

Kingdom Influencers Part 2: Light It Up

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[0 : 00] Father, as we come to your word now, oh Lord, thank you. Thank you for truth. Help us to believe the truth.

People are cynical throughout this nation. So much cynicism. So much doubt and fear. And Lord, help us to be different as your people.

People of truth and hope and joy because of the glory of our King. So Father, we would follow him. And so help us now, even as we open your word, oh speak to all of our hearts. Speak to our lives. Speak to those dark places that we don't want to talk about.

And speak life, life to all of us. Life and light for the glory of Jesus and the good of your people who follow you.

[1 : 02] Use your unworthy servant now and grant him energy and strength to proclaim the truth of God. According to your word, in Jesus' name. Amen. Yes, I'm back.

All right. Matthew 5, 13 to 16. Hear now the word of God. You are the salt of the earth. But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

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 who is in heaven. Amen. That is the word of the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Please be seated. We have communion this morning, so this is going to be somewhat truncated, I got a feeling.

[2 : 12] A little late this morning. We need light. We need light in so many places in our world.

Did you watch the Olympics? I did. The Olympics were filled with controversy. Female boxers who are accused of having male genetic markers.

Were they really women or were they men? Controversy. What seemed to be a horrible depiction of the Lord's Supper by transgendered people?

Or was it the Feast of Dionysus? Which one was it? Does Jordan Childs deserve a bronze medal along with the Ukrainian gymnast?

Does she? And of course, the Israeli-Hamas-Palestinian conflict. Who's wrong?

[3 : 14] Who's the real aggressor? Who's doing the worst evil? Who's doing the worst evil? All of these issues need light so that we can know what is true.

And believe me, your talking heads that you listen to all the time probably don't really know. And if you only listen to one side, it's called being in a, you're in a tunnel, a silo, listening to whatever you want to hear.

Do you really know? Do we know? Question, why do most people believe Sonia Massey was unjustly killed by Deputy Sean Grayson in Illinois?

I believe it's Illinois. Why do most of us believe it was an unjust murder? Even the police jumped on it right away. Why do we believe it? Because we have the light of the body cam video.

I watched it. Because I hate dealing with hearsay. See it for myself. That's why we believe it. We saw light.

[4 : 26] Light reveals what is true. But there's something much more important than everything I just told you. We need light to know who Jesus is.

That's the most important reality in the world. Hamas, Israel, all of that pales into insignificance, almost, compared to the significance of knowing who Jesus is.

Why is that so, Pastor Kevin? Because now we're dealing not only with life, but eternity. And you will spend most of, we will all, will spend most of our life in eternity than here on earth.

So it's better to put our money in eternity. That's a good investment, y'all. We need light to see Jesus.

We need light to see the kingdom of God. And what God is doing in the midst of our crazy, in the midst of all insecurities, in the midst of what's happening in our country and the world, we need to see the kingdom.

[5 : 40] And the Christ of the kingdom. And so do other people. See, the method the Lord has chosen to reveal this most important light is through his kingdom influencers, his disciples, you.

He wants to reveal his person and his kingdom through you. But maybe you're thinking, who am I? Pastor Kevin, who am I? I'm nobody. I'm nobody. I'm just me, you know. I'm not rich. I'm not famous. I'm not even popular.

I'm cute, but I'm not popular. You may be the world's nobody. You know what I'm going to say.

But you are the Lord's somebody. The world may disregard you. Don't worry about it. If you belong to Jesus, he will never disregard you.

[6 : 52] Thank you. You have influence because of who you belong to. All of us have influence. All of us have influence.

You may not be called upon to influence the world, the Olympics, the nation. You may not be called upon to influence big events, but you are called and gifted to influence your circles.

your settings and your places. That's why he put you there. There's nothing left to chance.

You are where you are because that is the will of the Lord. Wherever you are, I mean it, wherever you are, it's no such thing as chance.

There was no, yeah, maybe you made some bad decisions or some good ones. I don't know. But you're there because the Lord put you there. And he wants to use you because you are light.

[8 : 04] What kind of influencer do you want to be? What kind of influence do you want to have? I need to back up and get a running start.

Salt of the kingdom, we saw last time, permeates cultures. It permeates the world. Salt creates, as salty people, God's salty people, we create an influence.

And because salt dissolves, and whatever you put it in, sometimes our influence is not obvious, but it's there. We, we, God uses us to slow decay in various places, to create beautiful cultures and beautiful things, to demonstrate the Lord's reign, his righteousness, and his love.

That's what our salty lives does. Our Lord spoke of the power of saltiness in other places.

I didn't include this last time, so you need to see this. Mark chapter 9, verse 50. This is important. Listen to this. He says, Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again?

[9 : 21] Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another. You see how important that is?

Colossians, I'm going to tie this in with Colossians 4, 6, which is not on the screen. Listen to this.

Paul says, Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Salt in ourselves influences our speech, and that creates unity, be at peace with one another.

The saltiness of kingdom character causes the people of God to live in peace with each other, though we are from different cultures, different ethnicities, different political concerns, different nations, different, different, different.

It doesn't matter. If we are salt, we develop a unity in our diversity, and it comes in particular through how we talk to each other.

[10 : 44] Wonderful sermon you're preaching, Pastor God. Yeah, give me a chance. I'm still, I got to back up. You see, here's where I got to go.

I'm sorry, but I'm going to stay here until it's over. Losing our saltiness negatively impacts our peace with our Christian family.

Church fights, church splits, caused by secondary issues like politics and personalities are signs of a lack of salt in the church.

I'm just applying what Jesus said. You see it, right? Who don't see it? Let me know. I'll try to go back and do it again. You see, have salt in yourselves and be at peace with each other.

If we're not at peace with each other, we have to say, where's the salt? Where's the salt in you? But doesn't that go along with the Beatitudes?

[11 : 51] Blessed are the peacemakers. You see, the Beatitudes are the reason that we can be salt and light. The character of Christ being formed in us, it all hangs together.

Brothers and sisters, something is wrong with the American church. We're not salty enough. And if we're not salty, what did he say? We're good for nothing to be thrown out and trampled. What kind of salt are you?

I'm coming down your street. I'm doing this on purpose because God is speaking to us, family. What kind of salt are you again? When you show up, when you go on your keyboard, what happens?

At an elder in our church in Miami, I'll never forget it. Billy knows who I'm talking about. Sandy, Billy, Sherry knows who I'm talking about. He was very opinionated in this case.

[13:04] Now listen, I'm not picking because you know I don't really care which one you vote for. I really don't. But he happened to be very conservative, a Republican.

He happened to be. So don't go, Pastor Kevin, you didn't choose. Talk about the other side. I'm not talking about any side. I'm giving you an illustration. He happened, he so happened, he could have been the other side.

Okay? He happened to be conservative. We had some people join our church. I never forget, we had people join our church. And one of them was a union leader in Miami. So he was what we would call liberal or democratic, Democrat.

Another family joined with him. They came to our church and they were so blessed and they were so happy. Pastor Kevin, we're so glad to be here. One of them had a boat. He said, Pastor Kevin, I have a boat. Your church now has a boat.

And he was right. He took us all out on that boat. I remember because I got seasick. All three left our church.

[14:09] You see, they joined a small group with this elder. And he was so rabid conservative. He could have been the other side, liberal.

Okay, so I'm not picking on conservatives. I'm just telling you what happened. So don't come talk to me about it later. I don't want to hear it. Try making a point here. He was so rabid conservative that it drove them out of our congregation.

I did my best. I tried to talk. I said, guys, listen, we have different political views in our church. It's okay. He's just one person. He's just one elder.

We got several. I mean, I couldn't get through telling me. It broke my heart to pieces. Where was the salt? You see what salt can do?

You see what non-saltiness can do? It divides the body of Christ and pushes people out of the church even. What kind of salt are you again?

[15:15] What kind of salt are you again? What kind of salt are you? You see, what happens is something else becomes more important than Jesus.

Something else becomes more important than the kingdom of God and when that happens, we get skewed. We fall into different places because of whatever issues. We'll talk about them maybe later some other time. But when something else becomes more important than the kingdom, now you would never say that, but your actions out you.

Your speech out you. Your typing on your keyboard out you. You can't hide who we are. It's going to come out. And when it comes out and it's not Jesus, it hurts people.

You see, I'm making this point because both salt and light are two sides of the same coin. Jesus is really kind of saying the same thing but using two different images.

As one commentator put, both the salt and the light metaphors are communicating the same idea that Jesus' disciples are now heralds of the new and lasting covenant being effected in Jesus.

[16:35] We are heralds of the kingdom of God. That colors everything. That takes over everything. We are heralds of the new kingdom. And salt and light are the metaphors that reflect who we are.

So let's move on. The light of the kingdom, first of all, begins with God. Light is one of the Bible's major symbols, major realities. It begins way back in creation.

The first thing our creator does is create light. And God said, let there be light. And there was light. And God saw that the light was good.

And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness he called night. And there was evening and morning the first day.

just so you know, God created light before he created the sun. We haven't gotten to that part yet.

[17:39] Okay? Where did the light come from? Let's talk about that. Isaiah chapter 60. The prophet says, Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth. Thick darkness the peoples. But the Lord will arise upon, like the sun will arise upon you and his glory will be seen upon you.

And nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising. The sun shall be no more your light by day nor for brightness shall the moon give light.

But the Lord will be your everlasting light and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down nor your moon withdraw itself for the Lord will be your everlasting light and your days of mourning shall be ended.

Oh man, that passage gets me going because that's a promise from the Lord. He's going to do it. He's starting to do it but he's not done yet. He will rise.

[18:47] He will rise like the sun rising in the morning. That's why Revelation 22 says this quoting probably from what I just read night will be no more.

They will not they will need no light or lamp or sun for the Lord God will be their light and they shall reign forever and ever. This is our destiny with him who is light.

that's why John will say 1 John 1:5 this is the message we have heard from him that's Jesus and proclaim to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

So what does light represent in the Bible in general? It represents God's glorious presence God's glorious reality. It represents his holiness his glory and his truth.

that's what so the when Jesus talks about the light first of all it begins with the very nature of God who is God?

[19:57] He is light he is perfection he is holiness he is truth he is glory when I like to give my testimony and I know you all do too what a privilege to give your testimony and how Christ came into your life my testimony involves light it was like when my boy Craig told me about Jesus it was like walking into a dark room and somebody turned on bright lights it was that stark it was like I felt like my whole being inside just exploded with light I still remember it the sensation it was for the first time I could truly see and I knew that God was real that Jesus was real and Paul pulls that together too he pulls that light metaphor together by using physical creation physical creation and the new creation he combines them when God said let there be light now he combines that with the new birth and he says in 2nd Corinthians chapter 4:6 for God who said let light shine out of darkness has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that's the gospel the gospel is that the God of light has shown on you that the God of light has invaded your world that the God of light has moved the darkness from your eyes so that you can walk and see is that your story is that what maybe in different ways but same ways do you see his glory do you see him do you see

Jesus and recognizing Jesus you are looking at the glory of God the majesty of God the perfection and holiness of God it's seeing Jesus that transforms us that makes the difference no more death no more lies the bondage of sin is broken we still sin but the bondage is broken we have hope now light has shown upon us and if you gotta get this before you can get the rest who is Jesus to you who is God is he light to you or are you still in the dark you still don't really know who he is you're still not sure who he is you're not sure if he's real I wanna encourage you to pray and ask him to show you ask him to show you the light and where I wanna end today

I'm gonna give you a piece of it second thing the light of the kingdom shines in the Lord's people he doesn't say you will be light just like he said you are salt he says you are light you are it's part of your identity now you see when you see the light of God something happens to you I'm so glad it's your identity we talk about identity today everybody's talking about identity and usually it involves gender and sexuality but listen if you are a child of God if Jesus has risen if the day has risen in your heart here is your identity you are light Jesus Jesus in Matthew 4:16 he's the light that came he's the light that walked among us and the nation saw him he's that light and our Lord said of himself in John 8:12

I am the light of the world whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life now here's the thing most of the time right when we think of this idea of us being light in the Lord we always talk about how the moon and the sun relate right the moon does not have light but it reflects the light of the sun on the earth so we as Christ's kingdom people reflect his light he's the great sun and we are the moon as it were and we reflect his light to the nations and I've taught that many times I always felt something was not right about that and now I know it hit me like a brick you see

we don't reflect the light of Christ at all you see the sun shining on the moon does not affect the moon at all the sun shining just lights it up it doesn't have any real effect upon the moon and the sun's light is not inside the moon it's external but the light of Christ is not outside of us the light of Christ is inside of us and when he shines his light on you brother elder Sam his light unlike what happened with the sun and the moon his light is actually transforming you into his image of light we're not reflecting light we are radiating light him

Christ in us is shining out of us you're not a reflection of Jesus he's in you he's moving you into his very image that's why that illustration falls flat to me you are the light of the world because the great light of the world lives in you by faith in who he is and what he has done and lighting up the world to bring salvation to you and to the ends of the earth you are light Derek you are light Ephesians 5 says it so beautifully I'm going to end here so we can have communion and get out decent time but Ephesians 5 is beautiful I think we have the whole passage starting at verse 8 it's a little sizable but let's follow it you'll see for at one time you were darkness listen you were darkness but now you are light in the Lord in the

[27 : 25] Lord because of your union with Christ your spiritual union with Christ you are now light in him for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true that light in you is producing what is good right and true and then he says and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord because the light in you wants to please him and there's all kinds of voices speaking so he says we need discernment which comes from the spirit and the word of God to know right from wrong good from evil amen it's your job to look for it to look for truth to not just take what you heard on the radio or what you heard on your blog or what you heard don't just take what people say you have to discern do the work of discerning what is truth and error but you have help you have the spirit of truth in you and the word of truth outside of you working on you don't just eat the world's garbage

I don't care who your favorite pundit is if he's not lighting the Lord a lot of what he's could be saying to you could be error some of you don't want to hear it I understand I hear you God bless you for take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness this is what light does but instead expose them light exposes for it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret that's unbelievers but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible for anything that becomes visible is light therefore it says awake O sleeper arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you family that passage is deep and I can't have time to really unpack all of that but do you get it you are light in the Lord you are children of the light so that now your life is transformed so you want to do good right and true you're not satisfied with lies and half truths anymore you want to please the Lord because you are light because he is light in you if you don't want to please Jesus you're still darkness if you have no desire to exalt him and honor him and give your life for him you're still in the dark but if you're in the light

Christ is shining on you because the spirit is working in you and what happens as he transforms you your life becomes an expose of the darkness when you walk into a situation it is dark people are doing things that don't follow the Lord that don't reflect who he is when you walk in there sister Glinda and be who you are salt and light your life will expose the darkness around you and you will not be popular who do you want to please find out what pleases you will expose you don't have to necessarily speak to that situation though that's fine to do because light is visible we'll talk more about that later but you you can speak you do yeah speaking is good salt and light kind of go together they both speak we saw that already with salt speaks so yeah you may have to you may speak but just being who you are in

Jesus doing what is good right and true we saw good right and true if you will let the Lord use you in your sphere of influence by doing what is good right and true according to his standard your life will expose and I know I've experienced it I know you have too and people be talking about you and they don't like you and you wonder why you can't get promoted and you feeling bad because people you hear about the gossip and you're like what what did I do to them nothing but you were light you were salt and that makes the darkness angry we're going to end here for now but think about this think about your life who are you but Pastor Kevin

I send I ask you that who are you Pastor Kevin I'm weak I need to know the Bible more okay yes you do kick just get in the word but who are you that's the first question I want to ask you who are you are you light is that your identity or you're calling yourself something else are you light in the Lord hang that's who hang on to that that's who you are now by the new birth by the presence of Christ brother David you are light you may not feel like light I didn't ask you how you felt I don't

always feel like light do you always feel like light sometimes when you feel like you've done the worst people around you are going praise wow that was so neat and you're going you can't if you're light it shows up who are you who are the people and where are the places that you go regularly and have relationships answer that question think about that who are the people you go you around most where do you go the most and have relationships think about it will you pray that

[34 : 01] God will reveal the light of Jesus in you there are you willing to be light are you afraid to be light sometimes I'm afraid to be light because I want to be liked by everybody I do I'm a people pleaser that's most pastors are we want to make everybody happy and I'm developing a little bit of a thick skin because I'm recognizing I can't make everybody happy I can try all I want but everybody not going to be happy what's your goal and my goal find out what pleases the Lord God if you focus on that first not saying you shouldn't care about people don't even go there with me you should care about people but find out what pleases the

Lord first and do that in a loving and gentle way as you impact people's lives will you pray for that will you pray that God would do that in you in your spheres of influence has something happened to keep you from being light let's be honest has something happened to do what Jesus said you shouldn't do hide your light has something happened if it's happened will you go to the Lord about that and say deliver me from it will you go to him will you ask him Lord whatever this is holding me back that I'm scared of Lord please smite it break the idol break through Lord because I want to reflect your goodness and righteousness and truth I want to be your light here

I'm convinced that if we'll do this if we'll let God do this in us we can affect this whole election process we can affect our community we can affect our families we can do it we can affect our jobs our schools wherever you're influenced you can have an effect because Jesus will work in you now they may run you out of town but that's okay they ran the apostles out of town and Jesus said part of our character in the beatitudes is you will be persecuted and he said you're blessed blessed if you're persecuted for righteousness for being light for being salt father help us these are dark days in some ways but thank you that the light is shining you will never stop shining we help us to follow you help us to follow the light help us to follow

Christ help him help us to put him before everything before everything before our identities that we have apart from him from our identities and our our preferences Lord help us to put Jesus first and let his light bathe us so that Lord we just love and so we follow him no matter what it costs no matter what anyone thinks help us to follow him for his glory and in his name we pray