

You Are The Light Of The World

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Date: 09 September 2016

[0 : 00] Please open your Bibles to Matthew chapter number 5. Matthew chapter number 5. We're going to read a couple of verses here this evening. Matthew 5 will start in verse number 14. Did all of you notice whenever they were singing a few songs back that one by one light started coming on here on the stage?

Did you guys see that? And some of you maybe are sitting a little bit further back. How many of you haven't seen it? Raise your hand. Didn't notice. Everybody noticed. Fantastic. All right. Good. Then I'll have to cut out that part about explaining how it happens because you all saw it.

But you know, as I'm sitting here tonight thinking about the missionaries and watching the film and different friends of ours that are serving different places in the world and seeing the map and rejoicing with you and all that God's done through Vision Baptist Church over these last 10 years, just 11 years ago, all of this was just a dream and a hope and a prayer.

11 years ago, we were in Chile getting ready to start our first church. In September, we were, I don't know, six weeks out from the first church service of our first church there in Chile, just hoping and praying that God was going to do something there.

We had a building. We had a sign. We had some chairs. And first week of September, we were out in the community trying to hand out some flyers and get to know some people and make some contacts.

[1 : 16] But see what God's done over these last 11 years here up in Alfreda, down in Santiago, different areas around the world, to see what God could do through the potential of all these young missionaries that you guys are meeting week in and week out.

You know, the past is so encouraging, but the future and the potential if the Lord carries his coming is so unbelievable. And if we look at our pastoral staff here, the average age that we have of the pastoral staff is like 40.

There's one guy that's really skewing the numbers high. If you look at the average age of the missionaries here, you know, we have Jim Roberts, who's affectionately known as Old Man Jim.

He's, you know, outside of him, you know, there's, there's, man, there's so much potential of what God's going to do over these next 5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40 years.

Who knows what God is doing, will continue to do through Vision Baptist Church, and we should be so encouraged to look back and see the faithfulness and goodness of the Lord and how he is blessing and be so encouraged about these lights that we see here.

[2 : 28] It's just the first step, the tip of the iceberg of what God is doing through the ministry of men and women in this church. And you have a, you have the opportunity to be a part of it, to be around it.

And I know sometimes week in and week out, you maybe lose a little bit of the excitement of all the things that God's doing, but be encouraged. And I pray that this week, that's what's going to happen, that you're going to leave here each night and after the Sunday activities, knowing that you're a part of something bigger, of something special, of something that's actually affecting the world for God's glory in our generation.

And we have the opportunity to be a part of that. What an awesome thing. The Bible says here in Matthew chapter number five, Jesus is talking here, his ministry's just getting started, similar to how we're just getting started and all the things going on in many aspects.

In chapter three, he was baptized by John the Baptist. In chapter four, he's going through some temptations and some of the initial disciples are being called. Here we have the Sermon on the Mount, one of the first times that he's at length speaking here to the multitude and his disciples that came together.

And he says in verse number 14, 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.

[3 : 51] Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. The first part there, verse number 14 is so interesting because Jesus speaking to the multitude, a multitude that hadn't been through a whole lot of preparation, much training.

People are new. They're just getting started. These new disciples, some others that are listening on, and he tells them that you, ye, talking about you plural, all of you are the light of the world.

Are the light. And you know, whenever we're talking about the theme of the week and you see the lights that we have and the decorations and we're thankful for everyone that's put time into making things so pretty and our attention is drawn to the needs around the world and the opportunity and how we're lights of the world, but we're thinking about this concept.

It's a concept that we find in the Bible, and the Bible uses this battle of darkness and light, of lies and truth, of the forces of the devil and demons and all the deception with God and Jesus and the truth and the church and all that we're preaching, the message of the gospel, and Jesus declares to them that they are.

He declares to us that we are the light of the world. Now it's interesting because in that first cultural, that first century cultural context, there were a couple of rabbis that were known and they were given a title of being the lights of the universe or the lights of the world and guys that were respected, that were well known, they were like the televangelists of their days and here Jesus using that same title, that same name, he gives it to them and he says, you all are the light of the world.

[5 : 38] Now there's a couple of things that I want us to take away from this passage this evening and the first thing is, you are the light. You are the light. We're not trying to be the light.

We don't need to want to be the light. Being the light is our identity in Christ. It's who we are as Christians. The Bible says in Ephesians 5, 8, for ye were sometimes darkness.

Not that you walked in darkness, but in sometimes in the past, ye were darkness. But look what the Bible says. But now are ye light? Look what it says, in the Lord.

Now we know the Bible says in so many different times that he is light. For example, we find in John 8, 12, then spake Jesus again unto them saying, I am the light of the world.

We have the quote up here by Jesus on the wall. I am the light of the world. We have it in 1 John 1, 5. Then is the message which we have heard of him and declaring to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

[6 : 43] James 1, 17 calls him the father of lights. Philippians 2, 15 says, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

And I don't want you to leave here thinking, I need to be a light. Because the Bible says, if you're a Christian, if you put your faith in him, if you're a follower of the Lord, and I think by your testimonies, the majority of everyone here tonight would have that testimony, then the Bible says that you and I, we are now today the light of the world.

It's not something we're trying to do. It's not something that we need training to do. It's not something that maybe if these disciples followed Jesus for years, maybe they could get to the level of these real well-known rabbis and there's only a couple of them and they're known by this title.

No, Jesus says, he lets us know, in Christ, we are the light of the world. We should understand our identity in him because what we do is born out of who we are and the Bible tells us who we are.

We are the light of the world. We're the light of the world. And this is an important concept because the Bible tells us, for example, a very important passage that maybe we can have here on the screen.

[8 : 02] It says in 2 Corinthians 4, verse number 3 and 4, 2 Corinthians 4, 3 and 4, but if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.

Look what it says in verse number 4. In whom the God of this world, little g there, we're talking about Satan, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, whom is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Here's a passage talking about, highlighting this battle of truth and lie, this battle of darkness and light, and the enemy has blinded them. They've been born in their sin.

They've been born blinded. They're born not knowing the truth, and they're living that way, and we have been called to be the light. So they can hear the glorious gospel, the light of the glorious gospel, and come to know Him as their Savior.

Back in our text that we're looking at, Matthew 5, 14, ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. It says there that we're the light. What's the next three words there after light?

[9 : 10] Help me out now. Of the world. I love what the Bible says here, because it helps us understand that this idea, if our identity is to be a lamp, is to be a light, then we have here right after that phrase that Jesus gave us, He gives us the area in which we ought to work, where we should try to make sure this light reaches, and that area is the world.

All men should hear the gospel. He died for every man. Every man should have the opportunity. Every woman, every boy, every girl should have the opportunity, at least once in their life, to hear a clear presentation of the gospel, so they can put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We're supposed to go to all the world. Hey, this board back here, I was talking with someone over lunch today about where they should consider going in Latin America to be a missionary, and I'm like, the truth is, I think if we start up in Venezuela, it's a good option.

Colombia is a good option. I like Ecuador. It's a good option. Peru is a great option. Bolivia is an excellent option. Chile, I mean, check out the map over here. You guys see Chile? See the proportional size of this map to all the other maps hanging here?

You guys have my heart, right? So Chile is a great option. Argentina is a great option. The point is, they're all good options. Uruguay, Paraguay, we like them all. They're all good. We need the light in all those places, because they're living in darkness around the world.

[10 : 30] They've been blinded from birth by the enemy, and they need to know the truth, and God's called you and I to take that gospel to them. Just about 14 months ago, we had the opportunity to start a church in an area where literally there's no gospel preaching church anywhere within miles.

In this particular area, within probably a, I don't know, a mile circle, which for us, that's about 50,000 people, there's not even a Catholic church. There's no evangelical, Catholic, Jehovah's Witness, Mormons.

There's nothing at all that's been built, because it's a new area, and no churches at all. What an opportunity to take the gospel, to take the light there. We've got a picture of a recent youth meeting.

This is very recent. This is like two or three weeks ago. I think the guys have it there in the back. If not, then you guys can imagine. I think they're, yeah, here we go. All right, great. This picture was taken just, I don't know, maybe two or three weeks ago.

It's a group of teenagers that are, that have gotten together on a Friday or Saturday, I don't remember, and they're studying the Bible. Several of them are unsaved. Several of them are from an area of the city that's about, it's only about four or five miles away from the church that we started.

[11 : 38] But for us, that's like two or three hundred thousand people away from where we started this church. For them, in their mind, it will be like the distance of here and maybe Lawrenceville, or something very far away, difficult for brand new people to even think about coming and public transportation and all those kinds of things.

And there's some people here from that area that have come together to study the Bible, to hear the gospel preached, to have light shown into their lives. Now, let's look at that.

Here's literally the neighborhood where a few of them come from. If we can see this next, this next picture here. I think the guys have, yeah, good. So this area here, this is actually from Google Maps, zoomed in, in the area where a few of them come from.

You're seeing here about 40 homes from the top, obviously 200 people roughly living here in this very small area, living in darkness, because in this area of the city, there are no Bible preaching churches.

There are, we haven't reached this area yet. Let's back up once, one click to minimize a bit here, the screen, and we can see the same neighborhood, but from a little bit further out. Here we go. You see this area, okay?

[12 : 41] Now here there's probably, I don't know, we're reaching multiple blocks like we first saw. Let's go one more picture back, and now we're seeing a much larger area. Let's go one back even further.

And here we, we would need a couple of churches to reach this area. There, there are none currently. There's a few young people that have come, because of some friends, to the Bible study in this brand new church that we started.

We need a couple of churches here. Now watch that soccer field up on the left, because we're going to back out a couple more times, and you can see where the soccer field is. You can see the density of population in Santiago. You can see where it's just gray square dots, just block after block, mile after mile.

Let's go back one more, watch that little soccer field, because it's still going to be there. Now you see it there in the middle. Here's a, here's a couple of million people living in darkness in West Santiago. In this whole area that you're looking at, there's no churches.

Now in that one area close to the soccer field, we were talking about, we need two right there, right? One church for over 50,000 in Santiago, we need 140 churches in the one city alone. And when I look at Santiago and I see places like this, I'm thinking spiritually, this whole area is, it should be just a black screen where there might be a few scattered people that have gotten saved because maybe in another area, they've heard the gospel or whatever, but, but by and large, it's complete and utter darkness.

[14 : 03] Now if we back out one more, let's keep moving back. You see that, that soccer field still, right? Kind of right there in the middle on the left. Now we finally have one of our churches that reach into the scope of this as we back out.

Let's move back one more. All right, here we go. Now in this area, Santiago is kind of here on the right. We're looking at the west side of the city still. There's four or five of our churches on the left side of that screen. Guys that we've trained and have gone through the Bible college that are preaching the Bible.

But when I see Santiago, I think this is a city that is by and large, completely blinded by the lie of Satan. They're believing all kinds of religion, all kinds of things.

And they need the gospel, the light of the glorious gospel. And the Bible says that Jesus is light, that God is light, and that you and I are light.

And he's called us to be his ambassadors, to take the light of the gospel, and the light of who he is. And as we go forth and we preach his message, they can see the light, and they can know the truth.

[15 : 02] And he's called us. We don't need to get just wrapped up in saying, okay, we've got a few lights. Praise the Lord. We've had some money given. And praise the Lord. And I think we're ready just to kind of relax and lay back.

No, we're just in the starting point. And this is one city of hundreds and thousands of cities around the world that need Bible preaching missionaries.

As an 18-year-old man, young man living in Forsyth County, I told the Lord, 95% of the world lives outside of the U.S. there's about a 95% chance, Lord, you want me outside of the U.S.

because people need to hear the truth. And I would like to challenge you today. Let's don't let this just be another conference. Let's let this be a time where we come together and we ask the Lord, Lord, help me to realize that I am the light.

At work, with my family, in the community, I went down to Dunkin' Donuts early yesterday. Praise the Lord for Dunkin' Donuts. It's close by the church before my classes at the training center.

[16 : 00] And there were two men from the church sitting down with foundation lessons in front of them, drinking coffee. I don't know if they were eating donuts, but they were talking about the light. Praise the Lord.

And you can be involved in that. Some of you need to go to the other side of the world. Some of you need to reorder your life and your family and your thoughts and your heart and your time and your finances to show this priority of taking the light to the world.

Leave here today knowing we're not trying to be light. We don't need to do more so we can be light. We are light because of what Jesus has done for us.

We don't need to do bigger people überhaupt because of what Jesus Christ can be. We are just trying to be light. Week two weeks, first up for your children.

Matthew Wells, brother blinds. He was curious about which kid will stew. My boys have been doing in the very conservative multiplying by the following time. We are going to eat■■■. Who quieres pretend to go to the outside and for some of us?

[17 : 02] Some of you need to be light. Have a bad time.