

A Light to Others

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being a light in a world of competition, creating an atmosphere of acceptance and love, and striving for 100% victory over sin and its effects.

Duration: 1:06:15

Scripture: Matthew 5:14, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 13:57, Luke 15:20, John 1:18, Acts 1:8, 2 Timothy 4:5

Topics: "Example"

Description

In this video, the speaker emphasizes the importance of sharing the truth of God's word with others. They encourage young people to take on the responsibility of being a light to those around them, whether through preaching, writing letters, or engaging in short conversations. The speaker highlights the purpose of light, stating that just as the sun and moon were created to give light to the earth, believers are called to shine their light and share the love of God with those who are spiritually lost. They urge listeners to not wait until they are perfect, but to start serving God and reaching out to others, trusting that God will expand their influence and use them to bring rivers of living water to those in need.

Transcript

We have been thinking about letting the light shine and we want to look at another aspect of it in Matthew 5 and verse 16, where it says, Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. So the purpose of light is another purpose of light. It's not just that God, when he created the lights, it was to give light upon the earth, we read in Genesis chapter 1. The sun and the moon were created to give light upon the earth.

The sun was not created for itself. The moon was not created for itself, but to give light upon the earth. And so with us, that when the Lord puts his light within us, his purpose is that we may give light to others needing that light.

We ourselves were orphans, people are orphans. The world is full of insecure people. And you and I know that.

Even in the church, many are insecure because they have not found security in the love of a father. I'm more and more convinced that we, you know, ever since that first time when man, and it says he went and hid himself behind a tree, trying to hide from God. Before that, Adam and Eve were naked and were not ashamed.

But as soon as they sinned, what did they do? The first thing they did was to make fig leaves to cover themselves. Have you ever thought of that? Why did they put fig leaves? Was there anybody else in the church? The cats? Who were they covering themselves from? There was no other human being. I mean, we wear clothes because there are other people around, but I mean a husband and wife who know each other in nakedness, who were Adam and Eve covering themselves from? Think of that.

There were no peeping toms looking through some window or anything like that in the Garden of Eden. They were covering themselves from. And there's a spiritual lesson behind that.

Sin has made us all try to hide. We wear masks. We are afraid to be known as we really are.

All human beings, if you're afraid to be known as you really are, you're a normal human being. But God wants to set you free from that. You're not abnormal.

You're perfectly normal. All human beings wear masks. They wear something to hide their real self from others, even from their husbands and their wives, because they are afraid.

This is the reason. If somebody knows me as I really am, they won't accept me. I'll be rejected.

And so we go through life carefully, hiding ourselves from each other, afraid that if somebody discovers what I really am, they won't accept me. And in us, there is a tremendous desire to be. You know, this is the reason why teenagers especially do all types of things that their friends do.

They take drugs, they indulge in sex, because the way girls dress like other girls is to be accepted. It is a result of insecurity, an insecurity which wants death. However much we may hear about God accepting us and about being justified, deep down in our heart, we are not sure whether God is accepting us.

And so we want to find out. And so we are afraid. And if everybody dresses like this, and you don't realize young people, that you are a slave.

Most young people in the world, including in the church, are slaves without knowing it. They are slaves to the opinions of others of their age. They don't want to be accepted by their parents.

They couldn't care less what their parents think about them. Most young people are like that. They don't care what their parents think about their parents.

Peers, people who are the same age in church or in college, they must accept them. In fact, they don't even care much whether God has accepted them or not, so long as this is. We wear these fig leaves, these masks, to cover areas of our life, which others, we don't want others to see.

That's what Adam and Eve did. They didn't cover their whole body. No.

They covered areas of their body which they don't want other people to see. And the spiritual application is we cover areas of our life, which we don't want other people to see it, they won't accept us. Some of us who have found security in God, we know perhaps that God has accepted us because He knows us.

But we feel there are very few people like God. And that's true. He accepts people just as they are, to the glory of God.

As the prodigal son's father received the prodigal son, the elder brother would not receive him. Supposing the prodigal son in the far country had heard that his father had died, and the elder brother was now running the home. You think he'd have come back? He'd have said, I'd rather stay with the pigs, at least they accept me just as I am.

But he's my elder brother, he won't accept me. He wouldn't have gone home. And there are many people who don't come home.

Because the elder brother in some church is a Pharisee, who can't accept. And if he hears, if he knows something about somebody, he will tell everybody about it. Or he will tell at least his precious wife about it.

And she will tell everybody about it. What a sad state of affairs. What a sad state of affairs that sinners cannot come.

Because fathers are missing. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4, you can have 10. You don't have many fathers.

In the church is for father. You'll find 10. And you may find in that midst one elder who's a father.

What a need there is for elder brothers to repent and say, I want to be a father. For many, many years, when we have elders' meetings, this has been the burden of my heart. Be a father.

Be a father to those poor boys and girls who are in your church, to be a father to them. Draw them into the kingdom. Tell them that God loves them as they are.

And let them feel comfortable with you. Let them know that you keep their confidence. You must have that testimony.

We live in a world like that. We live in a world of frightened people. That's what some of you are.

You know, inside many of you, dear brothers and sisters, the man or as soon as somebody comes too close to find out something about you, this man runs away and hides. In our churches, it's a miracle where there are fathers and mothers who will care for the people so well that young people will feel so free to come to such a home more than they feel free to go to their own parents. Yeah, that's the type of elder brothers we should be.

The worst people in society felt free to come to Jesus. They wouldn't go anywhere near the Pharisees. They knew the Pharisees would condemn them and all that.

But as they heard Jesus speak, many are so hard. Living in such a world, how shall we be the light? It's to be like Jesus, that people must see when they come to us, that they are accepted. I mean, we may not agree with all that they do.

It doesn't matter. Do you think when the prodigal son, overnight he became different in the house? No. Supposing he came and he had a pack of cigarettes with him in his pocket, and the father saw him one day, you know, chain smoker.

What do you think the father would have done? I think he would have loved him, loved him, delivered him from that. We need fathers like fathers who will, who will put their arms around them and hiding behind trees, putting fig leaves in front of them, wearing masks because they're afraid. And the church is being placed in the midst of this world where people are so hard and demanding.

You think the worldly factories and companies will accept a man who's a failure and say, get out. They say, but sir, I have a family. If I lose my job, they're finished.

Well, we don't care about that. You don't do your work here properly, get out. That's the world.

They don't care whether your family is going to starve. They don't care whether you got to take your children out of school because you're losing your job. Just drop out.

We've got to run our company. Our company has to produce profits. We couldn't care less whether that affects your family or not.

We live in a world and it's become more and more like that of late, past 10-20 years, fierce competition. And in this world, Jesus has placed a church, an island of peace, at least that's what it should be. Where these shipwrecked people can scramble ashore and find food and shelter.

And when they come to our meetings, what do they hear you preach? Do they hear you hammering them with some more verses from the Bible? They'll scramble back to the shipwreck and say, we are safe. It's happening in our churches. If you're not ashamed of things you did five years ago, you're not growing.

If you're not ashamed of the way you did things one year ago, you're not growing. The mark of a man who's growing spiritually is that he's ashamed of the way he did things. He didn't do grossly sinful things.

And he's ashamed of it. I can honestly say I'm ashamed of it. And that excites me.

He is leading me on. He's showing me what it means to be a light. You know, the fact that you're popular in your church means nothing.

Popularity means nothing. Politicians can be popular. An elder brother can be popular because he can dish out favors, like elder brothers are like handing out favors to anybody.

And I don't want to be popular with some of my children and not with others of my church. A father is one whom all the children can access, even the rebellious ones. Otherwise, we're not fathers.

We're elder brothers, like the prodigal son's elder. So as I said, it's not just in the world, but inside the church. Masks that people won't accept us.

We have to create, and this is where you see the godliness of an elder brother. If he can create an atmosphere in the church, where people can know, at least in this church, you're accepted. You don't have to change before you come.

We'll help you to change after you come. We'll help you to change for what? For the better. We won't force you to change.

No, no, no, no, no. We'll help you to change if you want to change. And we'll help you to change at your pace, not my pace.

You know, if you're climbing up the steps, the staircase with a two-year-old child, you have to go at his pace, if you want fellowship with him. If he goes slowly, you've got to go slowly. Otherwise, you've got to lose fellowship.

So that's how we want to do it in the church. We want to help people to grow at their pace, not ours. And if somebody's slow to change, fine.

This is what it means to be the church, shining as a light in the world, drawing people to Jesus Christ. The world has got such a wrong understanding of God. Our ministry is the same as the ministry of the first body of Christ that walked around palaces.

There's a very beautiful verse in John 1, which is one of my favorite verses, which says, John 1, 18, No one has seen God at any time, but Jesus, let me paraphrase it, came and explained the Father to us. Explained the Father. Explained the Father.

You know, like a good teacher, you have a very, and you have a wonderful teacher in your mathematics class who explains it so simply. And you say, boy, I understood it now. I can solve that problem now.

A good teacher is one who can explain a very difficult problem. Jesus came and explained God, who loves us. Do you think stinking, not having a bath, do you think the Father wanted him to be like that? He accepted him like that.

When he embraced him and welcomed him, the fellow was stinking. He had been with the pigs. He was stinking of pigs.

And his clothes were all torn and filthy. Which father would want him to remain like that? There's a difference between accepting a person as he is and wanting him to remain like that. If you love, you won't want people to remain like that.

And the father loved his son too much. He said, come on, let's get a good robe for him. Let's get the shower ready, for he can have a shower and have a bath and put on a new robe and put a ring on his hand and let's, shoes on his feet.

And the fellow doesn't even have a pair of socks. Let's get him dressed up. And let's get him some good food.

Let's kill the fatted cough and let's give him a medical checkup and see if he's healthy and let's do everything needed to bring him back to be the son he should be and the heir in this house. That's what we want to make of the sinners who come to the church. They are heirs of God and we want to make them that.

Therefore, we want to love them and accept them as they are and change them at their pace, slowly. I mean, some people need to fix a lot of people who come to the church don't, they don't understand the holiness is like health. Are you afraid of the word health? Supposing I say perfect health, you get scared.

Why are we afraid of perfect? We have to change that concept, get people to stop being afraid of being perfectly holy. Stop being afraid of getting victory over sin. It's like, it's like trying to teach people to be healthy.

Keep the toilets clean. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Have a bath. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Change your underclothes.

All that perspiring stuff. I mean, you got to teach people so many things. So many bad, filthy habits that they have acquired living among the pigs for so many years.

Well, some of them are a bit stubborn. They don't want to change some of those filthy habits. Okay, we'll work with them.

We'll be patient with them, but we want them to change. Just like the father of the prodigal son. So don't be afraid of holiness.

Holiness is exactly like health. And just like a loving father would want his son to be completely free of all sickness. God the father wants us to be completely free of all sin.

And a loving father, an elder brother in a church would want everybody to be totally free. We want every brother in the church and every sister in the church over irritability, over jealousy of each other. We want everyone in the church to have 100% victory over the habit of not talking or despising others.

100% victory. We don't want to pay more for it. I'm willing to pay for it.

We want this person to be healed. We want everything in him to be healed. He's got tuberculosis.

I will not leave you until you're completely free of that tuberculosis. Do you hate me for that? Do you hate me because I'm determined to get all the tuberculosis out of your system and all the leprosy out of your system? That is what sin is. Sin is worse than that.

But do you think a small child, a baby knows what tuberculosis is? The baby says, why do I need that injection? Hates injections. Hates bitter tablets. Because it doesn't know how terrible tuberculosis is, how terrible leprosy is.

And when there is a complete cure available, even if it's through a painful injection and a bitter medicine, a father and a mother will give that painful injection and give that bitter medicine because he loves those children. There are people in the church who are like babies. They don't understand how terrible, evil, how much anger is destroying their soul, destroying their homes.

How much jealousy is destroying their souls and destroying the church. Spirit of competition. Competition between my children and your children.

You think that's only in the world? I have seen it in CFC. People think I don't see it. I see a lot of things I keep quiet about.

I've seen it. Competition. You parents, tell me honestly, can you look at me in my face and say that it's not true? You can fool others, you can't fool me.

Look at me straight in the face and say it's not true. I'm not condemning you. I'm trying to heal you of that tuberculosis.

I'm trying to heal you of that leprosy. You mothers especially, I think it's especially among the mothers competing to show that their sons and daughters are better than somebody else's sons and daughters. My dear sister, please be healed of this leprosy.

It's evil. That's why we speak against it. Eradicate leprosy, eradicate malaria, eradicate tuberculosis, eradicate smallpox, eradicate every wretched thing from the church.

Is that a bad thing? The World Health Organization is constantly trying to eradicate diseases. What's wrong in our doing something like that in the church? People say, oh, your standards are too high. Supposing we tell the World Health Organization, why should you eradicate malaria completely from India? Why not leave a little bit of malaria in India? A little bit of smallpox and a little bit of leprosy.

Why should we eradicate it? Total eradication. Isn't that too high a standard? No, no, no. I don't want to go to a country where malaria is totally eradicated.

I'd like to go to a country where they have a little bit of malaria and a little bit of leprosy. I don't want to go to a church where, oh, they are totally against sin. Let me go and sit comfortably in a church where they allow some of these sicknesses.

Would you choose a country like that? I'll tell you why. You have that idea. I've heard people tell me, oh, brother, it's the CFC.

I feel a little more comfortable there. Not one, a few nuts. My dear brothers and sisters, do you think one angel is trying to show that I can do better? The church is to be a... Do your children... Do you do better than me? Anything that you have better than me, God is my witness.

It has always rejoiced my heart whenever I've seen somebody in CFC prosper, materially or any other way. God's freed me. He freed me years ago.

The whole world. That's not a great thing. Supposing I tell you I don't have any tuberculosis in my body, what do you think? Oh, you have to have a little bit of leprosy to be humble? Have you seen sin as serious? This is babies who don't understand the seriousness of malaria.

I don't want AIDS even for one minute. No, thank you. It's terrible, these things.

These are all un-Christ-like habits. And we are building a church where the light is going to shine brightly with no part dark. Where we don't exploit one another.

We don't take advantage of one another. Where there's nothing that I will do to take advantage of you. Take it for whatever you... Nobody should suffer loss because they came in touch with me.

They must gain. That must be your longing. They must gain materially.

They must gain spiritually. They must gain in every possible way because they came in touch with me. Not I must gain something.

In the temple. Can you imagine? Jesus drove such people out. No, in the church.

What's good for me? Light is. What's for my mind if I suffer? Let me tell you a little secret of the way God runs this universe. God runs this universe on the principle... Very few Christians who talk about new and living way, new covenant and all that.

That means if you get close to God, you will have to sacrifice yourself so that other people can benefit. Remember reading something. Christ instituted the breaking of... Always remember the cross.

Because this symbolized his giving his body for us to eat. He told his disciples. So, we also must be willing to give our... Understood? As Jesus gave himself to be eaten by others, I give myself to be eaten by

others.

One of thirty exorcisms by which God runs this world. His body was broken so that other people could eat it. Are we willing to go that way? That is the price to be part of the body of Christ in the world today.

I say, Lord, I want to be a part of your body. I want to understand this principle by which the way of the cross, the New Testament calls the new. Many who talk about it.

I give myself. What does it mean to be a light? Having no part... When we think of Jesus coming to the earth to reveal the father. That is light.

He came to earth sacrificing all that was there in heaven only to bless other people. That's all. To help other people.

There in heaven he sat. Enjoying all the glory. And he sat there and he thought, I cannot enjoy this myself.

When there are poor suffering people out there, I want them to enjoy this. With me. That's the spirit of Christ.

I want those people to enjoy what I have. And let me go down. But if you want them to enjoy what you have, Lord, you have to suffer and die.

That is the spirit of Christ. And that is how the father was. Because the father was revealed in Christ.

Christ explained the... And here I am today. Supposed to be a representative of Jesus Christ. Sent by the Lord into this earth to explain the father again.

Because Jesus is gone. He sent me to say, now you continue doing what I did. Explain the father to people.

Explain me to people. Show people my spirit. Which spirit? The spirit of willing to go down that they must have what I have.

How many of you brothers and sisters sitting here can honestly say that you want other people to have what you have and that you are willing to pay any price that they might have what you have. That's why I admire these missionaries who have gone to North India. Missionaries who came from other lands in olden days.

Not these modern day missionaries who are like tourists. That is why I don't have any respect for these American preachers. I have a lot of respect for the American missionaries who went out to different places.

Who sacrificed so much. I really admire them. Because I have seen the standard of life they live in America.

What they gave up. I remember meeting some of those saintly women who came out as nurses where my wife, in the middle of Maharashtra. A village ridden.

You know that Nagpur means the city of snakes. Cobras. And around that area there was this village full of cobras.

And you know what the people in other villages did? Anybody who was a leper. They said go there. We don't want you around in these villages.

And here were these godly young 25 year old women from America. Nurses who could have earned a fortune working there. Who came to these villages with no electricity.

No running water. Lepers. Cobras.

Built a little hospital to take care of these lepers. To lead them to Jesus Christ. Some of us despise full time workers.

Such full time workers are my heroes. And I met this saintly old woman. She is 85 years old now.

Who came as a 25 year old. I tell you. Such a sweet saint at the age of 85.

She didn't make money. Like a lot of other people did. So the day will be in the kingdom.

Okay, you may not be called to go to North India. But I hope you will appreciate those who go. I get at least 3 or 4 missionary magazines.

Indian missionary magazines in my home every month. Think about these people. The early Christians didn't sit.

While they served others they perfected themselves. And you do a much quicker job of perfecting yourself when you start serving others. So within the limits of my limited gift I say Lord as long as I have health I want to be motivated by the spirit of Christ.

To reach out to those who haven't. That's why I am gradually reducing the time spent in our churches. Now mostly I go leave churches so much.

To go to share these same truths that we have heard for so many years. With some people who have not even heard it once. And when they hear it and hear this who have such appreciation such tremendous respect I feel humbled when I see that.

And then I see many who have heard it so often who don't have that appreciation. Who don't have that respect. You know Jesus said no prophet is accepted.

There are many people in this land in other lands who long to hear. Some of you young people need to carry that burden. First of all to allow the truth to transform your life and share it with other people.

You have a tremendous responsibility. God has given you much. Say Lord tell me how I can share this with other people.

Study the word. Lord pray and say Lord teach me how to communicate these truths in simple interesting ways. Within my limitations if you may not be a pulpit preacher but you can write letters.

You can talk to people five minutes. Will you pray Lord help me to be a light and be drawn to you. Help me to explain how he is such a loving father.

You don't have to run away and hide. You don't have to hide. He loves you.

And I love you too. That's what the prodigal son knew. I told a young brother once who had made a mess of his life.

He was younger than even my youngest son. Young child. Many of us to reach out please don't please don't go to them with your multitude.

If you attend one Sunday meeting morning meeting in your church that is enough. The rest of the time reach out to others. Don't go to any other meeting if you don't have time.

Reach out to others. Let the other people who are sitting perfecting themselves sit there forever perfecting themselves. You go and reach out to other people who haven't heard these truths.

Do that. I'm sorry to say some elder brothers are hindering that type of outreach. They want to sit and coddle each other and perfect themselves till eternity.

Ignore them. I tell you in Jesus name ignore those elders and do what God tells you to do. You don't need anybody's permission to be a witness for Christ.

In Acts 1.8 God has already given you that permission. You don't need my permission to be a witness for Christ. You don't need any elder brother's permission to be a witness for Christ.

Go out and reach out and share with people who haven't heard these truths and let those who want to perfect themselves and sit coddling themselves live there forever. You reach out and you don't need anybody's permission when Jesus has told you you shall be my witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth and we have not reached the uttermost parts of the earth yet. Don't be a slave of men.

You were bought with a price. Don't be the slave of some elder brother who tries to run your life. Break free from that.

Love him, respect him and be free of him. Don't cause any rebellion in that church. No, no, no, no, no, no.

Let them mind their own business. Let them do what they like. You do what God has told you to do.

Be a witness to the uttermost parts of the earth. The night is coming in India when no one can work. I travel around this land and I say Oh God, I wish I could be in 10 places at the same time and I know I can't because I am only one person.

Honestly, there are times when I wish I could be in 10 different places at the same time. Are you failing God? Have you failed God by not allowing God to prepare you in the little ministries He gives you to reach out to somebody? You do that and God will expand your borders. That's how He did mine.

I started with 2-3 people in a home. That's how I did it 40 years ago and you start doing that. Reach out to somebody.

Maybe 3 people in a home or 2 people in a home. God will expand your borders until one day rivers of living water will be flowing out from you. You don't have to be perfect before you do.

No, you don't have to be perfect before you start serving God. Let those who think like that sit and perfect themselves and waste their lives till eternity. Ignore them.

You go out and reach out and say, Lord, I am not perfect but I am going to share what I have with other people and in the process I will be perfect. Dear brothers and sisters, I believe that many of us have either lost the vision or never had a vision that Jesus had of reaching a lost world for the father. We need to get that.

Jesus said, Lift up your eyes and look at the fields for they are white unto harvest. Have you ever obeyed that exhortation? I did it as a young man and when I was 24 years old God said, Leave your job. I will take care of you.

I left my job. But I would never have left it if I had not lifted up my eyes and looked around India and seen the needs. I didn't think I was perfect.

How perfect do you think I was when I was 24? If I am not perfect today can you imagine what I was when I was 24 defeated by so many sins still struggling but sincerely wanting to live for God. That was there. I wasn't perfect.

I didn't have victory over all sins. But I sincerely wanted to do something with my life for God before I left the earth. I wanted to do something to show Jesus that I loved Him.

That I was thankful for His dying for me on the cross. And I lifted up my eyes and I saw a lot of people. I didn't know much but I knew a lot of people in India who knew less than me.

Maybe I was only in the kindergarten but some of those people were not even in the kindergarten. So I said, Okay, I can't preach. And that's how I started.

Think of that. Think of that responsibility you have. Let your mind function in that way.

Say, Lord help me to be that shines for you. And as I began to do that I saw my need for the power of the Holy Spirit and that don't stand in the day of judgment before God and say, Lord I was a slave to some elder brother's opinion so I did not serve God. And if your elder brother doesn't have a vision you catch the vision.

And reach out and bless people and share with them what you have learnt in the church and that's a tremendous lot. Don't be satisfied sitting in your home. That would be like Jesus sitting in heaven enjoying all the angels and it's wonderful here.

No, we are not to be like that. One day we will sit in heaven and do that but now is the time to work. The night comes when no man can work and I wish there were many many young people who would be gripped by this passion and who will study the word and seek for the anointing of the Holy Spirit and bless this land and who are afraid to expose themselves can come who will embrace them.

It's not a pep talk. To reach out to those who have not heard the wonderful things you said don't become a slave to somebody else's blindness. Throughout my life many people have called me they are welcome to call me because you can be filled with the Holy Spirit and you can be a witness.

Never meet. There are certain people only you will meet. Let's start with Christians who are defeated.

Don't you know Christians who are defeated? If you don't have the ability to reach the non-Christians and the Hindus like some others. Don't you know Christians who are defeated? Who need to hear the message of deliverance and salvation? Can you think of giving them a book perhaps in the new year? Can

you think of spending five hundred rupees in the new year to distribute some books to people? Is that a lot of money? You never know what the fruits will be for eternity. Heavenly Father give me a passion for souls.

Give me the passion that there was in your heart and give us the passion that deliver us from empty words. We don't want to be a bunch of empty talkers. We want our life to count for you.

We have only one life and we want it to count for you Lord before we leave this earth. Help us each. To take some serious decisions tonight and to stick to them in the days to come when we face opposition, difficulties, criticisms, whatever.

From those who are blind from those who have no vision Lord give us the boldness and the humility to explain to stand for what we believe without arrogance in humility agreeing to disagree with those who don't see and Lord help us to reach a needy world of people who are afraid to be known as they really are orphans, people who are wearing masks and hiding themselves.

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