

Reflect the Light of the Son

by Arno Stegen

We need to walk in the light as children of God, connected to the source of light, and let our light shine to be a testimony to others and to bring peace and unity in the church.

Duration: 1:01:53

Scripture: Matthew 5:16, Matthew 12:36, Ephesians 5:3-4, Ephesians 5:8, Ephesians 5:20, 1 John 1:5

Topics: "Son Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of walking in the light and avoiding the works of darkness. He shares a story of a man who was converted and became a preacher of the gospel. The preacher also discusses the prevalence of silly talk and coarse jesting in society and how it goes against the teachings of the Bible. He highlights the need to be connected to God, who is always close by and a source of light. Additionally, the preacher mentions the decline of church attendance in some countries and the need to bring the gospel to far away nations.

Transcript

Lord Jesus, we need you every hour. In fact, we need you every moment. And so we pray for your guidance, your wisdom, pray for your blessing.

We are totally dependent on you, Lord. We ask you to speak to us, touch us deep in our hearts, do something that will change us, that will be transformed evermore into your image. So please take full control of this service and glorify your name.

Amen. I'd just like to read a word out of Ephesians, chapter 5. And I want us to consider what we will speak about under this verse. Ephesians 5, verse 8. And I'll just read the second part of the verse.

Ephesians 5, verse 8. But now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. Walk in the light as children of light.

This is God's expectation of us. We need to walk as people who live in the light. Now we could say very much about it.

But what became so important to me and precious to me as I considered light, and what it means to live as a child of light, for me there were two things that stood out. For light to be effective, you need, I think basically, two ingredients. One is, you need a source.

Source of light. Without the source of light, there is no light. Secondly, for light to be effective, you need darkness.

You know that the darker it is, the more effective light becomes. We know that we live in a time of darkness. I think if you were a Christian, there'd be many reasons to be concerned.

We are faced with the powers of darkness every day. In our personal lives. The devil attacking us from every side.

But even as Christians, as a church, the devil has launched a massive attack. And it's easy to despair. There have been times like that in the history of this world.

And probably the darkest hour that ever came into this world was about 2,000 years ago. You'll remember when the Lord was in His darkest hour, as He was faced with the prospect of the cross. And not just the cross, but the prospect of having to carry our sins.

Which meant being forsaken by God. You can imagine what that must have meant to Him. And you'll remember when Judas came who betrayed Him.

Tragic to think that the one who was so close to Him was the one that betrayed Him. Very often we just look glibly over these facts. Because for us, we've heard them quite often.

But just imagine if that had happened to you. If you're close to someone who's so close to you. One of the chosen twelve.

If one of someone so close to you would turn against you. One cannot imagine that a human being can allow himself to be used by the devil to such an extent. And you remember how the Lord had relied on His other disciples to stand by Him and support Him in this darkest hour.

It was in this time when they were asleep. And it was soon after that that Judas arrived and they arrested Jesus. And the Lord said, this is your hour.

End power of darkness. For a moment it seemed as if darkness was being victorious. In this hour it must have seemed as if all hope was lost.

But praise God, after this darkness, the glorious Son of God arose. And that's what gives us hope. While it's so dark all around us, but if we let our light shine, God's light shine, there is hope.

Just to also give you an idea how dark it really is in this time. You should have noticed if you look just in our own country what it looks like. We are living in a time where the authorities are taking prayer and scripture reading out of the schools.

And they are replacing that with a pledge, or that's what their intention is. When you commit yourself not to a triune God, but basically to a humanistic constitution. One which has allowed many laws to be passed in this country which the majority of the people don't even agree with.

I don't know whether I heard correctly recently that they did a survey and if I heard correctly I think 90% of the people who were surveyed were against abortion. And yet we live in a country where abortion is freely available and legal. And so we can go on and on.

There are so many things which are happening in our country where we see that this is also an hour of darkness. In a recent copy of the Joy magazine there was an article about Hollywood. Where they write about how these idols, these role models, film stars, pop stars, whatever they are, have become the role models of society.

In the past where Christian leaders were taken as role models, now people of darkness have become the standard bearers of culture. In this article it refers to Germany. In fact it also refers to other countries like Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, other European countries which in many ways were the cradle of Christianity.

Those were the countries that experienced revival, experienced God working and where fire was ignited in the hearts of the people of the Christians. And that's why we enjoy Christianity even in Africa today because they had a heart to bring the gospel to far away nations. But they say in these countries people and especially teenagers, young people are leaving the church in droves.

Some churches stand empty. Many churches are being closed down. Some are even being converted for other purposes.

And they say in Germany, and I'm still hoping that this is a misprint, but this is what the article says. They say there are today fewer Protestants in Germany than there are Muslims. Can you imagine that in the country of Martin Luther? One leader in Berlin, the capital of Germany, he commented and said it would be better for Germany to be taken over by Muslims than for Christianity to return.

Do we realize how dark this hour is? That's why I say it's easy for us to despair. And today I don't want to focus so much on the darkness. But as I said, the darkness has that one advantage that it helps the light to be more effective.

There's a Chinese proverb that says it's better to light a candle than to curse the darkness. Many people, and especially Christians, are specialists at complaining about the darkness. Do we realize that the darkness is there because of the lack of light? But we love to share our troubles and our hardships.

We love to share our troubles and our hardships. When they talk to you, it's almost as if they need to prove to you how difficult they have it in life. In their own personal lives, they face so many battles.

In fact, you get the impression that they need super spiritual grace to make it. Others can only tell you how difficult it is in the family. Others can only tell you how difficult it is at work.

And how tough it is because you carry the burden alone. No one is supporting you. And all we can talk about is the darkness.

But that doesn't change the darkness. It only makes it darker. What would make a difference if one lit a candle? That we become part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

And my, what a solution don't we have at our disposal? We've got the best solution to the darkness that there is. And that brings me to the source of the light. God being the light.

And light is something wonderful. If you just think of the speed of light. Imagine that God being light, it just thrills one to think that if we need him, he is so close by.

I read an article in the engineering news of all places. You wouldn't have expected to find an article like this in an engineering journal. Written by Jack O'Brien and he makes some comments which were such a blessing to me.

He relates the story of a boy who heard his teacher say, teacher commented. Teacher was teaching the class about light and the phenomenal speed at which light travels. And the teacher said to think of light coming to us from the sun at the speed of all those kilometers each second.

Not really said the boy. He wasn't so impressed. He says it's downhill all the way.

It's downhill all the way for the light. Isn't it wonderful to know that God is so close by when we need him? And this is the light that is at our disposal. So if we want to be carriers of light, we need to be connected to the light.

There is no light without a source. No ray of light can shine if severed from its source. Dear Christian, are you connected? Are you walking in this light? And it's a wonderful light to be in.

If you have time at home, go and read Ephesians chapter 5. Where it exhorts us to become imitators of God as beloved children. That we should walk in love. And that we should not let immorality, impurity or greed even be named among us.

There must be no filthiness and silly talk. Silly talk is not fitting for a Christian. These are the things which don't stand in the light of God.

These are the works of darkness that get punished by the light. Do you know this light that convicts you when you say something which you shouldn't have said? Of course if you walk in darkness, you won't have this feeling. Because you will be blunt.

When you are in darkness, the works of darkness don't get exposed. And walking in the light exposes even the smallest bit of darkness. That some people enjoy the darkness.

Because that's what their works consist of. They feel at home in darkness. When there is light, they feel uncomfortable.

They don't like it when people talk about things which you know are wrong in your life. As opposed to a child of the light who rejoices when the Lord puts his finger on something that was wrong so that he can remove it. That it may not be a hindrance in his walk with the Lord.

But most people unfortunately prefer darkness. And they do their works of darkness in darkness. I know somebody who years ago, before he got converted, he went somewhere.

And on his way home, it was dark. He had a little motorbike with a small engine. So he wanted to get home quickly.

So to get the most power out of his little engine, he switched off his light. He put down his head to have as little wind resistance as possible. And he was riding foot in yoke.

What he didn't know was that there was someone else on that same road. In his car. Coming from the opposite direction.

In the car was a married man. He had just visited his girlfriend, a mistress, not his wife. Because he was doing his work of darkness, he enjoyed the darkness.

And so even his headlights were too much light for his situation. So to go undetected, he also switched off his lights. And the only reason why we tell the story today is because you can imagine, they did meet, they met by accident.

There are people who prefer darkness. Because their works are works of darkness. We praise God because this man got converted, soundly, who was on the motorbike.

And today is a blessed preacher of the gospel. Do we walk in the light? Or do we hide from the light? Because it exposes us. So hear this word, exhorts us not to have any of the works of darkness, even silly talk.

Or coarse jesting. In verse 4. Nowadays when you go to a function, you get the impression people think you cannot have a successful function without some silly talk and coarse jesting coming in. And one gets the feeling that people think motivational speakers, the best ones are the ones that can push the limits the furthest.

And these are even people who call themselves Christians. It's not fitting, the Bible says. But rather you should give thanks, it says here.

Do you give thanks? Or do you just, are you quite happy that you can always complain about your difficulties? Never can you say, you know I just want to say thank you for what the Lord has done for me. Or people know, when you just arrive on the scene they already know, it's either going to be silly talk, joking, things which aren't fitting for someone who walks in the light, talking things which are idle. And the Bible says we have to give account of every idle word we speak.

Or you're known as someone who's going to just come and just tell your stories of woe. The Bible says we should rather give thanks. Are you someone who can give thanks? The Bible even speaks about people who end up in sin because they never say thank you.

Have you ever said thank you in the first place to the Lord for what He's done for you? Or hasn't He done something for you? Maybe that's why you cannot give thanks. May God grant us the grace that we, as we go through life, may be like a breath of fresh air to people who need it so badly. We need to set a good example as Christians, as children of light.

Not like a woman I read about in one of the readings in Our Daily Bread recently. This lady was driving in her car, and I don't know what mood she must have been in when she left home. I hope she didn't leave home the way she was feeling in her car.

It would have been a pity if she had acted like this at home already in front of her husband and her children. She was very agitated. And you feel sorry for children who have mothers like that, and maybe fathers as well.

Mothers who have no patience with their children. When the child does something, it expects a slap already because that's what the mother is known for. And if it's not a slap with the hands, it's a slap with the tongue.

Poor children. A child that doesn't have a godly mother is a poor child. And this mother was getting more and more irritated because there was a lot of traffic.

And she was probably late for an appointment. Probably one of these modern mothers that make sure that they fill their day so full that there's not even time to pray anymore. This function and that function, and then it's this course and then that course, and you just make sure that there's just not time for God anymore.

And as she approached a traffic light, it turned yellow. Is it yellow or orange? Whatever. In front of her, the man in the car in front of her, because it turned yellow, stopped, which is obviously the right thing to do.

This was just one too much for this poor woman. And she acted like one would expect men to act. Now, I don't know whether it's because we live in this age of equality and where women are doing their utmost to do what men do.

But dear ladies, if you try to become like a man, please don't learn all the vices of a man. Don't learn what the men do wrong. Try and find something a man does right and learn that from him.

Rage and anger is something which is all normally associated with a man. And this is darkness. Anger is darkness that is found in a lot of men, even so-called Christian men.

You've got to go a long way to find a man that isn't hot-tempered or short-tempered. Because even the Bible speaks to the men and says, Therefore I want the men to pray, lifting up holy hands without wrath and dissension. Dear men, do you pray? Do you lift up holy hands? Are they without wrath? Can I ask your wife? Are you a man that lifts up holy hands without wrath? And this woman had unfortunately taken over this vice which the men have.

She sat in the car, and you can imagine her, hands in the air, shouting and screaming at this man who was so stupid to stop when he could have just jumped the robot anyway, and she was still going to follow after him. And as she was performing, and in this tantrum like you normally just find little children doing, there was a knock on her window. It was a traffic officer.

He said, Lady, could you just come with me? He arrested her, took her to the local police station, put her in a holding cell. After about an hour, he came back, very apologetically, and said, Dear Lady, I am terribly sorry. I've made a mistake.

I was following you, and I noticed on the back of your car were two stickers. One said, What would Jesus do? And the other said, Follow me to Sunday school. And he said, Lady, when I saw those stickers, and I saw how you were behaving, I was convinced you had stolen the car.

Walk as children of light. Dear Christian, the devil doesn't mind if you become a Christian. What worries him is if you act like one.

Are we light? Or do we represent darkness? Yes, we could say a lot more. But may God grant us grace that in this time of darkness, we will be light. To be this light, we need to be connected to the source of light.

In John 8 verse 12, Jesus says, I am the light of the world. And he says, If we walk in the light as he is in the light, his blood cleanses us from sin, and we have fellowship with one another. Dear Christian, are you

enjoying the fellowship of the saints? If you aren't, then ask yourself, are you walking in the light? Because God's word promises us if we walk in the light, we will have fellowship with one another.

And that is how we become a testimony to others as well. May God grant us a life in the church that is such that people will be attracted to it. And you may say, well, I'm not a big light.

But just lighting a candle makes a difference. In a cave in New Zealand, a hundred kilometers from Auckland, this cave is known as the cave of the glow worms. The cave of a glow worm.

A glow worm is a little insect that you see sometimes at night. When it flies, it's like a little light that shines. You know how small a glow worm is? Well, during the day, you probably would hardly notice that it's so small.

But in the darkness, this little insect shines, and then you see it. Now, this cave you can visit, but you can only access it by a boat that is pulled by a wire for silence. And while it's dark all over, as you approach this cave, you see a glow from a distance already.

And this glow, this light is generated by these little glow worms. And it's the combination of all these little lights that light up this cave. See, this is how the church should be a light.

Each one letting his light shine. And that light drives away the darkness. And they say when you come into this cave, the light is so bright that you can read a book in it in the light of these glow worms.

But there has to be perfect peace and silence. They say the slightest noise, that the lights go out as if you've put off a switch. See, in the church of Christ, we need this peace as well.

As soon as the Christians start losing this peace and losing this fellowship, that causes that light to go off. If we fight each other, we can no longer be a light to the world. Because while Jesus says, I am the light of the world, he also in Matthew says, you are the light of the world.

But when we start fighting each other, losing that fellowship, and being in disunity with one another, we lose the ability to be a light. That's why the Lord says, blessed are the peacemakers, they will be called the sons of God. Are we sons of God or are we sons of the devil? Do we disturb the peace? Do we sow disunity? Or are we a light that shines? May when the Lord is in our midst, there be no rumblings and no groanings and murmurings as there were in the congregation of Israel.

Dear friend, are you a light bearer? Do you want to be one? You can be. There is a famous picture that has the title, The Light of the World. It was painted by Holman Hunt in 1854.

It portrays Christ, thorn crowned and carrying a lantern. And he is knocking at the door of a cottage. When the artist showed some of his friends this painting, they pointed out to him something which seemed to be an omission, something he had forgotten.

They said to him, there is no handle on the door. The artist replied, that is the door of the human heart. It can only be opened from within.

Do you want to be light? Let the light, the son of God, into your heart. And then you can become light. Remember, when the light shines into our lives, that light brings everything to light.

Then you will experience what that Samaritan woman at the well experienced, when she later said, you know when he spoke to me, he showed me and revealed to me everything I had ever done. Dear friend, have you opened the door of your heart? If you haven't, when will you do it? And if you have let the light of God into your heart, is it still shining brightly? And remember, if it shines into your life, it doesn't stop there. Dorothy gave me a story when I went to Europe recently, and in closing I would just like to share it with you, to show you what happens when we let this light into our lives.

It's told by Robert Fulgham, a minister who once attended a seminar. And at the end of the seminar, the lecturer asked the question, well he asked, are there any questions? Fulgham asked him, what was the meaning of life? Everyone in attendance laughed and stood to leave. However, the leader held up his hand to ask for silence and then responded, I will answer your question, he said.

He took out his wallet and removed a small round mirror, the size of a quarter. Now I don't know what a quarter size, but it obviously must be a coin, it must be small, like a two rand coin or something. Then he explained that one day it was during the Second World War, he was walking along and he came across a broken mirror on the road, there had been an accident, a motorbike, and the mirror had obviously broken and was in very many small pieces.

He said he tried to pick up all the pieces and put them together and he couldn't do it. And he said, then I kept this one piece, the largest piece. By stretching it on a stone I made it round.

And he started using it as a toy, he would use it to reflect light into dark places. And he says it was always a challenge to him to try and shine, to reflect the light into the most inaccessible places that he could find. And he says as he grew up to be a man, he understood that this wasn't just a child's game, but actually a picture of what life was all about.

He says I came to understand that I am not the light or the source of the light. But he said the light is there and I need to reflect it. He said I'm a fragment of a mirror whose whole design and shape I do not know.

Nevertheless, with what I have I can reflect light into the dark places of this world. Into the dark places of human hearts. And change some things in some people.

And he says this is what I am about. This is the meaning of my life. Dear Christians, we've been called to be the light of the world.

Are we faithful to our calling? Let's pray. Lord Jesus, what a responsibility we have. We need to reflect your light into this dark world.

That mirror must always be focused on you. That light that you pass to us, we can pass on to others. And those, Lord, that look into this mirror cannot but see the light of God.

Lord, we need your help to be able to do this. You are the source of light. Help us never to be severed from that source.

But that we'll let our light shine. For all men to see. To the glory of God our Father.

Amen.

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