

Kingdom Influencers: Light It Up Part 2

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[0 : 00] We return to our study at the end of the Beatitudes, looking at salt and light.

And today we conclude our section on light in Matthew chapter 5, verses 13 to 16. Let's pray. Father, thank you for raising up new leaders in our church. And we know you will raise up more. And we thank you for their service even now as they begin officially. Thank you. They've already been serving. Thank you for showing us who they were because of their service already to our church. And we praise you that they will serve even more. Protect them. Watch over them and keep them, Lord. As now you've set them apart for this work, we know the enemy will try. And test them.

[1 : 01] But we know you will protect them. May their faith be in Jesus. May they be grounded in the truth. And may they find good fellowship with their brothers and sisters who serve with them.

Father, bless your word now as we come to hear your voice that we might know what it means to influence those around us for the good news and the glory of our Savior, Jesus.

May the light shine. May the light shine. Use us. Fill us with your spirit. Teach us. Empower us. May the light shine.

Use your unworthy servant now to proclaim your word in a way that your people can hear and understand. And may your spirit move upon us. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Matthew 5, 13 through 16. Once again. You. This is emphatic.

[2 : 08] You and only 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 and only 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.

That is the word of the Lord. Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you, praise team. Thank you so much. Thank you so much.

Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. You are the one who's on social media. For you are influencing people for the sake of Christ and his kingdom.

[3 : 45] not for your own glory but for his and for their good that's how God wants to use you you don't run from the culture but we engage the culture in love and holiness through faith in Jesus you bear witness that's what we're really talking about you bear witness through your kingdom character including being persecuted you bear witness to the reality of Jesus so let me just say light it up light it up folks so that's what we saw that God is light his presence meaning his presence is glorious bright revealing holy brings truth and then by the gospel of Jesus working in us through the power of the Holy Spirit he creates a people who are being transformed into his light his people now our light Christ's light in us we don't reflect the Christ's light we are Christ's light and we display that by doing that which is right good and true as you saw in Ephesians in his sight we seek to know his will so that we might do it this is what light does I want to elaborate Jesus our

Lord is going to elaborate on this by giving us two two examples of how light is effective the first thing I want you to notice is kingdom light is not meant to be hidden notice what our Lord says here I mean you've read this many times but you see it you are the light of the world a city set on a hill cannot be hidden now why would he say that because in ancient world cities were places of light in those days they were usually built if possible on an elevated place it was more defensive more defensible but also at night when lit up by torches and lanterns these cities were very visible you

knew the way home because you could just follow the light of the city outside of the city outside of the city the people were in darkness they didn't have street lamps so if you were not in the city if you lived outside of the city at night you would find yourself in great deep darkness this picture of a bright city makes us think even of our modern cities sometimes I remember back in 2019 Sandy and I were privileged to be in Tokyo and if you go to downtown Tokyo at night you will be struck I mean struck by how lit up it is the billboards and the signs are just bright and interactive and they're doing it's all like a carnival in downtown Tokyo because of such bright lights you couldn't miss it it was like noon it was so bright downtown Tokyo could not be hidden a city could not be hidden no that people want to hide it who would want to hide a city the same is true for our lord's people why would you want to hide the illustration Jesus gives is he intentionally makes it doesn't make any sense why would anyone want to hide a city the next example of light when they when a person lit a lamp they would raise it up because the height allowed more light to fill the house putting a lamp maybe a kerosene lamp oil lamps of some type or even a candle putting it under a basket like a thick wicker basket or even a bowl putting it under something like that would be foolish and silly who would do that who would light a lamp or a candle only to cover it up when you do that you're keeping the light from doing what it was made to do again another nonsensical idea Jesus is saying who would do that you he says and it's emphatic you and you alone there's no one else there is no plan B you the disciples of Jesus are the light of the world your kingdom light is not meant to be hidden it ought not ever be hidden Christ wants his people to shine for him in this world of deep darkness now that makes perfectly good sense doesn't it it's obvious right so why does he have to tell us

it's a no-brainer but why does he have to go through all this to tell us because like salt that loses its saltiness and becomes useless some people who claim to be Christians decide to hide their claimed relationship to Jesus and become ineffective as witnesses some people are ashamed or even fearful to be associated with Jesus because to be associated with Jesus in a world steeped in darkness will draw negative attention to you that's inconvenient and in some places it's also very dangerous you see bright light you know this is true bright lights make people very uncomfortable especially when it's unexpected like like you're in bed sleep somebody help me and you're if you're if you're if you have kids they come running in if you don't have kids maybe somebody just wants you to get up and what do they do they flip the light switch and what do you do ah the light the light I mean it's like we're a bunch of vampires like ah the light and it hurts it's annoying it's painful that bright light shining in your face kind of blinding like when you ever remember the old uh uh uh camera with the flash bulbs and they would take a flash and you would they and you would see a blue dot remember that dot it would hit you in the eyes and you would see a blue dot for about uh 10-20 seconds it was painful blinding that's why on sunny days at the beach or wherever we tend to wear sunglasses to shield our eyes from bright sunlight we are told are we not never to look directly at the sun for too long because it can cause blindness or some kind of eye damage you see that's the nature of light light not only reveals what is there it can also damage and blind light hurts eyes that are not accustomed to it light hurts eyes that are accustomed to darkness you feel you with me now I'm gonna geek out on you the matrix okay let's go back in time this I know it seemed like a long time ago for those but I loved that the first movie the matrix it was amazing I mean Neo the hero he he's unplugged from the false reality of the computer world called the matrix he had been living a lie all the all the human beings in the world were actually asleep and they were living by being connected to this computer program the matrix they were living in their heads bodies never moving but living in their heads in their minds what they thought was real but it wasn't real when you get unplugged when you got unplugged from that matrix like Neo our hero then you could finally see the truth you could finally see the light you wake up you wake up and now you be you can see what's really going on around you and it's not like the matrix this was that's a dream world as it were it wasn't reality you remember when Neo was awakened by his mentor and savior Morpheus played by Laurence Fishburne Neo asked Neo asked Neo asked a very telling question he said why do my eyes hurt you remember he he he says my eyes are hurting what's going on why did it hurt so much Morpheus said something very telling he said because you never used them before when you're asleep when we're dead in sin living in darkness sometimes when when God wakes us up yeah you're taken back but if you're not woke if you're still sleep you're living in a half-life you don't see reality fully this ain't a movie now I'm talking about life because this is real life okay but you don't see it fully something is missing in our understanding of reality until we know the Lord something is missing you say pastor Kevin what what what could be

missing the knowledge of god that god is real that you are not a cosmic accident who happened to crawl out of the cosmic soup grow legs a brain and arms and legs you're not an accident see that that's the darkness the darkness says i'm an accident i don't have any meaning or purpose other than what i can drum up for myself jesus is just a a if he lived if he lived he did that's how you see jesus he's a great avatar or a great revolutionary or a great teacher a great man but in the dark you don't see him as a son of god the eternal son of god the word made flesh the creator of everything that we see and know you don't see him that way because you're in the dark in that movie the matrix you remember there was one guy named cypher cypher was part of morpheus crew do you remember him you know what happened to him he betrayed the whole group got most of them killed because cypher wanted to be put back in the matrix he wanted to go back to sleep he wanted to live the fantasy listen listen because the fantasy to him was better than real life how many people today choose the fantasy whether it's especially online the fantasy world of being online the sometimes sometimes the fantasy world of gaming because reality

is too much to bear how many of our people are living as an avatar in their in in basements plugged plugged into the matrix plugged in because to them the darkness is better than the light here's what jesus says about that john 3 19 to 21 this is the judgment the light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil for everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his works should be exposed but whoever does what is true comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in god what makes the difference we got someone better than morpheus we have a savior who lives in time and space a savior who walked this world lived as one of us understands and sympathizes with each one of our hurts and areas of weakness not sin but our areas of weakness he knows what it means to be a weak human being we have a savior like that who went into the darkness to bring us into the light what makes the difference is this savior goes and snatches people out of the darkness you didn't want to come you didn't want to come you were in the dark you had no way of knowing that anything better existed than what you had than what you could make for yourself the darkness says it's all about me get all

[20 : 12] I can I gotta make it happen me me me me that's the darkness what when you when your eyes are opened by the light of the world you recognize that it's not about you you you recognize you can't save yourself you recognize that that that all your efforts will only end in futility you recognize that life is hard and you might not make it you recognize how tough things really are and you say help me and you cry out for help to the only one who can help you not a higher power the power the creative power the sustaining power when your eyes have opened by the light of the world you cry out for his light and he will never turn anyone away who cries out to him that's what makes the difference otherwise we would still love the darkness we still live lives steeped in fear anxiety pain and suffering and then you die oh there's good times don't get me wrong there's good people have good times don't let me don't let me

I'm not saying that people don't but without Jesus those good times are short lived without Jesus you're still in the dark and sometimes you really can't know what a really good time is until the light's turned on you see that's what we need we need this truth you can't please God you can't make God love you you can't do enough for God to make him save you the light of the world says I've done it for you I've done it all trust me it's that simple isn't it trust me but in the dark you've never trust yourself but when you see the light you recognize Jesus is the only one you should trust and he is eminently trustworthy light is an easy target in the darkness so have you chosen the easy path that leads to shame and worst case destruction by hiding your light are you willing to each day light it up let Jesus light it up in you every day light it up Lord no matter what it means

Lord Jesus light it up we're afraid of suffering and pain there's some reality here hello no one should like it but you gotta understand pressure actually causes more of Christ's light to be revealed in us let me give you some hope you're whatever you're going through you're pain and suffering right now as you trust in the light of the world you will not be destroyed he's gonna show up even more in you I'm thinking of a passage 2 Corinthians 4 7-11 I've referred to this passage many times one of my favorite passages in all the Bible we have this treasure Paul says in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us we are afflicted in every way but not crushed perplexed but not driven to despair persecuted but not forsaken struck down but not destroyed always carrying in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies now get the image jars of clay they would take their treasures their jewels whatever in

that time in place and they would hide them in nondescript vases this is pretty it wouldn't be this pretty it would be plain just something that you would never think anything in it would be worth anything maybe they put a plant on top of it like this but inside of that thing jewels coins whatever they thought was valuable they put it inside something like that okay now here's the thing the treasure if you were to go back and read that passage

I just quoted above that the treasure is the gospel it's the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus that's Paul's statement the treasure inside of us is the gospel it's Christ in us the light of the world in us now here's what happens pressure comes on your clay pot and what happens is the pots crack clay pots crack pressure's put on it that pot begins to crack now we're not gonna be crushed not destroyed so it's not gonna be destroyed but your pot your life your humanity gets cracked and and and and you're hurting right but see here's the thing when you're cracked the light can shine out when you're cracked see if I were to put a candle inside of this and put little cracks in it you would be to see light through it through the cracks that's what happens when the pressure comes on you you who are the light of the world in Christ

Jesus when pressure comes you become crack pots welcome to my pain you become crack pots but but but but but there's a light in you and when you crack but you're not destroyed you're still standing when you crack but you're not crushed when you crack but you're not done when you crack then the light of Christ the glory of Christ shines through you because what's holding you together is not you it's the power of Christ in you so don't be afraid to say you're weak don't be afraid to say you're hurting don't be afraid to admit it don't claim it don't claim it that's foolishness claim it you sick tell the truth you're light remember tell the truth I'm in pain I need prayer but you haven't fallen apart people will see the light that's why Jesus ends it with this great statement [27 : 40] I'm going to close with this he ends it by saying simply this you know I lost my page okay here we go 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 let your light shine before others let your light shine before others admit who you are admit it don't answer that it's not the Lord admit it and give yourself to doing his will give yourself to doing good listen the good that you do in Jesus name points to him and people will give glory to the father if they begin to see the light you say oh but pastor Kevin isn't there a passage in scripture that warns us about drawing attention to ourself yes thank you for saying that

Matthew 6 1 Jesus said beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them for then you will have no reward from your father who is in heaven what's the difference between that and what he says here in chapter 5 motive motive in chapter 6 the motive is for personal glory look at me I give to the poor look at me I'm so humble I pray every day three hours a day look at me I'm wonderful if you had known me years ago you wouldn't like me but now I'm wonderful look at me

I speak so well listen we've turned Christian leaders into superstars too often honor should be given yes the Bible tells us but superstardom where guys go to the green room before they speak and they come out and these guys get big heads millions of dollars poured in and things begin to happen in your lives why because it's about me look at me I'm wonderful I can write I can speak I can sing Jesus says you have your reward so what's the other motive the motive he's talking about here pastor Billy you're so wonderful thank you so much for visiting our family you really blessed our family and Jesus used you we were so encouraged we were so in need of encouragement and then Billy says

I'm so glad to hear that but any good you see in me any benefit you receive from me is because of Jesus Jesus is doing the work listen listen it's not me it's Jesus and you see the difference it's a big that's a huge difference so yes we are to do good we are commanded all I mean the book of Titus chapter 2 and 3 I'm gonna read it right now but you read it chapter 2 and 3 he keeps telling us be zealous for good works give yourself to good works do all in other words do all the good you can Christian you were saved for this purpose that you might be light that's why you're here to be light and you're light as you do good in the name of Jesus do all the good you can is there some place where right now you could do good for somebody you know is there some place right now that God is putting on your heart right now and saying that's a person you could do good to there's a family you could do good to there's a widow you could do good to there's a guy who's just coming off of drugs coming out of jail you could do good to you think about it they're all around you who are they let God use you whatever the good is that

God lays on your heart to do do it in the name of Jesus yes they will thank you if they have any sense of humility they will thank you but that's your opportunity right there don't let it go don't just walk away say you're welcome and walk away stop for a second I know I know what you're thinking Pastor Kevin I don't know if I can do yes you can but I'm an introvert I don't care God didn't give the great commission to extroverts only come on we got friends who are psychiatrists who debunked the whole idea in Manchester they debunked the whole idea of being extrovert and introvert it's just a way of limiting yourself both psychiatrists are they true I don't know but here's the thing the word of God is higher than your extroversion or introversion Jesus will give you power ask him to light it up in you and you can tell that person who thanks you hey you're welcome

[33 : 22] I'm glad I could help but let me tell you something I don't even like people like you but Jesus has worked in my heart okay let me be honest okay you set me up thank you I'm in the south I didn't want to live in the south my mother's from the south my dad's from the south the stories they told me about living in the south as african americans under jim crow if I told you my mother was urinated on sitting in the movie theater white kids in the balcony peeing on them thinking it's funny I didn't want to come to the south because I couldn't trust white people in the south

I thought you all were racist or the children are racist or the grandchildren are racist some of you know what I'm talking about but God saved me he saved me and I look at this congregation and I see my family look I walk around this city and I see my family or people who could be my family come on and I've watched God treat me so well in this city over the last 12 years he did it white people come up to me and say oh we love your jacket oh we this and that thank you I mean like you see Jesus Jesus does that so when I said I didn't even like you see you thought I was joking Jesus now I can't get enough of you're my family you're my brothers and sisters you're my mothers and sisters and fathers and

I you're family whether you look like me or not if you're in Christ you're mine and I want you in my life so when someone comes up to me and says thank you I can look to Jesus and say I know you've done a work in me maybe I won't tell them this story maybe I will depend on who they are but one thing that we can do we don't do good just to do good I've heard Christians say that do good just to do good whatever you do in word or in deed do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through him we never just do good brothers and sisters we always do it for his glory we always do it in his name we always do it that the light might shine and set people free who's in your life who are the people in your dorm hospitality another way of being light in your community in your dorm be wise now especially in your dorms be wise but who can you love on and show them

God's goodness it's a risk because remember one of the marks of kingdom character is you'll be persecuted your good will be evil spoken of but that's alright because Jesus sees and he will reward you he will exalt you in due time don't be afraid don't be afraid fear not I think it was A.W.

Tozer who said a fearful world a scared world needs a fearless church a scared world needs a fearless church and scared people need fearless people in the name of Jesus who will come into their lives and let the Lord light it up be that person will you ask God to help you to be that person father in Jesus name lord we we would be light we were darkness Paul said but now we are light in the Lord help us to live as children of light help us to display the kingdom character of being poor in spirit being meek being hungering and thirsting at the righteousness being peacemakers oh God all of that help us to be pure in heart all of that may we live lives that show goodness may we live lives that care about the hurt that other people have and may we use us to bring healing light and salt to a bland and dark world use us please don't let us hide and certainly don't let us be useless in Jesus name amen