

You Can Be Light

By Senior Pastor Guneratnam

“Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life – in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.” Philipians 2:14-16

Paul’s challenge to the church to “shine like stars in the universe” is still relevant today because the world is in darkness. People are lost; they are groping about in the dark. It is significant to note that a star guided the wise men to the place where the Saviour was born. So, Paul’s instruction still applies to us today. We should be the lights guiding men to the Saviour. We should shine so that those in darkness can find Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. We are the Church and we are called to be lighthouse wherever we are.

The word of God tells us why we ought to shine for Jesus:

1. Children of God through Creation

Malachi 2; 10 states: “Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our Father by breaking faith with one another?” Everyone, therefore, in a sense, is a child of God because it was He who created us.

2. Children of God through Redemption

Through the redemptive work of Jesus, we all have been given the right to become children of God. John 1:12, 13 states: “Yet to all who receive Him, to those who believed in His name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision, or a husband’s will, but born of God.”

Gal 3:26, 27 says the same thing: “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

God’s redemptive work on the cross has cleansed us from all sins. We who have put our faith and trust in Jesus become the children of God. Therefore, as God’s children, we ought to shine and direct those who are still living in sin to Jesus Himself.

We who have accepted Jesus as our Saviour have His light in us. We are to let that light shine. Jesus said in John 8:12: “I am the light of the world. Whosoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” We who followed Him have the light of life. Therefore, we should be that shining light that will lead our family members, friends and members of our community to Jesus.

Shining for Jesus

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exhorted his disciples to shine for Him. He said in Matt 5:14: “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.” Jesus wants us to shine and show others how to live and rise above their problems to face the challenges of life. We, must therefore be determined to be that light in this dark world. Our light can bring great help and pleasure to those around us.

The Bible has some examples of those who shone for Christ. Below are two such examples:

John the Baptist

John 5:35 states: “John was a lamp that burned and gave light.” John the Baptist lived in such a way that he was likened to a lamp that burned and gave light to those around him.

Stephen the Deacon

Acts 6; 15 states: “All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.” Stephen’s face shone like an angel it was not merely physical condition. His face shone with an impression that said he was a child of God. The expression showed that he had been redeemed from sins, the self and worldly concerns. That light radiated out from within him.

Likewise, we can shine for Jesus.

How Should We Shine?

Matt 5:16 says: “In the same way let your light shine before men, that they may see good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” Shining for the Lord is the essence of Christian service. We should let our light so shine that those who see our good deeds will give praise to God because it is the Father who work in us. We do not have the ability to be good. Only God can accomplish that in us. We are His handiwork.

Therefore, to shine for Jesus means doing what is good, righteous and pleasing to God. To be such light, it is a good to start each day with the prayer: "God make me a blessing to someone through the things I say and do. Lord, use me to lead someone to find you as his or her Saviour and Lord."

(All quotes in the above text are in the New International Version of the Bible)

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