

*The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 13 September 2020. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.*

## **The Condition for Sending the Light**

### **Matthew 5:15-16**

Years ago, when I was still living in America, I had an interesting experience one summer night which, for some reason, I have never forgotten. It was a hot, sticky June evening--one of those evenings when it is nearly as hot at night time as it was during the day. It was probably about 27 degrees Celsius outside that evening, and at least 37 degrees inside; and the house didn't have air conditioning. As I went to bed that evening, I opened my window in order to let as much cool air into the room as possible. I lay in bed for a while, and read my Bible; but finally, I drifted off to sleep.

Well, sometime in the middle of the night, I awakened just enough to realise that my light was still on; and so, with my eyes still closed, I reached over to the lamp, turned off the light, and settled back into bed. However, a few seconds later, I felt something brushing my ear, and I heard a clicking, whirring noise. Very quickly, I was fully awake; and I came to realise that there were clicking, whirring sounds coming from all around my room. I also felt little creatures crawling next to me on the bed. I realised that what I was hearing were June bugs. Now, in case you don't know what a "June bug" is, it is a big, beetle-like creature that hatches in the early summer in America. Although June bugs are harmless, they are creepy. They are about 1 ½ to 2 inches long; they make a loud, whirring sound; and they love to fly straight at your head. Because I had left the light on for hours, my room was now filled with June bugs.

Well, I lay there for a minute, and listened to the sound of the bugs; but I didn't quite have the courage to get out of bed to see how many there were. I lay there for several more minutes; but finally, I got up, hurried across the room (stepping on June bugs all the way); and when I turned on the light, I saw that there were at least 200 June bugs crawling on the walls, on the ceiling, on my dresser and desk, and on my bed; and there were some flying around the room, as well. So, what did I do? I got a fly swatter and started to whack them, right? Nope! Rather than deal with the bugs, I turned off the light, closed my bedroom door, and went downstairs to the sitting room to sleep on the couch for the rest of the night.

Now, what is the point of this story? The point is that *light exposes things that were hidden in darkness*. So it is with the Light of Christ. The Light of Christ exposes the hidden things of darkness, and reveals the true condition of people's hearts. The Light of Christ reveals the sin in people's hearts that they don't like to see. The Light of Christ reveals to men that they need a Saviour. As Christians, we have a solemn responsibility to "send the Light" to sin-darkened hearts, so that they might be saved. This is the subject of our upcoming missions conference, "Send the Light." As we prepare our hearts for our missions conference, I would like to point out some things that are necessary in order for this church--and for us as individuals--to "send the Light." The title of this message is ***The Condition for Sending the Light***.

**Read Matthew 5:14-16.**

**Read Ephesians 5:5-8.**

#### **I. You must first *have* the Light.**

Jesus said, "***I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life***" (John 8:12). Christ alone is able to give spiritual light to sin-blinded eyes. Apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, men are filled with gross spiritual darkness. The Bible says that "***men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.***"

Yet, in the Scriptures that we just read, we find an amazing truth. In both these passages, the Lord refers to His people as ***“the light”***! In fact, as we saw in **Matthew 5**, Christ calls Christians ***“the light of the world”***--the very same name by which *He* is called! He says, ***“Ye are the light of the world.”*** That pronoun ***“ye”*** is plural--which means that Christ is addressing *all* believers. Every true child of God is called ***“the light of the world.”***

Now, why would the Lord call His followers ***“light,”*** when He is the only one who can give men spiritual light? *We* were the ones who were lost in the darkness of sin, before Jesus shone His light upon us. Just like every other sinner, *we* need Christ’s light! How, then, can believers be called ***“the light of the world”***?

To answer this question, it is helpful to know that there are two Greek words for “light.” First, there is the word *phos*. *Phos* refers to a light *source*, such as a flame. A *phos* is something that produces light in and of itself. Then, there is the word *luchnon*, which refers to a light *carrier*, such as a lamp or candle. A *luchnon* doesn’t produce light; it simply carries light. These are two very different ideas; yet, Jesus used *both* these words to describe Christians!

First, Jesus says that Christians are a light “source.” In **Matthew 5:14** Jesus said, ***“Ye are the light (the phos, or “light source”) of the world.”*** Let that sink in! Jesus says that Christians are the “source” of spiritual light to the world! Now, how can that be? In and of ourselves, we have no light. How, then, can we be the *phos*--the “Light source”--of the world?

Well, it’s simple. We who are saved are called ***“the light of the world”*** in the sense that we are ***“in Christ,”*** and He is in us. This is our *position*, because we are saved. (And, thank God, this position cannot be revoked!) A Christian’s life is so bound up in Christ, that when people see Christians who are allowing Christ’s light to shine through them, it is as though they are seeing Christ Himself! It is as though they are looking at ***“the Light of the world”*** Himself! I remember a time years ago when Pastor McKinley and I were visiting with an unsaved man, and were trying to witness to him; and during the course of the conversation he said, “You know, I don’t know how to describe it, but ye lads have a ‘warm glow’ about ye!” He was able to see Christ’s love and holy character in us; and it was like a warm “light” to him. *This* is what Jesus means when He says, ***“Ye are the light of the world.”***

Now, lest we start to “pat ourselves on the back,” there is another reality that we need to remember. Yes, Jesus calls Christians the *phos* (the “light source”) of the world; but He also calls us a *luchnon* (a “lamp,” or “light carrier”). The humbling reality is that we who are saved are merely light “carriers.” This is the word that Jesus used when He said, ***“Neither do men light a candle (luchnon), and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick.”*** Born-again Christians are nothing but “lamps,” or “candles,” bearing the true light of Christ within them. There is nothing truly good in us. Apart from Christ, we would be in darkness, just like everyone else. Whatever righteousness shines forth from our lives is actually Christ’s righteousness shining through us. In **John 5**, Christ called John the Baptist a ***“burning and a shining light”*** (*luchnos*, or “lamp”). That is what every true believer in Christ should be!

And so, we see that the word “light” refers to two things. First, it refers to a Christian’s *position*. In position, we are saved, and “in Christ.” *We are* the light, because Christ is the Light, and we are “in Him.” On the other hand, the word “light” refers to our actual *practice*--the way we actually live our lives from day to day. We are “light carriers”; and *how much* light beams forth from our lives depends upon how much we *allow* Christ’s light to shine.

Brethren, there should be no contradiction between our position and our practice. Because we *are* “light” in the Lord (in our position) we should therefore allow Christ’s light to shine in our lives (in our daily practice). As we saw in **Ephesians 5:8**, Paul said, **“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”** The teaching of this verse is clear. We Christians *are* “light” (because we are saved); and *because* we are light, we should therefore *walk* as children of light on a daily basis. How well we walk as children of light depends upon how much we are allowing Christ to work His righteousness in our lives.

Now, I’m going to cut to the chase this morning. Over these next few weeks we will be talking a lot about “sending the Light.” However, you cannot *send* the Light until you first *have* the Light of Christ in your own life! If you’ve never been saved by God’s grace, then you cannot possibly send the Light. You may give as much money to missions as you wish; but it will do you no good if you do not personally know Christ as your Saviour.

Do *you* know the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, in a personal way? Has there been a time in your life when you turned in your heart from sin to God, and trusted in Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, and received His gift of eternal life? You cannot be a light-bearer for Christ until you first come to Christ for salvation; and in order to come to Him for salvation, you must admit that you are in spiritual darkness, and that you need His light.

### **Read John 3:16-20.**

In the natural condition in which we were born, we are all in spiritual darkness. In our natural, sinful condition, we hate the light of Christ’s truth. Just as I didn’t want to turn on the light in my bedroom, for fear of how many June bugs I’d see, so sinful men do not like the light of God’s Word, because it exposes the rotten, corrupt, sinful condition of our hearts. In our natural condition, we prefer to stay in darkness, and to flatter ourselves that we are “good” people. Tragically, most people choose to remain in the darkness, because they are too proud to admit that they are hell-bound sinners in need of God’s forgiveness and salvation. Most people won’t come to the Light of Jesus, because they don’t really think they need Him.

However, there is good news. The good news is that there are a precious few souls who do see their need for Jesus, and who do come to Him. Jesus went on to say, **“But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3:21).** If you have never truly repented of your sin and trusted in Christ alone to save you, why not humble yourself today, and come to the Light? Christ is ready and willing to save you, and to give you an abundant new life in Him! The Bible says, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).**

## **II. You must keep your light fuelled.**

### **Read Luke 12:35-36.**

In this Scripture, Jesus compares Christians to servants who stay up at night and keep their lights burning, so that when their master appears, they may be ready to serve him instantly. In Jewish tradition, a Bridegroom could come at any moment to collect his bride, and to take her to the wedding; and she and her wedding party had to keep their lights burning, so that they would be ready to go at any watch of the night. Likewise, our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, addresses *us* as both His Bride, and as His servants. He says, **“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord.”** Until Christ returns in the clouds of heaven, we must keep our light shining brightly!

Now, before I go any further, I would like to make one thing very clear: if you have truly been saved, then Christ will *always* be in you. There will never be a time when the light of His presence will be removed from your life. In other words, you can't lose your salvation. Christ will stay with you, and will see to it that His light is kept burning.

You will remember, from last week's sermon, that I told you about a scene from the book *Pilgrim's Progress*, in which the main character, Pilgrim, is in the house of a man named Mr. Interpreter, who represents the Holy Spirit. In each of the rooms of his house there were little "plays," or "enactments" that were being carried out, to illustrate spiritual truths; and in one of these rooms, Pilgrim saw a fireplace, in which there was a hot, burning fire. However, the strange thing about this fire is that there was a man standing by the fire, and casting water onto it; yet, the fire not only continued to burn, but burned hotter and hotter. Pilgrim turned to Mr. Interpreter, and asked him what this meant. Mr. Interpreter's answer was this:

"This fire is the work of grace that is wrought in the heart. He that casts water upon it, to extinguish and put it out, is the Devil. But in that thou seest the fire, notwithstanding, burn higher and hotter, thou shalt also see the reason of that.' So, [Mr. Interpreter] had him about to the *backside* of the wall, where he saw a man with a vessel of *oil* in his hand, of the which he did also continually cast, but secretly, into the fire.'

Then said Christian, 'What means this?' The Interpreter answered, 'This is Christ, who continually, with the oil of his grace, maintains the work already begun in the heart: by the means of which, notwithstanding what the devil can do, the souls of his people prove gracious still. [2 Cor. 12:9].'"

That's a good illustration, isn't it? Christ will *not* allow His light to be put out in our lives! He will deal with us in chastisement when He must; but He will not permit the fire to be extinguished. The Bible says, "***He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.***" Christ will *never* leave us, nor forsake us!

Yet, even though Christ's light is never extinguished, it *can* be greatly diminished, if we do not keep the light fuelled. (If this were not the case, Paul would not have urged the members of the church of Thessalonica to "***Quench not the Spirit.***") How do we keep our light fuelled? By listening to our Saviour's voice as we read His Word every day. By being in God's house, and heeding the preaching of His Word. By communicating with Him in prayer, both in our private lives, in our homes, and with the church body; and by continually submitting our hearts to Him. The Apostle Paul said that our "***inward man***" (our new nature, which is generated by the Spirit of God), must be "***renewed day by day.***" As you heed God's Word, and talk to Him in prayer, you not only are hindering the devil from *quenching* Christ's light, but you are *adding fuel* to the light. Just as the priests in Old Testament times had to keep pouring olive oil into the lamps of the Menorah day and night, so we, as God's priests, must continually throw the "fuel" of God's Word, prayer, and submission to God, upon the flames.

A couple summers ago, my family went to visit Hook's Head lighthouse in County Wexford. We were impressed as we learned of how the monks, and the lighthouse keepers in later centuries, trudged up and down the stairs of the lighthouse tower every day for 800 years, and fuelled the huge bonfire with coal (and later with gas). Never in all those centuries did the fire go out. They knew that there were sailors out on the sea who might be dashed on the rocks and perish if they did not see the light of Hook's Head piercing through the darkness.

So it is in the spiritual realm. We who are saved are safe in the tower of Jesus Christ; but there is a sea full of lost sinners who are perishing in the dark night of sin. Will we keep the knowledge of Christ to ourselves? Or will we allow Christ to add the fuel of His grace to our hearts, so that we can send His light into the darkness, and guide sinners to the place of refuge in Christ? In **John 5:35**, Jesus said of John the Baptist that ***“he was a burning and a shining light.”*** John’s light didn’t shine dimly and faintly; it burned with *exceeding* brightness. Why? Because he was filled with the Holy Spirit of God! Christian, are *you* allowing the Spirit to fill you with the oil of His grace? Are you keeping the light shining brightly?

### III. You must let your light shine.

In order to “send the light” of Christ, you must first *have* the light. In other words, you must be saved. In you already have the Light, you must also allow Christ to keep your light trimmed and burning with the fuel of God’s Word, prayer, and submission to the Holy Spirit.

However, that is not all. Remember what Jesus said? He said, ***“A city that is set on an 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.”*** Jesus’ message is clear: we must let His light *shine*. We who are saved *have* the light; but if we hide it, what good is it?

Christian, are you letting Christ’s light shine forth from your life? Are you allowing His light to shine in *your own heart*? You won’t have a passion to send the Light to perishing souls *out there* until you first allow the Light to shine *in here*. In **1 Corinthians 4:5**, the Apostle Paul says that when the Lord returns, He will ***“bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.”*** The Judgment Seat of Christ will be a joyful time, as we receive rewards for what we *did* do for Christ; but it will also be a *fearful* time, as the hidden sins of our hearts are brought to light. There will be no “June bugs” of sin left uncovered on that day. What should we do, then? We should allow Christ’s light to shine in our hearts *right now*, so that we can see our sin for what it is, and ask God to cleanse us! By the way, this desire to come to the Light, so that our deeds can be shown for what they really are, is one of the marks of a true child of God. Remember what Jesus said to Nicodemus? He said, ***“But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”*** Let’s look at what else Jesus had to say about the Light.

#### Read Luke 11:33-36.

Every believer has the Light of Christ in His life. Christ literally lives inside us. We are like clay “lamps”; and Christ is the Light inside the lamp. We have no light in and of ourselves; but we are *bearers* of the Light. Christ has saved us for the express purpose that we might be a burning and shining light.

If, then, Christ have saved for this purpose, how dare we hide His Light? How dare we try to be “secret Christians” at certain times, because we are ashamed? How dare we place His Light under a ***“bushel,”*** and recoil from letting others know about our faith in Christ? How can we confine Christ’s Light to certain areas of our lives (such as when we are in church), yet hide the Light in other areas of our lives (such as when we are at work, or about town)? True followers of Christ are compelled by a desire to confess Jesus’ name before men. This confession begins at the moment of salvation, and continues throughout the Christian life.

I wish I could say that the Light of Christ has always burned brightly in every corner of my life; but, sadly, such is not the case. Christians *can* hide the Light. In fact, we do it quite often. How do we “hide” it? It’s simple. Whenever we take our eyes fully off the Lord, our

lives begin to be filled with darkness. It's as though we are putting a "bushel" over the Light, or confining it to one little room of our house, out of sight. Not only is our testimony hidden from others, but we ourselves begin to think and act as we did before we were saved, when our lives were completely filled with spiritual darkness. If our eye be "*single*" (in other words, singly focused on the Lord), then our "*whole body*" will be filled with "*light*." However, if our eye be "*evil*" (focused on something of this world, instead of on Christ), then we will be filled with "*darkness*."

Christian, you cannot have "conflicting interests" in your life. A person who runs for a public office cannot have an affiliation with an organisation which would sway his votes, because this would be a "conflict of interest." Likewise, we, as God's people, cannot have a "conflicting interest" in fleshly things of this world, which are opposed to the Law of our Master. Our eye *must* be wholly focused on Him, on His kingdom, and His righteousness.

You know, it is possible for a believer to be *partly* filled with light, and *partly* filled with darkness. Jesus clearly implies this here in **Luke 11:36**. He says, "*If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.*" A believer *can* be partly filled with light, and partly with darkness. Yet, why would we desire to live this way? Christ wants our "*whole body*" to be flooded with spiritual light, with "*no part dark*"!

When you are allowing Christ's light to flood your *own* heart, and to have the sole, undivided attention of *your* eye, then you will be in the spiritual condition to let your light shine brightly before men. First, you will desire to shine your light to those who are nearby you. You won't be content to give money to missionaries, and to let *them* reach lost souls in far-off places, while you yourself do nothing to reach the lost souls around you. You will have a burden to reach those who are *near you*. Jesus' last words to His disciples were, "*And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*" He didn't say, "You shall send *someone else* to be witnesses unto me": He said, "*Ye shall be witnesses*" in Jerusalem first, and *then* go to the uttermost part of the earth. God's heart is to reach those who are *near* first.

However, God doesn't want us to shine the light only to those who are nearby us. He also wants us to send the light to those who are "far off"!

### **Read Isaiah 57:19.**

In this Scripture, the Lord was speaking about two groups of people--first, the Jews (who were "near" to Him, in the sense that they knew all *about* Him); and secondly, the Gentiles (who were "far off" from God, both spiritually and geographically). God has always desired to save His lost creation in *every* corner of the globe. He has declared "*Peace*" through the blood of his cross; and it is our job to take this message of peace to those who are near and far. God's desire is to "*open their eyes, and to turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins.*" This was Jesus' desire; and it should be our burning desire, as well.

### **Read Isaiah 49:6.**

This is an amazing Scripture! In this prophetic passage, God the Father is speaking to God the Son; and He is telling His Son that He would ordain Him to be "*a light to the Gentiles,*" so that He might be His "*salvation unto the end of the earth.*" Yet, when the Apostle Paul was preaching to the people in the city of Pisidian Antioch, he quoted this very Scripture, and he applied these words about being a "*light to the Gentiles*" to himself and his missionary team! Of course, Paul understood that *Jesus* is *the* "*light to the Gentiles*"; yet, he also understood that *he and his missionary co-workers* were a "*light to the Gentiles,*" as well.

Because Jesus, the Light of the world, lived inside Paul, Paul therefore viewed himself as a “lamp,” carrying the Light of Jesus to the people who were far off from God. Christian, do you have a passion for souls? Are you *really* concerned about getting the Gospel to those who are perishing in faraway lands? Or is your zeal for missions lacking?

In closing, I would like to tell the testimony of an English cobbler of the nineteenth century, named **William Carey**. William Carey received Christ as his Saviour as a young man, and was soon baptised. He had a zeal for the Scriptures, and he soon became a Baptist preacher; but, like many Christians in his day, he didn’t have any zeal to take the Gospel to foreign lands. Why? Because of the poisonous influence of Calvinism. Calvinism is a comfortable theology, because it leads Christians to believe that they have no real responsibility to win the lost. If Calvinism be true—if men have no free will, and God is moving everyone around like puppets on a string—then Christians are not really responsible to win the lost, because God will win them one way or other, against their will. In other words, “What will be, will be.”

Now, as I say, Carey himself didn’t have any particular passion for foreign missions--that is, until one day when he was teaching his boys’ grammar school in Northamptonshire. As he was teaching geography to the boys, he looked at the world globe: and a thought occurred to him. He realised that there were at least 400,000,000 people in the world who had never heard the name of Jesus Christ at all, and who were heading straight to a burning hell! (In those days, 400,000,000 people was the overwhelming majority of the earth’s population.)

As Carey thought about this, he became overwhelmed with grief at the thought that the Baptist churches in England weren’t doing anything to snatch these souls from the flames. Immediately, he sprang to action. This was urgent! In 1792, he wrote a small book entitled *Inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*. Sadly, few people read it, or cared. A little later, in a meeting of Baptist pastors, Carey proposed that they discuss Christians’ duty to spread the Gospel to the heathen. The moderator of the meeting, John Ryland, Sr., ordered Carey to sit down, and said, “Young man, when God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine!”

*That* was the rotten attitude that Carey was up against! However, I am happy to say that as Carey wept and prayed for his brethren, he slowly gained support. On May 31, 1792, at a Baptist fellowship in Nottingham, Carey preached a message called “Thy Maker Is Thy Husband.” In this sermon, he made the now famous statement, “Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God.” He was so overwhelmed with the thought that lost people in India were lost in darkness and headed to hell, that he broke down sobbing. The people in the meeting that day finally began to realise that they were guilty of *criminal* neglect in not attempting to reach those who had never heard Jesus’ name. A resolution was made to form a missionary society; and on October 2, 1792, 12 men from several Baptist churches resolved to form the Baptist Missionary Society. In April of 1793, Carey set sail for India; and 8 years later, in December of 1800, Carey finally won an Indian man named Krishna Pal to Christ. Soon after this, Krishna Paul was baptised in the Ganges River. This was just the beginning of a mighty harvest. Multitudes in India are still being saved today because of a simple cobbler who desired to shine the light of Christ into the darkest night.

**Read Philippians 2:15-16.**

**Conclusion:** The world has always been spiritually dark; and it is still dark to this day. Will we spend our time bemoaning the darkness, and wringing our hands about how bad the world is? Or will we “send the light”? Are *you* willing to send the light, Christian? Are you keeping your light trimmed and fuelled with God’s Word, prayer, and submission to the Holy Spirit? Are you shining the light on your *own* heart, so that you may keep your heart clean? Are you willing to shine the light of the Gospel to regions

beyond you? I would also ask, “Do you *have* the Light?”; or are you still in spiritual darkness? If you have never repented of your sin and asked Christ to save you, I urge you to come to the Light today!