

**Hurst Green**  
**24<sup>th</sup> Nov 19**  
**Let your light shine**  
**Matt 5:13-16**

So let's have a memory test!!

What did I speak on two weeks ago?

Faith like a mustard seed. – The point was that you either have faith or you do not.

And that faith is simple

**Romans 10:9-10 (ANIV)**

<sup>9</sup> *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

Now I considered that important – did you?

So today we are following on from that – not to encourage you to throw mountains into the sea but to show you how simple it is to share your faith by simply doing what Jesus has commanded us.

We all acknowledge Jesus as Lord and if he is our Lord we should be doing what he has commanded us – shouldn't we?

And today we have another very familiar verse

**Matthew 5:16 (ANIV)**

<sup>16</sup> *In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

That's one we all know isn't it.

But I want to place some emphasis on the last half of that verse

**Matthew 5:16 (ANIV)**

<sup>16</sup> *~~In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.~~*

Because that show us how simple Jesus commands are and how easy it is to carry them out.

We can get hung up on "Evangelism" and what it means and how to do it.

There are shelf loads of books on how to do it and people make money running courses on how to do it and some of them are very good and helpful.

Jonny and I did a session on street evangelism down in Brighton many years ago that was very good and focussed on asking people what happened to them after death and Hazel has done some

work on the High Street in Oxted. Both of these showed that people have a willingness to talk about the spiritual and showed how often it is our reluctance that stops us talking but today's verse gives us the key to successful evangelism

**Matthew 5:16 (ANIV)**

<sup>16</sup> *In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

Our deeds must match our words and from that People will praise our God and so they acknowledge God is God and so come to Christ.

So let's take a look at this and how this can affect our lives.

**The qualities of light**

**Firstly** – light requires a source of energy – a light bulb cannot light up all on its own.

You can have all the wires and fittings in place but if you do not have an energy source then nothing happens.

As the light to the world we need our energy source as we can't do it on our own and God knows that and he has given us one that was prophesied of in Isaiah

**Isaiah 9:2 (ANIV)**

<sup>2</sup> *The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*

And by Simeon in the temple

**Luke 2:32 (ANIV)**

<sup>32</sup> *a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."*

And Jesus himself told us

**John 8:12 (ANIV)**

<sup>12</sup> *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

Jesus is the light of the world and he has chosen to shine through us and you have the light of life – how about that?

He is the power of our light source and we know that if we tried to do it alone we would fail – we are not strong enough and can never be strong enough in our own strength.

We can only be strong enough in God's strength which is ours through our faith and so Jesus can shine through us just as he has shone through the saints before us because as Hebrews tells us

**Hebrews 13:8 (ANIV)**

<sup>8</sup> *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.*

Our God does not change on a whim and so is the source of the power for all of his saints forever

And that makes the words of Jesus still relevant today

**Luke 9:2 (ANIV)**

<sup>2</sup> ~~and~~ *he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.*

Because the **second** quality of light is that it has only one purpose – to dispel the darkness

And to do that only a little light is needed. We probably all have in our homes night lights. In the day and the evening when we have all the lights on they do not seem much but if we awake in the night and move around the house they are a light to our feet and keep us safe.

We will do the same thing in our nine lessons and carols on 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec. We will turn off all our lights and bring in one small candle which will seem bright and will spread the light to us all.

**John 1:4-5 (ANIV)**

<sup>4</sup> *In him was life, and that life was the light of men.* <sup>5</sup> *The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

We do not need search lights to light up a room but the more Christians we have the brighter that room will be!

**Thirdly** light has no value if it is hidden

**Matthew 5:15 (ANIV)**

<sup>15</sup> *~~Neither do~~ people don't light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.*

And what I have just said about multiple lights applies – we put enough lights in our house to give us light to do the things we want to do.

A lone light is not enough and that is why we are told so much about being a church, being the body of Christ. One of us on our own can't claim to be the body of Christ – it is together we function as the body.

So it is with our light; together we will make more impact than we ever will alone.

### **Let your light shine**

We have all had old light bulbs where their light is growing dim – but that is not the Christian approach – as we get older and more experienced in our faith and keener witnesses to our Lord our light is going to grow brighter.

As a runner in a race puts on a spurt so we must do the same in our lives. The runner gradually goes faster and in the same way we gradually grow brighter.

Light, to fulfil its purposes, must shine and Jesus has told us to shine.

Not in our reading Jesus did not tell us we are to be the light of the world. That would be something we try and attain.

Rather he said that we **are** the light of the world. Even if we only think we shine dimly we are still the light of the world.

The world is in darkness – even a night light would make a difference.

You are the light of the world.

## **So how do you let your light shine?**

We have been told that we are to do this and so we have no choice.

### ***John 14:15 (ANIV)***

<sup>15</sup> *"If you love me, you will obey what I command.*

And we are commanded to be the light of the world but that passage goes on to promise us the Holy Spirit who is in you, Jesus does not leave us as orphans but he has promised to be with us to the end of the age and tells us because he lives we also will live.

Remember that passage:

### ***Romans 10:9 (ANIV)***

<sup>9</sup> *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Don't you just love the way the bible holds together!!

But how do we let our light shine? Consider the letters:

L – love people.

This is why we are told to love our neighbour as our self.

And in the same way as light we are only passing on God's love.

Jesus had this love in Mark 6

### ***Mark 6:34 (ANIV)***

<sup>34</sup> *When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.*

And

### ***2 Corinthians 3:18 (ANIV)***

<sup>18</sup> *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

We are being transformed to be even better at all he commanded us because we have the Spirit

I – Intercede for them

The lost of this world are blind and need to have their eyes opened that they might see

### ***2 Corinthians 4:4 (ANIV)***

<sup>4</sup> *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

But our reading told us that they will see the light through us and specifically through our good deeds which God has laid before us and they will come to praise God – they will have their eyes opened and will see the great light!

But that brings us to one we don't like as much – the G of light

## G – Go to them purposefully

The great commission tells us this quite clearly – we are to go to all nations and make disciples.

I know we would rather sit in here and wait for them to come to us but that is not how it works.

And we might be amused by activities like the random acts of kindness where you do something for someone who you probably don't know.

But we are called to shine the light of our lord into the darkness of the world and to do that we have to acknowledge the source of our light.

If we don't tell them why how will they ever know?

## H – Help them practically

**James 2:14-17 (ANIV)**

*<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? <sup>15</sup> Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup> If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

A favourite passage of mine from a favourite book. The practical how to of our Christian faith.

## T – Tell them plainly

I know the passage says they will see our good deeds and praise our Lord but they can only do that if they know why we are doing the good deeds and they will only know if we tell them.

I am not an advocate of just doing good deeds and relying on people to ask about why although that does happen I believe we are to put the good news out there and so we need to tell people

So we are to let our light shine before men and we have a choice.

We have the light because we are plugged into the source and Jesus told us that we are the light of the world.

Our choice is simple – do we put the light under the bowl and hide it away or do we let it shine from a stand so all may see it?

One is obeying Jesus' command the other is not – your choice; choose wisely.

