

Bristol Conference 1977-07 Similies Christ Gospels

by Stan Ford

We are called to be the light of the world, shining our light before men so that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

Duration: 39:59

Topics: "Being The Light", "Christian Witness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a small but significant light in the world. He uses the analogy of a trickle of water that eventually becomes a river to illustrate how our small acts of kindness and praise can have a powerful impact. The speaker encourages the audience to bring their 'trickle' of light and burn brightly for God. He references several Bible verses, including Matthew 5:14-16 and Luke 8:16, to support his message. The sermon concludes with a story about a group of young people who spread joy and positivity in their neighborhood, highlighting the transformative power of small acts of goodness.

Transcript

I know I keep saying it, but let me say it again. If we'll go on this conference determined to be that little blinder, to be that little kinder, then I'm certain our coming here will not be in vain. The fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, please.

Matthew, chapter 5, please. Verse 1, of course I'm reading from the authorized version, you know, the Bible, the authorized version. So please, Matthew, chapter 5 if we may, and verse 1. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, verse 14, Ye are the light of the world.

A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candle set, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The eighth chapter of the Gospel of Luke, please. The eighth chapter of the Gospel of Luke. Verse 16.

No man, says the Lord Jesus, no man when he hath lighted a candle covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed, but setteth it on a candle set, that they which enter in may see the light. The eleventh chapter of the Gospel of Luke, please. The eleventh chapter of the Gospel of Luke, and verse 33.

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candle set, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye. Therefore, when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light.

But when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness. 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.

May the Lord just add his blessing to the reading of his word. Shall we ask his blessing? O God and Father, we pray very simply that the Spirit himself may take up the things of Christ, and reveal them to us this morning, for the joy that hath been ours, the joy of just being one with another, we thank thee. We ask now that thou would enable us to face the very challenge of thy word, and grant that our study of thy word, our consideration of its message, may mean that we will be better fitted to enjoy the things of God, and be a blessing to those that we come in contact with, for Jesus' sake.

Amen. I presume, of course, you have gathered that which is on my heart this morning. For I want to remind you, not as we reminded you yesterday, that ye are the salt of the earth, but that ye are the light of the world.

And I do think it's important for us just to say to ourselves, the Lord was the person that used those words, and so they have great importance. Ye are the light of the world. Now, when in the grace and mercy of God, you and I were separated from that great mass of unregenerated humanity, three things happened.

And I think it's good for us to remember that these things happen. Whether we are entering into the full joy of them, whether we are enjoying all that God has for us in them, when we trusted Christ, three things happened. First of all, every one of us was initiated into a new relationship.

Up to that moment of time, it could be said of us that we were children of God, as others. But when by sovereign grace we were brought to know Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we were initiated into a new relationship. We were born into the family of God.

Each one of us in this very place can say that we became linked with God's glorious Son. And being linked with God's glorious Son, we were linked to each other, and each other as a company to the Lord. It is this reason that yesterday we were seeking to emphasize that Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church.

But not only were we initiated into a new relationship as we became children of God, but also each one of us were introduced into a new realm. You see, being introduced into this new realm brought us as it were not just as sons of God, but it brought us under the authority of God. When the Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus in that day that long past, you will never see, you will never enter the Kingdom of God until you are born again, He was not speaking of a territory, He was speaking of an authority.

The Kingdom of God is not a territory. The Kingdom of God is not bound, as it were with five wire fences and walls. The Kingdom of God is an authority, and we come into a new realm.

I think this can be well illustrated, don't you, in the tremendous story of the Apostle Paul. Known by every one of us, told by every Sunday School teacher to their scholars. You will remember that when Paul came to know Jesus Christ, he was initiated into a new relationship.

That relationship with God, that relationship with others, for could it not be said by God to Ananias that here was one who was none other than a brother. For Ananias went in and said, brother, brother Paul, I think you will grant when he came to know the Lord, he was introduced into a new realm. I sometimes, when preaching the gospel, of course, I sometimes say of the story of Paul, that when first we see him, he's a fighting man.

Many I shut up in prison. Or if ever there was a person who fought against God, that person was Paul of Carthage, he was a fighting man. When you look at the story, that fighting man became a fallen man.

For there was a light above the brightness of the noonday sun, and he fell to the earth. And we all have seen, as we fall from the drop fell, that whenever a man comes in contact with God, the first thing God does for that man or woman is to knock them down. Oh, I don't mean that physically, of course.

He knocks Paul down physically, he fell to the ground. But he makes us cry as Peter cried, I'm a sinful man, O Lord. He makes us cry as all who come to know the Lord, O God, I'm not fit for thy presence.

He convicts us of sin. I sometimes say of Paul, that not only was he a fighting man, but he became a fallen man. But, oh, hallelujah, he was a forgiven man.

Is it grand when the Savior forgives? My sins and my iniquities will I remember no more. It's not just an Old Testament truth, it's God's desire for every man and woman. And maybe this very morning, I know now, but maybe this very morning, there may be someone amongst you.

And, oh, you've been fighting against God. You've been fighting against Him, and yet in these very services, you have felt your need of Him. You've fallen as a crab before Him.

Can I say this to you this morning? You could miss a gift. There's a Savior who loves you. There's a God who gave the very best of heaven, that you might know that forgiveness and salvation.

Would you remember this? Please remember this. A fighting, fallen, forgiving man became a following man. What wilt thou have me to do? I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

I wouldn't give you that much, you've heard me say a hundred times. I wouldn't give you that much. The man or the woman that tells me they're a Christian and doesn't show it by their living, I don't believe them.

I'm not called to be a judge of any man, but I am called to be a fruit examiner. By their fruits ye shall know them. Ye shall know them.

Here's a man who sought to follow in the ways of the Lord. You see, he came into a new realm. It was the realm of the authority of the Lord.

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Up to that moment of time, it was what men thought of Him. It was the authority that He had from the high priest. It was what society thought of Him.

What He do in there, which others would accept. And now it is not what men will have me do, but Lord, what wilt thou have me do? Oh, please, God, that this may be drilled into my very being. Sometimes the

Lord has a hard job to drill it into me.

But it is not what my brethren think, it is not what the society thinks, it is what God thinks. And when I do what God would have me to do, I'll be right with my brethren, and I'll be right with society. The matter of getting your priorities right, you come into a new realm.

Then would you notice, when one comes to know the Lord, not only does God initiate us into a new relationship, not only does He introduce us into a new realm, but oh, blessed be His name, He involves us in a new responsibility. That each one of us are responsible. No man lives to himself.

This is why the Spirit of God uses the illustration of a church as a body. And He dares to tell us that not one portion of the body can do without another portion of the body. That every one of us are responsible in our attitudes, for we live not unto ourselves.

To become bond servants, bond slaves of the Lord Jesus. When the apostle writes his second letter to the church at Covent, after giving a long list of what he's suffered, he seems for me to sum it all up and say, and beyond all this, the care of all the churches. What a new responsibility.

But friends, if this happened when we were paid, whether we have entered fully into what will follow it, this did happen. When you and I were initiated into a new relationship, when you and I were introduced to a new realm, when you and I became involved in a new responsibility, then, dare I suggest, we need to take what the Lord Jesus said of a full-orbed Christian experience. He dares then to say to you and me, and ye, and ye are the thought of the earth, and ye are the light of the world.

Now yesterday we gave some thought to the fact that we were the thought of the earth. And we saw that the thought is secret, and thought in its action is hidden. But that's not so of light, is it? Light is of no use when it's secret.

Light is of no use when it's hidden. It's not light at all. So we see in the light the opposite to what we see in the thought.

When we think of thought, we think of that which is moral, that which stops corruption, that which is placed upon that it may not become bad. But when we think of light, we do not think of that which is moral, but we think of that which is spiritual. We think of that light which comes from God, that light that shines out to others.

When we think of thought, as we did yesterday, we think of what a man is. What a man is. When we think of light, we think of what a man does.

When we think of thought, we think of a man's character. When we think of light, we think of a man's conduct. And so could we think of those things? Could we spend just those moments this morning and think indeed of light? Could we think of that which is open and manifest? Can we think of that which is spiritual? Can we think of that which we do? Can we think of that which is our conduct? Now when the Lord Jesus said, ye are the light of the world, he divides what he hath to say into two things.

He speaks, first of all, of a city upon a hill. And then he speaks of a castle in a house. He speaks of a city on a hill.

Now here on this hill, we have come to appreciate a little of that, have we not? Could I suggest this to you? It may bear your thinking. Maybe straight away you will not say, I think that's right. And I hope you don't.

I hope you'll think about it. But could I suggest to you that the city upon a hill is the aggregate of all the little candles that are shining? We saw something of this during the war. I know not whether you did over here.

But of course in my country during the war there was a strict blackout. So many of our cities were blown to the street. So many of our people were killed.

But there was insisted upon a strict and absolute blackout. The fire watchers and the air raid wardens would be walking down the street, and sometimes, unaware of the fact, a person had not drawn his blackout curtain. There was just coming out of that, just coming out of that window, a small ray of light.

And immediately, put that light out! Oh, you see, you may say that it was only a little light. But if everyone acted like that, what a stream of light would fly into the heavens to enable every farmer to see that here is a city. Here is a congregation of people to live long and glittering.

Let's place it the other way, as the Lord has said. Amen. He wants there to be such a light shining.

The aggregate of our candles. He wants to see our united testimony. He wants to see us as a church.

We used to sing, did we not? But the children, they still sing it in our Sunday school, and I expect they do in yours. You in your small corner, and I in mine. Do you know something? It may be a child's hymn, but it's a good one.

Jesus let me shine. A pure, clear light. Like a little candle shining in the night.

Your candle shines, and my candle shines. Oh, like a city upon a hill that cannot be hid. The world will look and see the light that streams from yon hill.

And say, there is the city of God, whose building, builder, and maker is God. Brethren and sisters, do you see what the Lord is saying? He's saying you may only have a little candle, but if your little candle is added to mine. I lived a year ago.

I'm going over to his firm to speak at a conference, as often I do. And just like they have these trips over to wherever they're going, wherever it is, of course, without saying, they decided to take us, this Friday, when there were no services during the day, they decided to take us over the border into the Alps for four days. We all sat in a bus, the way we were.

Eventually, we arrived at a place, and the bus driver, in his somewhat broken English, let us out of the bus and took us for a little trickle of water. Now, it was a little trickle of water. I could have taken a cup and held it underneath that trickle of water, and filled it without the water splashing over the side of the cup.

And he looked at it, and he turned to us as much as to say, You haven't got anything on that, George. He looked, and he said, You see that? They call that the mighty Tabor in Rome. The Alps of northern Italy, it was a trickle of water.

But into that trickle ran another trickle, and it became a stream. And into that stream ran another stream, and it became a river. And into that river they ran another river, and it became the Tabor.

And it flowed on and on. And in Rome, they sailed the boats on it. It started as a little show.

What do you want from your fellowship, friends? What do you want? Do you desire that there may flow to the very throne of God a river of praise? Shall I tell you when you'll have a river of praise? For you and I are prepared to say, I'm only a little trickle. I'm going to bring my trickle. I'm only a little light, but I'm going to burn.

I'm going to burn. I'm going to add my light to someone else's light. The testimony of God is not made up of a few brilliant Christians.

Oh, please, say I say that to you, dear Americans. Say I. The assembly of God's people is not made up of a few brilliant Christians. Though they be welcome, get water, wait, though they be Mr. McKay, whoever they may be.

The assembly of God is made up of all of the Lord, shining for Him. Shining for Him. There is not a man in this place who would say, Amen, louder than Mr. Chapman when I say this.

It is not to the pulpit, it's to the few that we need to be looking for our testimony. It is important, our pulpit, but it's important, our few. Oh, that they may see a shining assembly prepared.

Our witness, ye are the light of the world, and it is a city on a hill that cannot be hid. Please, God, you may shine for Him. But if He says it is like a city on a hill, He says it is like a candle in a house.

Now here is our individual testimony. Here is not the aggregate of all light, but here, praise God, is the individual testimony. Now I pointed out yesterday that one of the things that Mark thought is that it's sacrificial.

Would I say the same about a candle? You know the amazing thing about a candle is that when it burns, it burns itself out. It burns itself out. This is the reason, of course, that years ago, candles were the clock.

They lit a candle, and as it burnt down, they saw how the hours slipped by. My friend, I wonder how sacrificial we are in our Christian witness to the Lord. But there was a tragedy in that house.

The Lord said, No man, no man, no man, light up a candle and put it under a bush. He goes further. He says, No man, light up a candle and put it under a bed.

I wouldn't like to be in that bed with you. I'd be setting fire. And He goes further.

He says He doesn't put it under a bushel and He doesn't put it under a bed. Neither does He hide it in a secret place. But I suggest to you, please, I did not write the Bible.

But I suggest to you that what the Lord is saying is this, that we are the light of the world, but there are things that will stop that light shining forth for the glory of God and the blessing of others. And the first thing He refers to is a bushel. Can't be lighting a candle and putting it under a bushel.

Now, you know what the bushel was used for. The bushel was a thing that was used by seed merchants and farmers in their business. You still do it over here, don't you? I noticed when I was down in Southern Pines some time ago.

I noticed there was a man selling, selling and... Thank you, sir. He knew, you see. He knew.

Man after me own heart. But he was selling for it. And he was selling it by the bushel.

By the bushel. Now, I would think that a bushel is a very good thing. I think it's a very rotten thing to put on top of a candle.

Now see, don't you understand? My Bible says this to those of you brethren that labour. It says, not loathful in business. I know not what you do in business.

If you're a bricklayer, I hope you're the best bricklayer. If you're a road sweeper, I hope you're the best road sweeper. If you're in business, I hope you're the very best.

I only know this. God doesn't want us to be so occupied in our business that our light for Him never shines. He doesn't want us to cover our candle with our business.

To be occupied with things. Be occupied with the making of money. He wants us to use our bushel, maybe, to stand the candlestick on.

That's what He wants. I say, it was Cary who went first as a missionary to India, wasn't he? No need for me to tell you his story. It's told wherever missionary history is considered.

The man that left my country and went out to India. The man that did so much, not only for winning men and women for Christ, but for killing those Indians and their Bible. And yet when he went there, he spent his days making boots.

That he must be able to pay expenses. And are we doing that? No man lights up a candle and puts it under a bushel. Now the second thing he talks about is not putting it under a bushel, but putting it under a bed.

The first man was too busy to serve God. The second man was too lazy to serve God. Who wants to put a candle under a bed? Now I know most of you thought that this morning, the morning was very near the night.

Now I know that. I had a young person say to me, since I've been over here, said to me, Mr. Ford, I know I ought to get down to, I ought to get down to the study of the Word of God and I ought to have my quiet time before I go to work, but I have such a job to get up in the morning. What advice can you give me? Go to bed earlier.

Isn't that right? I can't think of anything better than that. You know, there are so many of us. We had an old brother in our meeting who, reading the epistles of the Corinthians, used to speak of that the apostles were exhorting us to be steadfast, unmovable.

He said, some of you are steadfast. Not steadfast. And isn't that true? Now God doesn't want us to hide our candle under a bed.

Oh, you young men, you young women, don't you dare do it in my presence. Don't you dare. Don't you point your finger at older folk and say, what are they doing, when you are in the prime of your life, health and strength and the ability to do what those of us that are older can't do, and you do nothing.

I arrived in Sydney in Australia. I had to go to an assembly some few miles outside of Sydney to start a gospel campaign. I arrived late on the Saturday, at least just in time for the meeting on the Saturday, and I

was utterly amazed the place was full.

And they told me, although it would start with a ministry meeting, the good brother said, we thought that would be unconverted. That was right down my street. And we had a wonderful time.

But I wondered where these would be unconverted on the first night in St. Paul. And I heard, you young people listening, I heard one of the loveliest stories that I've shared with men and women in every country I've ever been to. For a number of years, in that assembly, they had a track band.

Some of the older brethren of a Saturday afternoon would get young folk and they would go with piles of tracks. They would have little open air service on this street corner, that street corner, give out tracks. And over the years, not one person as far as I knew ever came, ever came into the gospel hall.

There was in the gospel hall a dear brother and his wife. Suddenly, at 41 years of age, the brother was stricken with a desperate stroke and passed into the presence of the Lord. His dear wife, with a family, had to struggle on, had a great job, a great difficulty, even to make the mortgage payment.

But she went to work and cared as best she could. That bit by bit, you know, the house needed painting. Wooden houses, similar to the ones you have here, the house needed painting.

The garden got a bit overrun and it began to look a little dilapidated. And one day, one of the leaders of the young people, a young man in his 22 years of age himself, he went to one of the elders and said, We want to do something. And he told the elder, he said, Would you ask, and he spoke of this in his name, Would you ask her to go round to your house? Would you take her away for a day? And the elder went round with his wife and said, On Saturday, you not in business, would you come? We're going away for a picnic out in the country.

And the dear sister said, Oh, what a beautiful elder you are. What a wonderful man. And round they went to the car, picked her up, the family, and off they went.

And they'd hardly got out of the road before 32 young people from that meeting attacked that house. And attack it, I mean. They cut the lawn, they dumped the garden, the fellas and the girls, they might have got more paint on themselves than they did the house, because they were a bit like me, but they painted it! Do you know what happened? The whole road.

Hey, what's going on? I mean, what would happen to your road if 32 youngsters up and came to your house? By the way, if you young people want to do that, I can give you my address. Do you know what happened? I'll tell you what happened! That evening, over a thirty-something-thirty-thousand- there'd never have been problems in the place, but getting attacked, they came to the gospel hall. The dear sister came back.

And stood by the fire, and they told her, whap, whap, whap, and she went on. She can't say a thing. She never did, but she did very well.

Well for her. And that's what I've done. You say, I can't preach, I can't teach, surely there's something we can do.

Oh, let your light so shine. Don't be lazy. Remember, God doesn't want to hide it, us to hide our candle under, under a bed.

Sorry, Mr. Walliser, I've broken the bad Magruder habit straight away. He praised me last night for being on time. He doesn't want us to hide it under a bed.

Ah, but you say, but just a moment now, Mr. Preacher, that's very good, I've agreed with everything you've said, but so-and-so, not for me, not for me now. Now I'm not lazy. And I'll tell you something more, I don't allow my business to up, you find me, as a matter of fact, I'm retired, so I don't need to do that.

I don't need to do that. Ah, but isn't it easy to hide it in that way, the Lord spoke, and I didn't say it, he said in a secret place. In a secret place.

Oh, friends, something known only to us, that makes that light not shine forth in all its wonder and glory. Don't hide it in sleep. Don't allow anything to stop a shining light.

But, but, on a candlestick. Now I've given a lot of thought as to what that candlestick was. Haven't you? I've given a lot of thought.

Do you know what I think the candlestick is? Now if you disagree, God bless you, you'll be wrong, but still, this is what I think. I think that that candlestick speaks of all the circumstances in our life that are our circumstances and no one else's. He said he wants it to shine in a candlestick.

You see, God doesn't take candlesticks in pairs. They do that in vows, but not the law. He takes one candlestick, and when he takes it, he takes it.

Your circumstances are different than mine. The problems you face are different than mine, but he wants you to shine in yours. In yours.

The circumstances of life. All you say, but you know, Mr. Preacher, if you live where I live, if you face the circumstances I face, you wouldn't be able to shine very well. Well, maybe so.

Maybe so. I do remember a little story, though, don't you? I remember the story of a man who said, Could any good thing come out of Nazareth? What, that miserable city? Nazareth? Nazareth? That pretty, altruistic wickedness? Sepulchry and crime? Could any good thing come out of Nazareth? The best man that ever lived came out of Nazareth. Don't come to me and tell me your area is indivisible.

That's my end. God wants it to shine. One little story or illustration, and I finish.

My dearest friend, well, he's one of my dearest friends, is a man by the name of Wilfred Deal in Swansea. Lovely, lovely, lovely man. Wilfred lives on what we call Town Hill.

Town Hill is just one massive steep hill which is covered with what you would call low-income houses. And over the course of years, I've met Wilfred at very more people on Town Hill than anyone else. I often used to wonder.

It seems that almost every week he'd have one or two kids. I've wondered how he did it. But they would always come to the gospel hall and say, Mr. Deal, here we come to the gospel.

And I said to him on one occasion, I said, Wilfred, I think you've had more funerals than almost any man I know. Now I ask, why is it they always come to you? He said, well, the first thing is they don't have to pay me. But the second thing was something else.

He said, you know, I can sympathize with a person. And then one day the phone rang. And I picked up the phone and it was Wilfred.

He said, Sam, a little bit past one. And I went down to Wilfred's and I buried a little one. And I saw him with these good, great tears in his eyes.

By the side of the wife of his youth and the companion that followed him. Now he said, I can go in. And I know what it means to really be blind by faith.

One morning the phone rang. And it was his son. Sam, he said, he's had a great tragedy.

Brother, bank manager, brilliant young man. So gave himself to his bank and to his work. Suddenly had a breakdown.

Went down to the railway station and put his head on the line. I went down and buried a man that I'd known as a baby. Wilfred said, I could go in.

And I did weep with him. I used to sympathize with him. But now I'm in sorrow with him.

I don't want a candlestick like that to you. But if God gives me a candlestick like that, God enable me to put the candle in it. Let it burn.

Do you all like burning? May I say one thing as I close. Just one thing as I close. Would you please remember.

A candle does not burn longer. It burns shorter. I have a Lord who did wonderful miracles.

He made blind folks to see and deaf folks to hear and lame folks to walk. But he never made an old man a young man. May I repeat that.

He never made an old man a young man. Tongues that talk. A candle burning dead.

Come let's hide it under our bushel. Under our bed. Let's put it on our hands and shine the light.

God and Father we feel like saying together again in the little children's hymn. Jesus bids me shine with a pure clear light like a little candle burning in the night. In this world of darkness so we must shine.

God help us to shine in our small corner wherever we pass for thy name's sake. Amen. Could we sing number 495? Number 495.

Jesus wants me to be a sunbeam to shine for him each day in every way. In every way to try to please him at home, at school, at play. Number 495.

Shall we sing? Jesus wants me for a sunbeam.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10414.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stan-ford/bristol-conference-1977-07-similies-christ-gospels/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net