

PLEASING GOD WELL AS LIGHT IN A DARK WORLD – PART ONE

This is your Friend and Minister, Dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you healing word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

Greetings again, friends. Last time, we discussed, "The Noble Ambition of Pleasing God Well"; and that is: In our private lives as well as public lives. Let me remind you again that there is no ambition nobler than pleasing God well; and there is no ambition that taps into the blessings of God better than pleasing Him well.

I want you to note that the emphasis is on pleasing God, not in ambition.

Today, we shall examine: Pleasing God well as light in a world that is darkened by sin, and its terrible consequences. So the topic today is: Pleasing God well as light in a dark world. And the scripture is taken from Saint Matthew's Gospel Chapter 5, verses 14-16. There, Jesus says:

Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴ *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

PRAYER:

Thank You, again, Father, for this time we have come together to search the scriptures. Into Your hands, I commit all in radioland, and myself, that You may bless us through Your Word – Your infallible Word: Your powerful Word...in Jesus Name. Amen!

The Lord Jesus Christ uses light as a metaphor in this passage. Metaphor is a figure of speech; and the word is borrowed from a Greek Word, *metáfora*, which means, to transfer. It is the transfer of characteristics of one thing to another, in terms of the similarities between them – even though they are not alike.

In our text, Jesus seeks to transfer the characteristics of light to the character of His disciples: character that brings pleasure to God.

Let me break down our discussion into four parts:

1. The sense in which Christians are light to a dark world,
2. Characteristics of light which the metaphor transfers to the character of Christians,
3. The brightness of the light that Christians are supposed to be,
4. And finally, how long the light of each Christian should shine

So let me go to the first one:

The sense in which Christians are light to a dark world

Jesus says, in John 11:9, that the sun gives light to the physical world in which we live. There He says, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.”

This is the natural light. Borrowing from this then, Jesus says metaphorically, that He Himself is the light of the world – John 8:12. And that His disciples are also the light of the world: Matthew 5:14 where we just read. Thus, what the sun is to the physical world, Jesus and His disciples are to the moral and spiritual worlds of people. But the light that His disciples are is a lesser light because it is secondary: it is derived; and it is dependent; while the light that Jesus is is primary, autonomous – independent – and greater light. The disciples of Jesus are like the moon that shines as a result of the light of the sun reflected from its surface. So as disciples of Jesus Christ, our light must be a reflection – not a distortion, of the light from Jesus Christ. So you see now in what sense Christians are the light of the world.

Secondly, what characteristics of light are transferred to the character of Christians?

The following characteristics of natural light are transferred by Jesus Christ to the character of Christians when He says that they are the light of the world.

The first observation is that, light makes object visible by the phenomenon of reflection. Second, light shines noiselessly; and third, light shines out of an intense burning. Light makes objects visible, and thereby reveals their nature, their beauty, their ugliness or deformity. May I submit to you that it pleases God well when the disciples of Jesus Christ or Christians help the unbelieving world to see:

- i. The nature of God: What God looks like. As the light of the world, Jesus said to the world of His day, He who has seen Me has seen the Father. That's John 14:9. In other words, what He is saying is, I Am a reflection of the Father: if you want to see what the Father looks like, look at Me.

A disciple of Jesus Christ, as the light of the world, should then be able to say also to the world around him or her, he who has seen me has seen Jesus Christ. If you feel that that is too ambitious, then stop saying that you are a Christian, for the word Christian means little Christ – Christ in Christian.

When the early disciple of Jesus Christ were nicknamed Christians in Antioch in Acts 11:26, it was not for fashion, as it is today. It is fashionable today to say I am a Christian; it is not fashionable to say I am a heathen – even though you are one...But out of the fascination of seeing ordinary men and women some of whom were of serious questionable character transformed into the likeness of Christ...Transformed into the gentleness, kindness, humility, holiness, boldness, endurance, love and spiritual power of Jesus Christ. It is when those around them saw these characteristics in them they said, "Ah! These are like that Man – Christ". And it is this that pleases God and pleases Him well, indeed. So it pleases God when Christians help the unbelieving world...God and see Christ. It pleases God well also when Christians help the unbelieving world see the beauty or the goodness of Jesus Christ through their good works. Jesus says, Matthew 5:16, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to Your Father who is in heaven.* The Greek Word for good in that verse conveys

the idea of something that is not only practically and morally good (just another Greek Word for good). Two! There are two of them, but in this case, this one, this word: good, is not only practically and morally good, but also aesthetically good – something that is lovely: pleasing to see, pleasing to behold; something that is winsome, something that is attractive. In other words, as the light of the world, the disciple of Jesus Christ, the Christian, is supposed to help the world see how attractive, how beautiful, how good Jesus is. Christianity is lovely, winsome and pleasing. A true Christian is a winsome person; but some Christians are good, but they are unattractive. They have a streak or trace of lovely hardness in them.

May the song of the true disciple of Jesus Christ be our prayer always:

*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me
All His wondrous compassion and purity,
O thou Spirit divine,
All my nature refine till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.*

Christians – disciples of Jesus Christ would help the world see the beauty of Jesus.

Thirdly, it pleases God well when Christians help the unbelieving world see the ugliness of sin and the deformity it causes. Sin has deformed the image of God in man beyond recognition. Its ugliness and the deformity it causes are all around us today. We see them on the streets, on television, in the market place, in places of business and on the campuses of lower and as well as higher institutions of learning. It is now so bad that calling some people beasts is even an insult to animals, because they do what animals will never do.

It pleases God well when Christians refuse not only to be part of this ugliness, but expose that. That's why Ephesians 1:11 says, *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*

So we see that light reveals the nature of objects. Light helps us see things the same way as the light of the world....the child of God should help the world see Jesus – see the beauty that is in Him. Secondly, light shines noiselessly.

Friend, it pleases God well when Christians shine as light noiselessly. Some Christians think that God does not only love noise but cannot do without it. That's

not true. Everything about them is noisy, so noisy that the world around them keeps saying, you are so noisy that I cannot hear what you are saying. We lose the message in the noise. You cannot hold any meaningful conversation in an environment that is pulsating with loud music or loud noise.

Have you listened to some Christians give their supposed praise report? They tend to say loud and clear: “look what I have done”, not, “look what the Lord has done”. As one servant of God said, in his testimony: the Lord performed these wonderful miracles after my prayer.

The Lord Jesus says in Matthew 6:2,

Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Let us never forget, friends, that a barrow makes noise only when it is empty.

We will continue from here next time.

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for Your Word again today. Help us to be the light to this dark world: this dark world of sin. And for those who have not yet been light or become light, we pray, Father, that they will give their life to Christ today, that they might become the light to the world...in Jesus Name. Amen!