Sunday, 5th July 2026

You Are The Light of the World: Not Self-Display, but Kingdom Witness

Text: Matthew 5:14–16

My Dearest Christian Family, let us continue to dive into the Word on the reason why our beloved Lord Jesus call us the chosen children of our beloved Abba Father God and His very own beloved Bride, the light of this world.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 5:14, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

These words are familiar, but they are often misunderstood. Many hear this verse as if Lord Jesus were saying, “Make yourself impressive. Be admired. Build your platform. Become influential. Let people see how bright you are.”

But that is not what our beloved Lord Jesus meant.

The light of the world is not self-display. It is visible Kingdom witness. It is the character of Christ’s disciples becoming public in such a way that people do not stop at the disciple, but are led to glorify our beloved Abba Father.

Lord Jesus Himself gives us the purpose in Matthew 5:16: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.”

That final phrase protects the whole passage from religious vanity. The works are seen, but the glory must go to God.

The Light Begins with the Beatitudes

Before Lord Jesus says, “You are the light of the world,” He first describes the people of His Kingdom.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

“Blessed are those who mourn.”
“Blessed are the meek.”
“Blessed are the merciful.”
“Blessed are the pure in heart.”
“Blessed are the peacemakers.”
“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.”

This is the GROUP Lord Jesus calls the LIGHT of the world.

Not the proud.
Not the self-promoting.
Not the spiritually impressive.
Not the people who dominate the room.
But the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the pure, the peacemakers, and the persecuted.

The world sees influence.
Lord Jesus sees mercy.
The world sees platform. Lord Jesus sees purity.
The world sees dominance. Lord Jesus sees meekness.
The world sees applause. Lord Jesus sees faithfulness under pressure.

Therefore, if we want to understand the light, we must not begin with the stage. We must begin with the Beatitudes.

The light Lord Jesus speaks of is Kingdom character made visible.

Lord Jesus said: “You Are”

Notice that Lord Jesus does not say, “Try to become the light of the world.” He says, “You are the light of the world.”

Identity comes before activity.

Many Christians hear this verse as pressure: “Shine harder. Be better. Be more impressive. Never fail publicly.” But Lord Jesus begins with grace. He tells His disciples what they are because of their union with Him.

Ephesians 5:8 says, “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”

First: “You are light in the Lord.”

Then: “Walk as children of light.”

A lamp does not become a lamp by shining. It shines because it has been lit.

Christians do not shine in order to become light. They shine because Christ has made them light in Himself.

John Calvin wrote that believers are “enlightened by faith” and are to point others “the way of life.” The light is received before it is reflected.

A City on a Hill Cannot Be Hidden

Lord Jesus continues: “A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

In the ancient world, before electric lights, a city on a hill would be visible in the darkness. Its lamps would shine from the height. It did not need to advertise itself. Darkness made it visible.

So it is with true Christian witness.

When a believer tells the truth in a dishonest workplace, light appears.
When a believer forgives in a bitter family, light appears.
When a believer refuses cruelty in a mocking conversation, light appears.
When a believer is kind, light appears.
When a believer is humble, light appears.
When a believer is gentle,

light appears.
When a believer loves his Triune God, light appears.
When a believer loves his fellow believers, light appears.
When a believer loves an enemy, light appears.

This is public, but not promotional.

Lord Jesus is not saying, “How can you get people to look at you?” He is saying, “Where has obedience made hiding impossible?”

Matthew Henry said Christ’s disciples become “remarkable” and are “taken notice of as beacons.” But the beacon

does not exist for itself. It exists to guide others.

The Lamp Must Not Be Covered

Lord Jesus then says in Matthew 5:15, “Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand.”

This confronts hidden faith.

A believer may be truly lit, and yet fear may cover the lamp. At the lunch table, someone is mocked, and silence feels safer. In the family, truth is needed, but comfort wins. In the workplace, honesty is costly, so the basket comes down. In a conversation about God, someone asks

sincerely, but fear keeps the Christian quiet.

There is wisdom in how we speak. We are to speak at all times with gentleness and respect in all situations about our beloved Christ.
Scripture does not command foolish boldness. But Lord Jesus' image remains: a lamp is not lit for concealment.

The light is not for the lamp. The light is for the house.

When Christians hide faithful witness merely to preserve comfort, others remain in darkness who might have been helped by the light.

Good Works Must Lead to our beloved Abba Father

Matthew 5:16 gives the purpose: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.”

The disciple is not the destination. The disciple is the window.

A window may be noticed, but its purpose is not to trap attention on the glass. Its purpose is to let the light through.

So our good works are not monuments to human virtue. They are signs of the

Father's character reflected in His children.

When people see mercy instead of revenge, they glimpse the mercy of the Father.
When they see purity instead of secret compromise, they glimpse the holiness of the Father.
When they see peacemaking instead of pride, they glimpse the reconciling heart of the Father.
When they see enemy-love instead of hatred, they glimpse our Kingdom not of this world.

John 15:8 says, “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

Fruit does not glorify the branch. Fruit reveals the life of the vine.

The Westminster Confession says that good works are “fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith.” They glorify God because believers are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for them.

Good Works Are Not Vague Niceness

Some people reduce good works to being pleasant, polite, and respectable.

But the Sermon on the Mount will not allow that.

Lord Jesus speaks of anger and reconciliation: “First be reconciled to your brother” (Matthew 5:24). That is costly light.

He speaks of purity: “Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). That is light entering the secret room.

He speaks of truthfulness: “Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’” (Matthew 5:37). That is light in speech.

He speaks of retaliation: “Do not resist an evil person” in the spirit of revenge (Matthew 5:39).

Then He gives the command no natural heart can domesticate: “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you” (Matthew 5:44).

This is not positive energy. This is not self-improvement.
This is the visible life of the kingdom.

Good works are reconciliation when pride wants distance.
Purity when secrecy offers cover.

Truth when deception would work.
Mercy when revenge feels deserved.
Enemy-love when hatred would be easier.

A.A. Hodge said that a truly good work springs from divine love, follows God's revealed will, and aims at God's glory.

That is Matthew 5:16.

Matthew 5 and Matthew 6: Witness, Not Theatre

But here we must be careful. Matthew 5 says, "Let your light so shine before men." Yet Matthew 6:1 says, "Take heed

that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them."

Is this a contradiction? No.

Lord Jesus is separating witness from theatre.

Matthew 5 confronts hidden faith.
Matthew 6 confronts performed religion.

In Matthew 6, a man gives, but the giving is really about being seen.
Another prays, but the prayer is really about appearing spiritual.
Another fasts, but the fasting is really about receiving admiration.

Lord Jesus says, “Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward” (Matthew 6:2).

That is a terrifying sentence. They wanted to be seen, and they were seen. They wanted applause, and they received it.
But there was no reward from the Father, because the Father was never the aim.

The lampstand is not a stage.

A stage says, “Look at me.”
A lampstand says, “Here is light for the room.”

So the question is not merely, “Did people see?” The question is, “Why did I want them to see?
And where did the glory go after they saw?”

Christ Is the True Light

Here is the deepest comfort: we the children of God are not independent sources of light.

If you think the light begins in you, Matthew 5 will crush you.
If you think the light belongs to you, Matthew 5 will corrupt you.

John 1:4–5 says of Christ, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness.”

John 8:12 says, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

Christ is the true Light. We shine only because we belong to Him.

Second Corinthians 4:6 says, “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts.”

That is received light. Borrowed light. Reflected light.

The moon does not boast against the sun.
The window does not claim to be the source.
The lamp does not boast that it invented fire.

So Christian witness is not self-generated brightness. It is Christ shining through His people.

The Spirit Empowers the Witness

Acts 1:8 says, “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me.”

The Holy Spirit empowers witness to Christ, not witness to our personality. He does not make us visible so that we may become spiritual celebrities.
He makes Christ visible through weak, ordinary, redeemed people like us.

The poor in spirit can carry the light because they know they do not own it.
The meek can become visible without turning visibility into domination.
The merciful can reflect the Father's kindness in a cruel world.
The pure in heart can resist using obedience as a mask.
The persecuted can keep the lamp uncovered when darkness pushes back.

The Covered Lamp, the Staged Lamp, and the Lamp on the Stand

There are three dangers before us.

First, there is the covered lamp. This is the believer who belongs to Christ but hides whenever obedience becomes costly. He believes, but he has learned how to disappear.

Second, there is the staged lamp. This is the religious person who uses holy things to gather attention. He serves, but wants credit. He speaks truth, but enjoys superiority. He gives, but needs the story told.

Third, there is the lamp on the stand. Not hidden. Not performing. Simply placed where it can serve the room.

That is the life Lord Jesus is describing.

Visible enough that faith is not concealed.
Humble enough that self is not the destination.
Obedient enough that good works can be seen.
Clear enough that the Father is glorified.

Conclusion

When Lord Jesus says, “You are the light

of the world," He is not flattering His disciples. He is placing them.
Like a city on a hill.
Like a lamp on a stand.
Like a people whose ordinary obedience becomes visible because the kingdom cannot stay invisible forever.

The final question is not, "Do people see us ?"

The question is: "What happens after they see us?"

Does our life leave them with us —our image, our confidence, our morality, our reputation? Or does our lives, however

imperfectly but truly, point beyond us to our beloved Abba Father?

Does mercy point to the Father?
Does purity point to the Father?
Does reconciliation point to the Father?
Does courage point to the Father?
Does visible obedience refuse to become performance?

This is the path of the light.

It starts in our beloved Christ.
It forms Beatitude people.
It becomes visible in good works.
It refuses the basket.
It refuses the stage.

And it gives glory to our beloved Abba Father.

A covered lamp may still have flame, but the room stays dark.
A staged lamp may draw eyes, but it has forgotten the room.
A lamp on the stand gives itself away.

That is what Lord Jesus says His disciples are.
Not celebrities of the kingdom.
Not spiritual performers.
Not private believers with no public witness.

Light.

Visible. Useful. Received from Christ. Shaped by the Kingdom. Aimed at our beloved Abba Father.

“You are the light of the world.”

Not because we are impressive.

But because through our lives, our Father in Heaven is meant to be glorified.

Amen, Amen, Amen

With much love,
Francis