

Let Your Light Shine

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Date: 12 February 2023

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] So let's begin our worship. Today we're singing firstly in Psalm 116 in the Scottish Psalter, page 395. The tune is Cunningham, verses 1 to 8.

I love the Lord because my voice and prayers heeded here. I, while I live, will call on him who bowed to me his ear. Of death the cords and sorrows did about me compass round the pains of hell took hold on me. I, grief and trouble, found upon the name of God the Lord.

Then did I call and say, deliver thou my soul, O Lord, I do thee humbly pray. So on singing down as fast, verse 8, Psalm 116 to God's praise.

My voice and prayers heeded here. I, while I live, will call on him who bowed to me his ear.

All death their hearts and sorrows did about me compass round.

[1 : 38] The pains of hell took hold on me. I, grief and trouble, found upon the name of God the Lord.

God's mercy, do not cry.

You, the birth you, the O thou, my soul, do thou return, until thy quiet rest.

For my sweet love, the Lord to thee, his bounty hath expressed.

For my distressed soul from death delivered was by thee.

[3 : 47] Thou didst my morning night from tears, my feet from falling free.

Let's now call upon the Lord briefly. Let's pray. Our gracious God, as we give thanks once again for being gathered here together around your word, and thanks for the prospect of your spirit blessing us, we do, Lord, come before you as our God and as our Savior.

We do confess our need that you would once again bless your word to us, and we pray your blessing upon the children and young folks who are present today. And we ask, O Lord, as they go through to their classes in Sunday school and tweenies, that you would bless them there and help them as they learn about you, that they will come to know you better day by day, and especially that you would grant to them your blessing in all the different aspects of their lives.

And we pray that your blessing will go before them in all the ways in which we seek their development, morally and spiritually and physically. And so, Lord, we commend them to you today and pray for those who look after them and care for them, not only in their own homes, but also here in the church.

We thank you for them and pray that your blessing will be with them as they take such responsibilities and privileges to themselves. We thank you for all those who help with our various activities.

[5 : 25] So receive our thanks, we pray, and forgive our sins and cleanse us. For Jesus' sake.

Amen. Amen. The other day I was down at the shore, and if you go down to the shore when the tide is out, especially if it's a rocky shore, there's no use if it's a sandy shore without any rocks, but if you go down to a shore that has especially large rocks, and when the tide's gone out, some of these large rocks will have limpets attached to them.

Does anybody know what a limpet is? I don't need to tell, but hands up those who know what a limpet is. No? Well, next time you're down to the shore and go to a large rock, have a look at the rock and see if you can find little creatures with a shell that's shaped a bit like a pyramid.

It's round and then it comes to a point, not very big. They're called limpets. Inside is a very soft creature, and it uses that shell for its protection. But if you go to a limpet as it's attached to a rock, and you just touch it with your finger, you'll find it immediately tightening like that to the rock.

It's got a strong hold of the rock, but it relaxes a little bit once the tide is out. But if you touch it at all or anything comes near it, it immediately goes tight onto the rock.

And that's a great illustration for how we have to hold tightly onto Jesus. You know, when the tide comes in, sometimes the waves are huge, and they come bashing against these rocks with these tiny little limpets attached to them, and you'd feel, surely, these wee limpets are not going to manage to cling onto that rock with these massive big waves crashing over the rock.

[7 : 15] But they do. If you go to the rock after the tide's gone out again, even if there have been huge waves bashing that rock, the limpets are still attached because they have such a tight hold of that rock.

And that reminds us how we need to hold onto Jesus really tightly. We do that by trusting in Him, by having our faith in Him, by trusting in Him.

A psalmist, when we sang a psalm a wee minute ago, said that the pains of hell took hold on him. He found grief and trouble. He was surrounded with sorrows, things which were really difficult for him.

And then he says, In other words, just like the limpet clings to the rock, and especially so when the tide's coming in, or if somebody's trying to shift it, when we have anything in our lives that troubles us, any problems, anything that really hurts us, whatever our need is, we need to come to tightly cling to Jesus.

Crying to Jesus like the psalmist, Lord, save me, protect me, look after me. Don't let this difficulty overwhelm me.

[8 : 32] Don't let me lose my grip on you. Just like the limpet clings to the rock. So when you think about Jesus and all that Jesus has done, and who Jesus is, the Son of God, our Savior, think of how important it is that you hold onto.

And when some people might tell you that it's just really not the kind of thing that people should be doing nowadays, to believe in Jesus, to follow Jesus, to come to say in public that Jesus is our Savior, that's like the waves crashing over the limpet trying to get it away from the rock.

When any of that happens, you need to cling all the more tightly to Jesus, to ask him to look after you, to help you, protect you in your faith, in your following of Jesus, so that you'll not give way, and that you'll cling even more closely to Jesus as your Savior.

Now we're going to say the Lord's Prayer together. Amen. Amen. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[9 : 57] For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Amen. We're going to sing again, this time from Psalm 61, on page 293, singing verses 1 to 5.

And that again is similar to what we're saying about the limpets hanging, clinging onto the rock. And says there in verse 2, What time my heart is overwhelmed, and in perplexity, do thou me lead unto the rock that higher is than I.

Jesus, in the Bible, a number of times is called a rock, so that we are secure as we are attached to him. Psalm 61, the tune is Salzburg, verses 1 to 5.

O God, give ear unto my cry. O God, give ear unto my cry, unto my prayer's end, From the utmost corner of the land, my cry to thee as send.

O time my heart is overwhelmed, and in perplexity, To love me lead unto the rock, that higher is than I.

[11 : 58] For thou hast for my refuge be, a shelter by thy power.

And for defense against my foes, Thou hast me not strong turn.

Within thy tower will lie, For ever will abide, And under cover tall thy wings, With confidence behind. For thy levels that I did make, O Lord, my God is here, Thou hast given me The heritage Of those thy name not fear.

Let's read now from God's word in the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew chapter 5. We're reading verses 1 to 16. Matthew 5.

[13 : 57] Matthew 5. Reading from the beginning. Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain, And when he sat down, His disciples came to him.

And he opened his mouth, And taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger, And thirst for righteousness, For they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, For they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted, For righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you, Blessed are you, Blessed are you, When others revile you, And persecute you, And utter all kinds of evil against you, Falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, For your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets, Who were before you. You are the salt of the earth, But if salt has lost its taste, How shall its saltiness be restored?

[15:10] It is no longer good for anything, Except to be thrown out, And trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, Nor do people light a lamp, And put it under a basket, But on a stand, And it gives light to all in the house.

In the same way, Let your light shine before others, So that they may see your good works, And give glory to your Father, And the Father who is in heaven.

And may the Lord once again bless to us, Reading that portion of his word. We're going to engage in prayer, And one of those we're going to be praying for, I've been asked to pray for her particularly, Is little Lucy Beth Davis.

She's just a few days old, And she has had to go to have major surgery today. So please bear her in mind, Along with her parents, Nicholas Davis, And Laura Jane Davis.

So we're going to be praying for her, Particularly in the course of her prayer time this morning. So let's join together in prayer. O Lord our God, We know it's our great privilege, To be able to pray to you, To be able to come before you, And not only give praise and thanks to you, But also to seek your help.

[16:30] For we are always in need of your help, O Lord. You are the only one to whom we can turn, For the help that we require. Even though we may give much help to one another, As we seek to do throughout the course of life.

Lord, we give thanks that we have been singing this morning, Of how you are the great help of your people. How you are the one to whom we can turn at any time. And we thank you Lord, Even as Peter long ago, Exclaimed and confessed.

When the challenge was given to himself, And to the disciples by you. If they also were going to turn away from you. Lord, to whom else can we go? You alone have the words of eternal life.

Lord, we pray for ourselves today here. We represent a great variety of need, Of ages, of backgrounds, Of circumstances in life. But we thank you that they are all known to yourself.

That you know us most perfectly, Even out in most thoughts. And we can say, like the psalmist said on another occasion, That even before he uttered the words that he would speak, They were already known to you.

[17:39] You knew the thoughts of his heart, The very turnings of his mind. And so it is, Lord, with ourselves before you today. Every aspect of our being is known to you.

We pray that we may take comfort in this. Even, Lord, though at times we may find it uncomfortable, To realize that God is reading our very thoughts and our minds. All the things that take place within our souls.

And yet, Lord, we give thanks that we are known in such an intimate and perfect way with yourself. For we know, Lord, that we can safely deposit our lives in your hands.

That we can do so knowing that, because your knowledge of us is so perfect, So you are able to do for us even more than we are able to ask or think. And so today, Lord, we pray your blessing to come to us and to take your own word, Make it particularly beneficial to us today.

We thank you that we know your word, yet we realize, oh Lord, that we don't know it anything like well enough. And that we still have so much of it to learn in our experience, Especially in having it applied to our lives day by day.

[18:52] Lord, we come before you today and come with our confession of sin. We come with our need of pardon, of cleansing, of being reestablished in your way when we go astray.

And we give thanks today that we come to the God who has demonstrated this so many times in the history and in the events of his people. Not only as a people, but also individually.

You are the God who turns us back into your way. And to whom we can pray that you would maintain us in the ways of righteousness and of peace. Lord, but when we do stray, we pray that

you would recover us quickly.

But we do not want to stray away from you. For in your presence there is fullness of joy and there is life. And we pray that today you would keep us close to yourself.

Even as we have been thinking, Lord, with our children today. Enable us to cling to you, to cleave to you. And to know you as our sure foundation. As the rock upon which we may stand.

[19 : 52] Upon which we may safely build our lives. We pray your blessing upon us, Lord, in all our activities as a congregation. Bless us in our services of worship. Our public worship when we come together as we do now.

O Lord, we ask that you would draw near to us even at this time. And as we anticipate in the week to come, further services connected again with the remembrance of the Lord's death in the Lord's Supper.

Lord, again we pray your blessing to be with us during these days. We pray for any who know in their heart of hearts that they should be sitting at the Lord's table and have not yet done so.

We pray that you would encourage them. We pray that we may be encouraging to them. We pray that you would give them strength, O Lord. We pray that they may see that their worthiness is not in themselves.

And that indeed as we come expressing our unworthiness, help us to turn to the worthiness of the Lord. That you are worthy that we should remember you.

[20 : 55] Worthy that we should do this in remembrance of you. Worthy in every way that we should serve you. That we should do so in the presence of others as well. And so help us, Lord, at this time.

And be pleased to bless those we anticipate to preach the gospel to us. Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Ferguson. And we pray that you would grant your blessing to them and to Mr. McCritchie.

We pray that they may know your blessing in preparation. That we may know the blessing of the Lord through them as they minister your word to us. And we pray too, Lord, today for those who are unwell.

We think of those who are suffering in different ways. From illness at this time, we ask that you would bless them. We pray for those who are anticipating surgery of different ages.

We commend them to you, Lord, today. We ask for those who have been through surgery that you would bless them. And those who are receiving treatment at this time. Lord, we ask your blessing for them.

[21 : 52] We pray for little Lucy Beth. We pray for our Lord as she undergoes surgery today, as we understand. Bless her, we pray, in these young, fragile, early days of life.

Be pleased to lay your good hand upon her. And help those who carry out the surgery that they may do so under your own hand, under your guidance. We pray that it may be for her health restoration. And that all would be successful as we commend her to you. We pray for her parents. We ask that you'd bless them, Laura Jane and Nuck. Be with them, Lord, at this anxious time.

And all the rest of the family, we commend them to you. We ask that you bless, too, those today who mourn the passing of loved ones. Lord, our God, we are conscious every week that passes that there are some who have mourning and the experience of death in their families.

And today we commend them to you once again. And ask that you would bless us as a congregation. You are making us so familiar with death. And so we want to be all the more familiar with life, O Lord.

[23 : 00] Lord, the life that you have come to provide for your people. Remember our troubled world at this time. Lord, our heart goes out and our prayers ascend to you for the people of Turkey and also of Syria.

And the devastation of this earthquake. These earthquakes that have taken place. O Lord, we don't know how to pray in regard to such devastation. So much loss of life.

So many devastated families. So many wondering if they have a future at all. And if so, what it is. We commend them to you.

We pray for them. We pray that whatever else may happen, that they may find the Lord in their troubles. And that you would grant to all who are giving them assistance at this time with emergency services and recovery services.

O Lord, our God, we pray that all of them will be helped and you would help to uphold them during the trauma of these days for them as well. As they deal with such tragedy on such a large scale.

[24 : 07] Remember too, we pray the ongoing wars in the world. Different places, Lord, where we know there is ongoing engagement and hatred of people against each other. Not only in Ukraine and other places in the Middle East.

We pray, Lord, that you would bring the peace of the gospel especially to bear upon our troubled world, including our own nation. And so we commend all of these things to you now.

Asking that you would hear us as we pray. And we ask all of these things, seeking pardon and cleansing from all our sin. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Now we're going to sing once again to God's praise from Psalm 96.

Psalm 96a. In the St. Psalms, that's page 126. In verses 1 to 9. O sing a new song to the Lord. Sing praises to his name. And his salvation day by day. Let all the earth proclaim. His glory and his mighty deeds to every land declare. How great and awesome is the Lord.

[25 : 16] With him no gods compare. Psalm 96a verses 1 to 9. The tune this time is St. Magnus. O sing a new song to the Lord.

Sing praises to his name. O sing a new song to the Lord. Sing praises to his name. And his salvation day by day. Let all the earth proclaim. His glory and his mighty deeds to every land. The Lord sing praises to his name.

And his salvation day by day. Let all the earth proclaim. And his salvation day by day. Let all the earth proclaim. His glory and his mighty deeds to every land declare.

His glory and his glory and his glory. His glory and his mighty deeds to every land declare. How great and awesome is the Lord.

With him no gods. compare. All other gods are good and stone. The Lord make them. The Lord make them. hres ■■■ho Bot, don't belong on earth. Am tot my twent hands. Jienty. Now, this is the Lord.

[26 : 15] Of h Consortium.

That ■ field, Miss you three■■■. All power and majesty are his, he dwells in glorious light.

All nations to the Lord ascribe the glory that is true.

Glory and strength thus ride to God and grace his name anew.

Enter his horse with joy and ring and offering with you.

[27 : 34] Worship the Lord in holy fear. All life before him power.

Now turn with me please to Matthew chapter 5. We're going to be looking at verse 16 especially today.

Matthew chapter 5 and verse 16. In the same way let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

We'll mention the previous two verses as well because they're very much tied up with what's in verse 16. The light of the world and the lamp that's put on a stand.

Well we know all about courses in discipleship these days and they are very welcome, very important in the life of any congregation.

[28 : 40] The times that we're able to carry this out. For example even the hope explored. You can say that that is itself an exercise in discipleship. What is it to follow the Lord, to know the Lord and to be among his disciples.

But imagine going through the discipleship course that you have in the opening verses of this chapter. Where Jesus spoke to the disciples as they went up on the mountain.

His own disciples came to him and he opened his mouth and taught them saying. And then you have the discipleship teaching of these following verses.

And they are among the most challenging verses in the whole Bible. Jesus didn't shirk from setting before his people, his disciples and therefore before ourselves now in the Bible, in the Gospel as well.

The challenges of living this kind of life. And all the more as you see that, all the more we should come to seek the Lord's grace and the Lord's help.

[29 : 45] To be the kind of people, the kind of disciples that are disciples of Jesus. And what you find in these verses includes both what we should be internally and also externally.

And the two of course should always match up. What we are in our way of life outwardly, openly, should match what we are inwardly. And there are many times when we ourselves are conscious that the two just don't quite match up the way they should.

And what we are outwardly doesn't necessarily fit with what we are inwardly, at least not a hundred percent. And that's because we're sinners. Because we're imperfect.

And because we have to come before the Lord every day asking that the Lord would forgive us. For the failures we have to match up what's inside with what's outside.

But in any case, this is what you find throughout these beatitudes in this chapter as they're called. What they have to be inwardly, they are to show that outwardly.

[30 : 52] And that's what you find here in verses 14 to 16 as well. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

Now this is really a follow-up. If you cast your mind back, you may remember, you may not, but hopefully you do. When we looked at John chapter 3 verses 19 to 21 a few weeks ago, it was following on from Jesus as the light of the world, taught to our young folks.

And as we saw there in chapter 3 of John, we noticed there that verses 19 to 21, Jesus himself had said, this is the judgment.

The light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. And then he made the distinction between those who do wicked things, who hate the light, who don't come to the light, so that their deeds should not be exposed.

But whoever does what is true or truth comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought out, carried out in God. So this is in a sense a follow-up to that, where we're now coming to see Jesus saying to the disciples, let your light shine before men in the same way as it happens with the lamp and with the city that's set on a hill, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

[32 : 25] And it's especially the burden of verse 16 that we think about discipleship, not in so much what it means to ourselves, yes it does, it's not even how much it means to others as we show them the way to God.

But our primary responsibility and privilege is to bring glory to our Father who is in heaven. To bring him the praise, to bring him the glory, to let his name be exalted.

That's really the essence of discipleship, that's the burden of discipleship. This is the end you have in view, that God will be glorified, that our Father in heaven will have all the honor and the praise and the glory.

Well let's see, first of all, the illustrations that are used, verses 13 onwards here, the illustrations that are used. You are the salt of the earth and you are the light of the world.

A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Let's just take it from there. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. You are the light of the world.

[33 : 37] Well you know yourselves when you come to a place where a village or a town or a city is set prominently on a hilltop, you can see it from pretty much all directions.

And there are places in the world that are famous for the fact that they're set so high up on a hill that people can see them from a great distance. And of course in the old days that would have been part of the way that they tried to make things secure, that the city would be set as prominently as possible to make it more difficult for any enemies to come and attack them.

And of course they'd have a wall round in those days as well. The point made is the visibility of that city. That's the point that's made there. You are the light of the world.

A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. It's impossible to miss a city that is set on a hill. Its visibility is one of its striking features.

And then he moves to this lamp on a lampstand. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all that are in the house.

[34 : 47] Well, there's the visibility aspect of that as well, of course. But you'll notice there's something additional here. It's not just saying like the city set on a hill. Its visibility is its obvious characteristic.

There's the visibility too of the lamp, but there's also the responsibility of the person who's lit the lamp to put it on a lampstand rather than put it and hide it under a basket or under a covering. So there's both visibility but also responsibility. You have to actually, when you're lighting a lamp, your concern obviously is to let that lamp do the work it's designed for.

To actually let that light shine, as it says here, to give light to all who are actually in the house.

That's what the lamp was made for. That's the purpose of light. That's the purpose of light to scatter

darkness.

Darkness doesn't have any properties of its own, remarkably. When you think about what darkness is and you want to try and define darkness, well, it's very hard to define it, isn't it?

[35 : 46] Because it doesn't have properties of its own. The best way you can define darkness is to say, well, if you take light, then darkness is the opposite of light.

It's the absence of light. Which really just goes to show that the purpose of light, the whole point to light, is that it will actually scatter the darkness.

That the darkness will disappear once the light goes on. That's the purpose of the light. And here he's saying, people don't light a lamp in order to put it under a basket, but on a stand so that it may give light to all who are in the house.

And that's what Jesus is really saying for his disciples. That's their responsibility. That's their privilege. He has made them lights. You are the light of the world. You notice what he's saying there.

You are the light of the world. Of course, Jesus is the light of the world too, as we saw in John chapter 10. But following on from that, because his people are so joined to him, because he has made them to be lights in his image, he can say of them here, you are the light of the world.

[36 : 53] How is the world out there in all its moral and spiritual darkness, how is it going to see the way to God? How is it going to see anything except its own darkness?

How is it going to see anything opposite to itself, different to itself? Jesus is saying, it's going to see it in you, because you are the light of the world.

You are like the lamp that's been lit, especially to scatter the darkness, to deal with the darkness. But it's your privilege, he says, and your responsibility to put it on a stand, to put it on display, to make it seen, to make it visible.

That's how it is with our salvation. We don't receive salvation from God just to hide it in our hearts, just to keep it to ourselves. There's a visibility about the Christian life that is inseparable from the fact that God has made them into his own lights in the world.

And that visibility is something that you come to see at different times. But we mustn't just think of it at certain times, such as at the Lord's Supper, though it is there when God's professing people come to gather at the table, as we anticipate will happen next Lord's Day.

[38 : 11] And they come apart and show themselves to be as professing people as they come to take the communion, taking the bread and the wine that represent the Lord's death, the Lord and his death.

Of course, that is itself one of the obvious ways in which their light is shown, in which they are able to say, God has made me what I am, and I'm pleased to do this in remembrance of him.

I'm doing it for him. I'm just in passing, maybe you're one of those here today, and I know there are some, who are light, but it's still under the basket.

You haven't yet made it shown in the way that you would like it to be shown, in the way that it's intended to be shown. You know Jesus. You know the Lord.

You love the Lord. You love his word. You love being in his worship with his people. So this is your opportunity this time round.

[39 : 13] To come and take the light from under the basket, as it were, and show it. Make it known. Make it known that you are one of those described as the light of the world.

You might be one of those people, like myself, who says, well, my light is really pretty pale compared to what I see in others. I'm not of the same caliber of Christian as I see in other people's lives.

That really isn't the point. The point is, make the light that you've got, whatever you think of it, make it visible for the Lord's sake. Remember what we said.

It's to give glory to your Father who is in heaven. That's our great privilege, to bring him glory. That's what we were created for in the first place. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever along with that.

So here is the lamp that's set on the stand, and it's a great encouragement. You remember Luke chapter 8, you find from verse 47.

[40 : 21] Verses that fit in with what we're looking at here just now. Chapter 8 and verses 47 in Luke, where you find the following said.

This is the woman that came and touched the fringe of Jesus' garment. And immediately her discharge of blood ceased.

Jesus said, who was it that touched me? And all denied it. Peter said, master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you. But Jesus said, someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me.

And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling and falling down before him, declared or confessed in the presence of all the people why she had touched him and how she had immediately been healed.

And he said to her, daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. He's only after she came publicly. And Jesus himself brought it about the way he dealt with it there in his own unique way.

[41 : 28] She knew that she couldn't be hidden anymore, that he was going to bring her out anyway. That she had something done to her, which she knew in herself had changed her life. And which he knew, Jesus, who had done this for her.

So she came trembling. And you might be trembling. You might be trembling at the prospect of making it known that you're a Christian in this dark world. But this dark world needs your light. This dark world needs people to see that God is precious to you.

And so even if you come trembling, come. Even if it's in fear, come nevertheless. He's going to look after you. He's not left you to yourself to look after your own light, to look after your own future.

It's him. It's all about him. So in this moral, spiritual darkness that we have in our own circumstances, in our communities, in our nation today.

Friends, we all of us together and each of us individually needs to let that light shine. Let your light, in the same way, let your light shine before others.

[42 : 36] So the illustrations that are used, where you find the city set on a hill, the lamp that's lit and put on a lampstand, these are the illustrations he used. But then he came to the application of it in verse 16.

This is the illumination that's called for. In the same way, let your light shine before others. Now, the fact that he says in the same way there means in the same way as he's spoken of the lamp and also of the city set on a hill, in terms of its visibility and the responsibility to make it shine, in the same way, let your light so shine before others.

It's our action. It's our responsibility. That's what's being called for. The setting is the setting of darkness. It's the property of the light to scatter that darkness.

You know, we complain very understandably about the darkness of our age, the darkness of our day, the darkness morally and spiritually that's all around us. And it's right that we do that.

We have to let that hit our hearts. We have to really bring that to our own minds and then bring it before the Lord. It's not wrong to say that. But we mustn't just stop at complaining that it's so dark that there's hardly any light out there in the world these days.

[43 : 54] We have to deal with that in the way Jesus here talks to his disciples. Let your light so shine. How do we expect that darkness to be other than darkness if we keep the light to ourselves?

Let your light so shine before others. We must be lights in this dark world.

And in order to be lights in this dark world, we need to look after the light that God has given us. We need to care for that light that God has given us or that God has made us out to be.

He has made us lights. We need to look after our lives that he has made lights, that he has made lamps for himself. How do we look after our life spiritually? How do we look after that light?

Well, in the old days, when people used lamps, especially those days of Christ himself, but I'm sure we've all seen lamps that were from times gone by in our grandparents' age or whenever, and when there were oil-fed lamps, we had the lamp, the bowl, and the glass on top, the wick coming up through.

[45 : 01] You lit the wick, and the oil fed the little flame, and it gave out its light. But you needed to look after that lamp. For one thing, you needed to trim the wick every so often.

You needed to take away the black stuff that was sooty. And if you left it unattended, all you would get was increasingly black smoke, and the light would be lessened by that. You needed to keep the glass of the lamp clean, because it also became smoky and black.

And if you didn't do that, then it didn't give out its light as it was intended to. Think of it on a larger scale. Think of the lighthouses. In the days when lighthouses were different to now, they had to be manually looked after.

And the person looking after the lighthouse, whatever it was, had to make sure that that light was kept shining. People's lives depended on it. And if that light was not kept in good condition, then there could be a shipwreck as a result of it, and people might lose their lives.

So they had to keep the light in good condition. They had to keep the glass around the light in good condition, so that that light had as much efficiency as possible to shine out into the darkness.

[46 : 11] Well, we have to look after the light that we are, the light that God has made us to be. How do you look after it? Well, you bring your soul before God daily for its washing, for its cleansing, for its refurbishment.

We come to confess our sins daily. That's what we do as we read in the Lord's Supper, as we teach our children and ourselves. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Forgive our trespasses, as it is in another gospel, as we forgive those who have trespassed against us. In other words, we're asking the Lord, Lord, clean me. David in Psalm 51, he knew his sin.

He knew what he had done. He knew it wasn't right. He knew it was bad. He knew it was evil against you, you only, Lord. I have done this. I have done this wickedness. I have done this evil. And I need my life restored. I need cleansed. Cleanse me, Lord. Clean me. Create in me a clean heart. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity.

[47 : 16] Not so. You come every day to ask the Lord to keep you clean, to make your light shine. To let your light shine forth through a cleansed heart and a cleansed mind.

Whenever we find ourselves with a smoke of our own sins, as it were, a smoke of our own tendencies, beginning once again to cloud the glass of our lives, bring it to the Lord.

Ask the Lord. Clean me. Lord, I want to be shining for you. I want it for your sake. It's not for my sake. It's not to make a name for myself. It's not so that I can be proud of my achievements or anything like that.

It's so that I will give glory to you as my Father in heaven. And of course, not only do you keep the lamp clean like that, but you also make sure that the, going back to the days of the oil, that the oil that you use doesn't run out, that you actually replenish it, that you make sure it's good quality oil. Otherwise, the week will be smoky. And it won't give out the kind of light that you desire in your lamp. And it's the same in your soul as well. Not only do you need to come to God, and I need to come to God every day for washing, for cleaning, for forgiveness.

[48 : 34] We also need to ask the Lord, Lord, feed my soul. We're here today so that our souls can be fed. That's why we value the gospel.

That's why we value his word. We come to this as the most wonderful, perfect, 100% pure oil that we can get for the light of our souls.

Here it is in the word of God. The word that's out there despised. You don't find this word valued out in the darkness. You've got to shine so that this word through you can actually touch the lives of people who don't know the Lord.

And in order to do that, your own soul has to be fed. Your own soul has to be properly fed. And, you know, one of the dangers when we're serving the Lord, whatever way we're serving him, whether it's as ministers or deacons or elders or prominently helping out in various clubs or whatever kind, you know, we can be so busy even doing good things that we neglect our own souls.

You wouldn't benefit much from my preaching or from the preaching of Calmerdor or anybody else who comes to preach to you. You wouldn't benefit much if all we were doing every day of our lives was just preparing stuff for preaching.

[49 : 55] That's good. Yes, that's great. That's necessary. But I need to feed my own soul. I need to go to the word of God for my own edification as much as I need to go to the word of God to know what I'm going to preach on the next occasion I preach.

And if I don't keep my own soul in good condition, and please don't think I'm keeping it 100% as it should be, none of us can say that. But we need to actually feed our souls with the best of oils.

You know, one of the reasons why the devil is so active in our world, why the darkness in our world is the way it is, why there's so much of an effort to remove this Bible from private and public life, certainly from public life, from our schools, from other ways in which it's held publicly and still used publicly, is because the devil realizes this oil, this oil of God's word, is designed specially to feed the souls of God's people.

And if they're denied it, then their life suffers as a result. Keep your soul in the best condition. Go to God daily for your washing and cleansing.

Feed your soul daily on this wonderful oil of God's word. Because that's so necessary to let your light shine. But he says, let your light shine before others.

[51 : 26] You see, this has to be taken like the lamp out from under the bushel, under the basket, under its covering. And in order to give light to the room, to the house, it has to be taken out deliberately and is put on the lampstand.

So its light then goes out and scatters the darkness. He's saying, in the same way, let your light shine before others. Take your light, Jesus is saying, into the darkness and into the dark corners of society.

And let it do its work there. Let Jesus use you as light for his name and for the Father's name.

Remember how, let me just read from Ephesians, just now chapter 5.

Ephesians chapter 5. And you'll find in verses from 8, verse 8 onwards. Let me just read these few verses. Ephesians 5 at verse 8.

He's here talking, of course, about how Christians are to be together. And the kind of life they must live together as well as individually. But he says, You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

[52 : 35] Walk as children of light, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true. And try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. And he says, Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness.

Instead, expose them. How do you expose them? By being light for the Lord in society. For he says it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.

But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible. For anything that becomes visible is light.

See what he's saying there? He's saying expose the works of darkness. And you do it not just simply by criticizing or critiquing what's going on in the world.

You do it especially by being light. By living a holy life. By living a life that's faithful to Jesus. By putting your light out there so that it will shine.

[53 : 37] And so that it will bring glory to your Father who is in heaven. You know, the more Christian influence in society. You hardly need to say this. The more Christian influence in society declines.

The more gross that society becomes. I hardly need to say that. Because you know that that's what's happening in society at the present time.

There is just such an awful grossness out there in the darkness. It's not just that there is darkness. But there is arrogant and gross and coarse darkness and shameless darkness.

You know, people accuse us when we say, well, in the old days, people were afraid to actually let those things be known. And the response from the world today is, well, that's just hypocrisy.

That's ridiculous. It's good nowadays that people are free to do as they please. Instead of trying to keep it covered up, that's hypocrisy. But you see what's happening. There's no shame.

[54 : 39] Or there's little shame compared to what there was or used to be over the works of darkness. Yes. People are just so open and so bold and so arrogant in living godless lifestyles.

Lifestyles, the Bible tells us, are depraved. What is shame to yourself? What is shame to me? It's a valuable thing.

Why is it a valuable thing? Because when I feel shame and when I'm ashamed over my sins, I know my conscience is working. And when my conscience is working, I know that God is laying something on my heart that's important to him and important to me.

And if my conscience really begins to slacken or cease to work, if it becomes deadened through my familiarity with sin, I'm in deep trouble. If I don't recognize my sin for what it is, if I don't recognize the shamefulfulness of sinful behavior for what it is, where am I?

I'm just being carried away on the tide of debauchery. That's where we're at today. We mentioned that in the last study from John's Gospel.

[55 : 52] This is the condemnation that light has come into the world and people loved, chose darkness rather than light. Why? Because their deeds were evil. And they don't come to the light.

Why don't they come to the light? Because they're afraid that their deeds will be exposed. They know that if they come to the light, the light of God's truth, their conscience is going to be stung. And they don't like their conscience stung, so they stay away from the light. And they do the very things that they want to do in the darkness. Let your light so shine before others that they may see

your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Shine into that darkness, friend. Shine into it in every way you can. Not only by coming forward in the context of the congregation publicly to make it known that you too are a Christian.

That you too love the Lord. That you too want to do this for Him. But even outwith that, every opportunity you get, and we actually mention some of them from time to time. We're given the opportunity of petitioning our members of Parliament and MSPs.

[57 : 06] We're given the freedom and the liberty to write letters to them, to contact them, to tell them, we don't agree with this darkness. We don't agree with this debauchery. We want to protest against a government-led movement into darkness.

Write, phone, text, email. We have all the opportunities in the world to be as lights in the world.

Whatever it's made of, whatever people think of it, whatever is the end result of the day, even if you think, well, it's not going to make much difference anyway.

What's the point of me sending an email to my MSP or to my MP? It's just going to disappear amongst all the other waste people. It doesn't matter. You've purged your conscience. You've made your stand.

You've made your point. And you never know if you quote the truth to them. Remember, this is the Word of God. God has given a promise.

Those that honor Him, He will honor. We have to hold on to that, friends, because God has placed us in a privileged position in our democracy where we can be His lights in the world so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

[58 : 29] Well, just as you find some lights that are really just for decoration, decorative lights, nothing wrong with that, but their purpose is not specifically to shine into the darkness, to scatter the darkness.

It's pretty much rather than that just to put on a nice show, and that's all right. There's nothing wrong with that. But light in itself and its properties, as we said, is designed to scatter the darkness.

In other words, what Jesus is saying here, among many other things, is that I have made you a light so that you would be useful to the world.

So that you would be useful in bringing me before that world, in bringing me into the darkness.

That's really what you're carrying. As God has made you a light, as He's made you someone who knows Himself.

When you're carrying that light into the darkness, when you're putting it there deliberately in the darkness so that it'll shine for the Lord, well, the Lord is saying, I'm actually in that light.

[59 : 31] My truth is in that light. That's why I have given you to be light, so that not only do you shine, but I shine through you. In 1933 or thereabouts, a man called Percy Shaw was driving home at night in the fog.

Now, he normally followed tram lines, which were also then on some roads, and he could see the tram lines in the lights of his car. Very often, he would use the tram lines on the road just to mark out his way home, and he could follow that in the lights of his car.

But this particular night was very foggy, and he couldn't see the tram lines, and the reflection of the car headlights wasn't really reflecting on the tram tracks the way it used to be.

And it was so bad that he was really struggling to make his way home. And then, just all of a sudden, around the corner, there was a cat sitting by the roadside. And of course, as soon as the car headlights hit the cat's eyes, they lit up, or they appeared to light up.

And that gave him an idea. Could he invent something like the eyes of a cat that would help people in the darkness, and the lights of their car could follow them and be safe?

[60 : 52] And that's what he did. He set about inventing what we now know as cat's eyes. He invented this particular marking for the road.

Two small circular balls, they were, first of all, facing each direction. And they were reflecting in the car's lights when they came to it. And you know that yourselves now.

You find them even in different colors. But the problem was there was no guide until this happened if you were in the darkness. But with the cat's eyes, as soon as the car lights hit the cat's eyes, you could make your way safely by following the cat's eyes all the way through along the road where they were situated.

Now, that's really, I think, an illustration for us as to why God has given us the light that's in us when he's given us when he's given us to know himself, when he's given us, when he's brought us into

that saving relationship with himself and made us as disciples.

You are the cat's eyes for the world. You're the cat's eyes by which you can show the world the safe way to proceed in life.

[62 : 07] The safe way morally and spiritually that will not only enhance and be good for themselves, but will come to bring others to glorify the name of God.

We're not in the business of bringing glory or praise to ourselves, friends. There's enough of that in the darkness.

But we have to bring glory to our Father who is in heaven to guide ourselves and to guide people to the light that is Jesus himself and to be lights for him like the cat's eyes that mark up a safe way for people to proceed so that they can see their way to God and fulfill the chief end for which we were created.

I still think it's one of the great statements in all literature, that first catechism of the shorter catechism. What is man's chief end?

To put it in other words, why were we created? Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

[63 : 22] Both very much connected together. It's not just man's chief end is to glorify God. We can think of all that that would mean is that we bring glory to God, but there's nothing at all in it for ourselves.

Or on the other hand, man's chief end is to enjoy God forever without bringing him the glory. You see how it's balanced. Man's chief end is to bring glory to God and to enjoy him forever.

Friends, being the light of Jesus in the world, knowing Jesus, is a matter of great joy, the profoundest joy. And there is no joy like the joy of the Christian.

The joy that's enjoyed even in the darkness. The joy that the darkness cannot extinguish. In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

May God bless these thoughts. Let's pray. Lord, our God, our Father in heaven, make us, we pray, to shine for you more than we are. Forgive us when we fail to shine as we should.

[64 : 39] Forgive us for the opportunities to shine that we let slip by. Lord, forgive us when we fail to keep our own lives as clean as they should be. Forgive us when we fail to take in as much as we should of the oil of your word to maintain our lives in good condition.

Lord, use us, we pray, to bring glory to your name. And give us that burden in our hearts increasingly to bring glory to our Father who is in heaven.

And in every way that we can, O Lord, and in whatever way we do fall short as we know today, we pray that you would grant us grace, that things may be improved, and that we may move onwards in our discipleship to bring you further praise and honor and glory for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Let's now conclude our service singing in Psalm 96 again. We'll sing the final three verses of Psalm 96.

It's page 127. The tune this time is Stroudwater. From verse 10. Tell every land the Lord is king. Established is the earth and cannot move.

[65 : 55] The Lord will judge the peoples in his truth. These verses 10 to 13. We've made attempts to find out what's causing that.

We still don't know. So, but just bear with it. We hopefully will get to the source of, well, I say we because I can't really. I have no expertise in any of that. But those that do, hopefully can get to the bottom of it.

It's just something obviously wrong in the electronics somewhere that's causing that distortion. So, anyway, verses 10 to 13. Tell every land the Lord is king. Established is the earth and cannot move. The Lord will judge the peoples in his truth. These verses to God's praise. Tell every land the Lord is king.

He establishes the earth and cannot move. The Lord will judge the peoples in his truth.

[67 : 11] Let them rejoice that death begot. With joy let oceans spring.

The fields and all in their will shine. The forest trees will sing.

They all will sing before the Lord. The Lord will sing.

The Lord will sing. The Lord will sing. He'll judge the earth. He'll judge the earth. He'll judge the world.

In righteousness. The Lord will sing. The Lord will sing. The Lord will sing. The Lord will sing.

[68 : 18] The Lord will sing. The Lord will sing. I'll go to the main door after the benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore.

Amen. Amen.