick or lampstand. On the right side, or the north side, stood the table of showbread.

And right in front of the veiled entrance to the second room of the tabernacle, called the Holy of Holies, stood the altar of incense. Tonight our focus is going to be upon the golden candlestick or lampstand.

For we read, This was to be the most elaborate of all, the furniture of the tabernacle, as to its workmanship, being richly decorated, while the rest of the furniture of the tabernacle was really quite plain.

[12 : 09] It was not cast in a mould, but was made of beaten work from one solid mass of gold. Every part of the candlestick was beaten out and shaped, which meant intense labour and skill.

It was composed of a main shaft with its connecting branches. In Exodus chapter 37, verse 17, we read, And he made the candlestick of pure gold.

Of beaten work made he the candlestick. His shaft and his branch, his balls, his knobs, and his flowers were of the same. Notice what is written there.

He made his shaft and his branch. That would indicate to us that the shaft rose up into a central branch, decorated with bowls, knobs, and flowers.

In verse 20, we read, And in the candlestick, we had four bowls made like almonds, his knobs, and his flowers, and a knob under two branches of the same, and a knob under two branches of the same, and a knob under two branches of the same, according to the six branches going out of it.

[13 : 27] Their knobs and their branches were of the same, all of it was from one beaten work of pure gold. But sometimes the seven lamps of the candlestick are represented on the same level, making the central shaft and the branches the same height.

But these verses that we have looked at would indicate that the central shaft with its branch was higher than the rest. It rose higher than the other six branches.

Also, on the central branch, there were four bowls, their knobs and their flowers. This shaft and branch was more decorated than the others, and it rose to a greater height than the six side branches.

Though, it was of the same fashion as them, and formed out of the same mass of gold. Now, everything we have said to this point may seem extremely complicated and complex, and maybe we are apt to pass it over quickly, and by doing so, we miss the relevance of it all.

The candlestick represents Christ and the church. In the book of Revelation, John was asked to write a letter to the seven churches at Asia, and in chapter 1 and verse 12 and 20, we read, And I turned to see the voice that spake with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man.

[15 : 12] And it goes on to say, And the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. Now, as we noted, the candlestick was made or beaten out of one mass of gold.

We can only imagine the skill and the intense labour of the workman who had to fashion it all out. His tool must have been guided with careful precision as he formed the branches and all the decoration that was upon them.

If this speaks to us of Christ and the church, then it brings before us this truth, the marvellous wisdom of God displayed in Christ and the church.

Paul writes, For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. The candlestick brings before us the union that there is between Christ and his church.

Because if these branches represent the church of Christ, the central shaft and branch may be regarded as representing Christ himself. It can be taken in the same sense in which Christ spoke of the vine and the branches.

[16 : 38] It is from Christ that the church springs and it is by him that the church is supported as the outspreading branches of the candlestick are supported by his central shaft.

The church is united to Christ and it is sustained by Christ. The branches of the candlestick sprang from the central shaft and each branch and the central shaft was of the same material.

It all was from this one mass of gold. So it is with Christ and his people. We read, For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.

For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren. In the midst of the church shall I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him and again behold I and the children which God hath given me.

For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. But as the shaft with its branch was higher than the other branches, so we read in the Bible, that it pleased the Father that in all things that he that is Christ, his Son, should have the preeminence.

[18 : 11] There is oneness and yet there is preeminence. The next thing we notice the decorations that was upon the candlestick.

Three bowls made like unto almonds with a knob and a flower in one branch and three bowls made like unto almonds in the other branch with a knob and a flower. So in the six branches that came out of the candlestick and in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds with their knobs and their flowers.

And there shall be a knob under two branches of the same and a knob under two branches of the same and a knob under two branches of the same according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick.

Their knobs and their branches shall be of the same. All it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. I think that the significance of the decorations were really for beauty.

The bowls were to be made like unto almonds. It is probably worthy to note that we have a comparison here to the fruit that was shielded by Aaron's rod which were almonds.

[19 : 27] The almond tree was the first tree to bud in spring. Then part of the decorations were not only the bowls but also the knobs.

What these are is not known. Josephus says they were pomegranates. The flowers that made up a decoration in the Septuagint are called lilies.

That is quite interesting because Jesus said that King Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these things. However, I think that these decorations were simply for glory and for beauty.

I think that is the significance of them. As a whole there stood this seven branch candlestick of gold characterized by its distinctiveness and yet unity.

the number seven is a well known number in the Bible that speaks of perfection. Creation and a day of rest was completed in seven days.

[20 : 39] And in the book of Revelation we have the perfection of power and intelligence expressed to us by seven horns and seven eyes as seen in the Lamb in the midst of the throne.

It is worthy also to note that its completeness is owing to the six branches that spring out of it and which are in union with it.

So the candlestick represents to us the union that there is between Christ and the church. The six branches springing out of it and in union with the shaft and the branch with the central part of the candlestick.

Christ would be incomplete without the church and yet the church derives all its completeness and beauty and glory from him. Paul in Ephesians 5 says for we are members of his body of his flesh and of his bones and goes on to say this is a great mystery but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

So we have the candlestick standing in the completeness of its beauty seven branched and yet distinct as to its centre branch from the other six branches but all forming together a beautiful whole perfect according to the divine estimate of perfection.

[22 : 20] This ought to be an encouragement or at least strength to our faith tonight. In the midst of all our perfection that God sees us as in Christ that God sees us as united to Christ in all his perfections.

God does not look upon the church as separate from Christ but the church as in Christ the church as united to the central shaft and branch of the candlestick.

His gaze as it were is upon the whole seven branched candlestick. Now the candlestick purpose was to provide light.

This was the only light that shone in the tabernacle for there was no window in the tabernacle. The light sent forth by this candlestick though proceeding from the seven lamps yet was but one light.

For it was never said of them that they sent forth their lights lamps. And again the oil ministered to each of them was the same and it's always specified as oil for the light not for the lamps.

[23 : 50] That may sound rather complex to take in but for instance in Exodus chapter 27 Israel was commanded it.

Thou shalt command the children of Israel that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light to cause the lamp to burn always.

This obviously points us to the fact of the unity that belonged to the light though proceeding from seven distinct lamps and the unity of the lamps which though seven number formed but one.

It was the light it was the lamp not lights and lamps. Each member that makes up the church though distinct in themselves and shining forth with their own individual glory yet they are one with Christ and the church.

In heaven Christ and the church will be but one lamp though there will be preeminence in Christ yet we will reflect the glory of Christ that the blessedness of that glory that is given to us which had been given to Christ as Jesus said recorded for us in John chapter 17 verse 22 and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them that they may be one even as we are one now the light was symbolic of the holiness of God John tells us as we read there in his first letter chapter 1 verse 5 that God is light and in him is no darkness at all the glory of the gospel is that light that belongs to God has come into this world of darkness the light of the gospel points us to the one who came and stepped into our darkness in order to save us the gospel of

[26 : 03] John there it is written for God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved he that believeth on him is not condemned but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God and this is the condemnation that light is coming to the world and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil for everyone that doeth evil hated the light neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved but he that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that was symbolic to us of the holiness of God but also we note the necessity for the light unless the golden candlestick had shed its light upon the surrounding objects we should have seen nothing of the table of showbread we would see nothing regarding the golden altar so that the candlestick teaches us the necessity of the light of divine revelation without the light of the candlestick the most profound darkness would have filled the tabernacle just such would and do so a condition spiritually and would remain so without the light of divine revelation therefore we see that there in the golden candlestick shining in the holy place and giving forth the only light by which anything can be seen the most impressive lesson respecting the necessity of divine revelation without a divine revelation everything would remain in darkness so as the light from the golden candlestick was necessary to see the objects and to see the beauty within the holy place so divine revelation is necessary for us to see the great provision made for us by

God in Jesus Christ the gospel of John is full with the theme of light this theme of light penetrates the gospel from the very beginning John links the being and the person and the glory of Jesus with the light that we need in the prologue of his gospel John tells us that the life in Jesus is the light of men that it is the light that shines in the darkness we are told in the gospel of John that John the Baptist bore witness to the light John's emphasis is that in Jesus there is light and it has come into our world there is the light of the gospel manifested in Jesus Christ it is the presence of the light of the world in the person of Jesus Christ and his truth that exposes just how dark the world truly is when

God begins his work of grace in the soul of man he begins by revealing the darkness in us in 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 Paul writes and said of which to

Beth Peter chapter 1 chapter 1, giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. To the Thessalonians he wrote, ye are all the children of light and the children of the day. We are not of the night, not of darkness. Peter says, but ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of whom we hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

In a sermon on the mount, Jesus said, ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a 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. Now we know that in Christian experience, that light is in conflict with darkness. And this conflict is something that is ongoing in the life of the Christian. And writing to the Romans, Paul wrote in chapter 13, the night is far spent, the days at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armour of light.

[32 : 50] Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in strife and envy. He exhorts us there to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, to make no provision for the flesh in order to fulfil the lust thereof. Oh, he says, put on the armour of light. Put on the armour of light.

In this first letter, as we read there, John said, this then is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in light, we have fellowship one with another. And the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Now in regards to the candlestick, I want us to notice the directions that are given for lighting and dressing the lamps. There we read, and Aaron shall burn therefore sweet incense every morning when he dresseth the lamps. He shall burn incense upon it, and when Aaron lightens the lamps at evening, he shall burn incense upon it. A perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. Aaron alone is mentioned as the one who is to undertake that service.

He was to light the lamps. He was to light the lamps. And this is the duty of Aaron on his own.

It is a particular work that is assigned to the high priest and to him alone. Here we have a picture of Jesus Christ as our great high priest, to whom alone is entrusted the glory and the safe keeping of the church. He is the only one who is able to present his people as a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. But that it should be holy and without blemish.

[35 : 25] And yes, this was part of the duty of the high priest in Israel of Aaron to light the lamps, to keep the lamps burning. So this has been entrusted to our great high priest, the glory and the safekeeping of the light of the light of the light of the light.

And the light of the light of the light of the light. And the light of the light of the light. In the Old Testament we find a light as a guide, the pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, when the children of Israel left the bondage of Egypt. The pillar not only acted as a guide, but was also for their protection. In the same way God is taking his people home to a place of perfect day, with no night there. In Revelation 21 we are told, and the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamb is the light thereof.

Our protection, our guidance, our safekeeping is in the hands of our great high priest, Jesus Christ.

There were certain instruments attached to the candlestick. We read, and the tongues thereof, and the snuffed dishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold, shall he make it with all these vessels. And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount. It would seem that the use of these instruments was twofold.

On the one hand they would be knitted at the candlestick, when the priest dressed the lamp to raise up the weak, in order that the light might burn more brightly. And it would seem that the tongues would also be used at the incense altar, for placing the live coals on it, or removing them into the censer when it was used.

[37 : 34] For there was no other instrument provided in the tabernacle for handling the live coals. This brings us, and reminds us of the vision that is given to us in Isaiah chapter 6, we find that tongues were used by one of the seraphines in the temple, and the burning coal was taken in them from off the altar.

But it also shows us this, how each vessel in the tabernacle were connected together in the work of atonement. And maybe worthwhile for yourselves to study that, and see the connection between every vessel, every piece of furniture that made up the tabernacle, how they are connected together, to show us the one atonement that could take away sin, the atonement of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The light in the holy place was hidden from the world. Only the priests had the privilege of ministering and enjoying the light of the candlestick. And you know, it is the same today. Only as believer priests are we able to enter into the light of fellowship and communion with God.

John wrote, But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. In order to see the beauty of the holy place, and to understand the ministry of the priests in the holy place, we have to enter the holy place.

The oil in the bowls at the top of each branch into which pure olive oil was poured was a beautiful type of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The oil produced the glowing light that filled the holy place.

[39 : 56] Jesus said concerning the Holy Spirit, How be it when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth. For he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

It is the Holy Spirit whose light makes us see our need of salvation. It is the Holy Spirit whose light makes the atonement of Christ real to us, who opens our understanding to the word of God, who makes us receive nourishment from the word of God.

Do you know something of the blessing of standing before the candlestick? Do you know something of the blessing of knowing our union with Christ?

Do you know something of the blessing of walking in his light? Do you know something of the blessing of the ministry of the Holy Spirit?

Do you know something of being a reflector of the light that there is in Jesus Christ? Do you know something of the blessing of God?

[41 : 19] Do you know these privileges and blessings that belongs into those who have embraced Christ by faith, who have become priests unto God?

May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. We give thee thanks, O Lord, for the work of thine own grace in the hearts of sinners, that brings us out of darkness into thine own marvellous light.

We give thee thanks, O Lord, for that work that makes us to be priests unto God, that gives us the privilege of entering into the holy place, and to see the beauty of the holy place, to see the beauty of the candlestick, and to be a reflector of the light that there is in Christ.

We seek, O Lord, that thou would bless thy word to us, and when things may seem confusing and complex to us, that through thy Spirit, that thou would give us the understanding of these things, that would encourage us and strengthen our faith.

We give thee thanks that through the work of thine own Spirit, that thy word becomes a nourishment to us, on which we may feed and receive that strength to go on in the way.

[43 : 03] We ask, O Lord, that we may know the blessing of standing before the candlestick, of knowing your union with Christ, the blessedness of walking in the light, and the blessedness of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

And if it be otherwise, O Lord, we pray, that we would make our earnest plea unto thee, that thou, O Lord, would enter into our life, and that thou, O Lord, would bring us to see the beauty and the perfection that pertains to the holy place, that pertains to Jesus Christ.

We pray, O Lord, that thou would continue with us during the remainder of this week. And now, may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and for evermore.

Amen.