

SERMON: KEEPERS OF THE FLAME

John 8:12

John 9:5

Matthew 5:14-16

John 8:12

Then spake Jesus again unto them saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 9:5

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Matthew 5:14-16

(14) Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. (15) 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. (16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Introduction

In order to fully understand this text, we have to get into their world. We have to get into a world with no electric lights; we have to historically rewind the tape and go to a world with only oil lamps, wax candles, and tar torches. In this world there were no matches; it was hard to start a fire. In this world every terrestrial source of light was produced by a fiery flame. Sometimes it became a challenge just to keep the flame burning. To go back ever further, each primitive culture had a designated person who was the “keeper of the flame.” His job was to keep a fire burning at all times so others could come and re-ignite their fires. We are now the keepers of the flame of God’s truth which is expressed in the Bible. Jesus said, “I am the Light of the World,” then He delegated that position to Christians and told us we are the light of the world. I don’t think you would disagree with me when I say that we live in a dark world that is in need of “spiritual illumination.”

These two passages from the Gospel of John occurred on the day following the spectacular nighttime ceremony, known as the “Illumination of the Temple.” This ceremony was part of the Feast of Tabernacles. As part of the festivities, four massive golden lampstands were topped with huge torches. The lamps rose over the outside walls of the temple and were said to illuminate the entire city of Jerusalem, as well as the temple. This ritual was to celebrate the great pillar of fire that led the people of Israel

during their sojourn in the wilderness for forty years. It also implied that Israel would be a light to the entire world. However, the ritual had lost its true meaning and had become a “secular party.” This was the popular sentiment: “since the lights will burn all night, we can party all night.” In His disgust, Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world.” Now let’s discuss the points of our outline.

Exposition

1. The Source Of The Light.

(Jesus Our Savior.)

(We Reflect the Light Of Our Savior.)

2. The Service Of The Light.

(A Positive Difference-Good Works.)

3. The Site Of The Light.

(On A Candlestick-Not Covered By A Bowl.)

(Putting It Under A Bowl Would Defeat The Purpose.)

4. The Scorn Of The Light.

(Satan Hates Your Light And Wants To Extinguish It.)

5. The Success Of The Light.

(The Glorification Of God.)

Closing Thoughts

Our fore-parents were on point when they sang: “This little light of mine, I’m gonna let shine. Let it shine! Let it shine! Let it shine.” Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!”

Related Scriptures

Exodus 13:21-22

John 3:19-21

1st Peter 2:9

End Note

In Matthew 5:16 some scholars believe Jesus was referring to a custom of that day. When a person of “high-standing” came down a road or street, the common people

would move to the side of the road to allow the dignitary unobstructed passage. If it was night as the dignitary passed by, the people with lamps would extend the arm holding the lamp toward the dignitary as an act of honor and respect. The light from the lamp illuminated the face of the dignitary and was away from the possessor of the lamp. Our good works should shed light on Jesus and not on ourselves. Jesus is the ultimate dignitary. He is the “Divine Dignitary.”

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