

Christmas Lights

Text : **Matthew 5: 1-16**

S#1.

INTRODUCTION :

A. Aside from religious significance what's your favorite thing about Christmas?

1. Young people instantly say presents.
2. Older ladies think about getting the family back together.
3. Older men think about the food, the cookies, the pies.

S#2.

B. One of the things I most enjoy about the Christmas holidays is the light.

S#3.

1. More than any other time of year, people decorate with lights at Christmas time.
 - a. Some are very moderate with the decorations.
 - b. Some blanket their house with lights.
2. Every place we've ever lived the city has had lighting contest.
3. The light show in our park has its own U-tube video on line.
 - a. They use 36,000 lights each year.
 - b. They recently overhauled some of the displays.
 - 1) 10,000 ft. of wire
 - 2) 16,000 rolls of electrical tape

C. How did lights come to be associated with Christmas ?

S#4.

1. I used to think it was because the magi followed the star to find Jesus – WRONG.
2. Started with candles on Christmas trees in 17th century Germany. *Then, mini-lamps.*
3. The use of electric lights started in America.
 - a. In 1882 an associate of Thomas Edison (Edward Johnson strung first lights)
 - b. In 1895 Grover Cleveland put electric lights on the tree in the white house.
 - c. In 1903 the Eveready company began selling commercially manufactured lights.
 - d. It wasn't until the 1960s that the mini-lights we now use were invented.

S#5.

D. Christmas lights bring good cheer to all, but why talk about them in a sermon ?

1. They are an appropriate symbol of Christians in this dark world.
2. Christians are commanded to shine forth as **"lights in the world."** **Phil. 2: 15**
3. We are lights and it is the Christmas season so we are to be **Christmas Lights.**

I. Increased darkness makes greater demands upon God's lights.**S#6.****A. This is a dark time in the world today.****S#7.**

1. We tend to focus our eyes on our own path, but the whole world is growing increasingly wicked.
2. Perverse lifestyles are now protected around the world.

B. In our own country depravity and immorality that for generations was punished as criminal is now not only tolerated, but protected.**S#8.**

1. In our own state sodomites are now permitted to marry.
 - a. From the beginning of recorded history there has been degenerate behavior.
 - b. The city of Sodom was destroyed even before the Law of Moses was given.
 - c. Moses made it a death penalty offense.
2. Laws cannot change the hearts of men.
 - a. Prohibition laws just created an increased problem of violent crime.
 - b. Laws against homosexuality did not prevent evil people from practicing it.
 - c. Laws against abortion did not stop wicked women from murdering their children.
3. HOWEVER, legal endorsement encourages negative behavior.
 - a. Homosexuals, now called "gays" and "lesbians", are aggressively attacking all forms of religious people and any others who oppose their perversion.
 - b. Not only does our government pay for the murder of the unborn, it is now trying to force private companies to provide abortion inducing drugs to their employees.
 - c. A new law in California gives children the right to chose which gender they will be today. **Now** moral children fear to use the restrooms.

S#9.**C. The fact is that the government isn't commissioned to be the light of the world.**

1. The darker the darkness the more light is needed.
 - a. Many people instinctively fear being in the dark.
 - b. Nightlights are used to give a sense of security.
2. The darker the darkness, the greater effect a small light can have.
 - * a. On a clear night, the human eye can see a single candle from 30 miles away.
 - b. We see stars that are millions of miles away.

3. Christians : God ordained that only YOU be His lights in this dark world.**S#10.**

Phil. 2: 15 – so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

II. We cannot choose – IF – we will be lights, only if we will shine.**S#11.****A. Remember our text :****S#12.**

1. **Matt. 5: 14** – You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
2. This is a simple declarative statement describing the character of a Christian.
3. Christian, YOU appear as a light in the world because you ARE a light.

B. Being light, God has deliberately placed YOU where you will be observed.**S#13.**

1. **Matt. 5: 14** – You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;
 - a. He put you on top of a hill where you cannot be hidden. (*Peter at fire*)
 - b. You've heard a lot of jokes about blonds, polish people, **and** red-neck farmers but they don't even make jokes about people hiding a light where it can't be seen.

2. To try to hide a light that Jesus lit makes Him look foolish. (*Don't be rebellious*)

Matt. 5: 15 – **nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.** **S#14.**

- a. It's an absurdity; if you don't want like, you don't turn it on.
- b. Jesus lit you because He wants YOU to be seen.
3. There is no acceptable or godly motive for hiding a light that God has lit.

C. When you were created in Christ Jesus you were created to be a light to others.

1. You were created as a Christian for the purpose of doing good works. **S#15.**

Eph. 2: 10 – **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**

2. Jesus personally commanded us to do our good works so they could be seen. **S#16.**

Matt. 5: 16 – **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.**

- a. Pharisees want their good works to be seen so that THEY would be glorified.
- b. Christians want their good works to be seen so that GOD will be glorified.

*** – It takes verbal communication to give God the glory.** **S#17.**

3. We have fellowship with God only when we are shining forth the light in our lives.

I John 1: 5-7 **This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, **S#18.** we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

D. When a Christian is born again, he is born to be a light bearer.

1. Jesus referred to Himself as light.

S#19.

John 8: 12 – Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

2. We who follow Christ are called “children of light.”

S#20.

Eph. 5: 8 – for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (cf. – **I Thes. 5: 4-6**)

- a. There is not a grey area ... we are either light or darkness. (*you were – you are*)
- b. This shining of our light is to be a *lifestyle*, not on-again-off-again.

3. God does not leave us guessing what that lifestyle is composed of.

S#21.

Eph. 5: 9-10 (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), **10** trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

III. You may be the only light in someone's life.

S#22.

A. You are on the particular lampstand that God placed you on.

1. When one stops being darkness and becomes light he becomes a lamp on a stand.

I Pet. 2:9 – But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people **#23** for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

2. Many feel inadequate to act as a light ... to be what they ARE.
 - a. God created you in Christ for His use ... *Clearly God wants to use you.*
 - b. You ARE light so God wants to use you where you are. (*Wherever you go.*)

B. Knowing God wants to use us should be a source of encouragement to us.

1. You have a reason to get up in the morning.
2. God is going to use you to be a light to someone.

C. When Jesus first spoke these words, it was to a multitude of common folks.

1. They weren't educated people or prominent in their community.
2. This early in His ministry, even His disciples weren't fully converted.
 - a. Peter had a foul mouth. (*Evidenced around the fire.*)
 - b. Matthew was a tax collector. (*Made his living gouging people .. %*)
 - c. James and John wanted to call fire down on people.

D. The Rabbis were fond of calling themselves ... “the light.”

1. Jesus told the common people they were light.
2. Walking in light assures the sinner of forgiveness.
 - a. **I John 1: 7** – but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
 - b. Therefore, one does not have to be sinless to be a light to others.
3. Every Christian can be light to someone.

IV. We must not become discouraged when others do not receive the light.**S#24.****A. There are those who will avoid the light and all who bear the light.**

1. **John 3: 19-21** This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God. **S#25.** **S#26.**
2. This means that there are some people who will not be comfortable near you.
 - a. This is not to say that said people are especially wicked.
 - b. It is to say that they are not light and do NOT want to be brought to the light.

B. Light cannot blend in with the darkness.

1. It is the nature of light to supplant the darkness.
 - a. Light can be dim, but it cannot be darkness and light at the same time.
 - b. When the light is turned off, it ceases to be light.
2. **So**, the only way a Christian can fit in with those who are not light is to be darkness.
 - a. Christian are called “**aliens and a strangers**” for a reason. (**I Pet. 2: 11**)
 - b. Non-Christian people have different values, customs and lifestyles than Christians.

C. We accept that many non-Christians don’t feel comfortable around Christians.

1. There is a reason “***Birds of a feather flock together.***”
2. It’s normal for people to feel uncomfortable around people who are different.
 - a. They use a different vocabulary than we use.
 - b. Being aware we don’t approve of profanity, they feel they must guard their tongue.

3. Worldly people who know they are sinning feel guilty around Christians.
 - a. It's normal to feel uncomfortable when you think others don't approve of you.
 - b. People are prone to feel resentful when in the presence of those who make them guilty about things they normally do not feel guilty about.

D. Our objective is not to be judgmental of others, but we cannot endorse evil.

1. **Eph. 5: 11-12** Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but **S#27.**
 instead even expose them; ¹² for it is disgraceful even to speak
 of the things which are done by them in secret.
2. The Christians cannot be a part of many conversations of the worldly people.
 - a. They should never think you are okay with such discussions.
 - b. We don't have to make an issue, but we do have to project a standard.
 - c. I was taught at a young age,
"No one will ever respect you more than you respect yourself."

CONCLUSION :

A. It's the holiday season so we will be having more contact with others than usual.

1. That makes is a time of temptation.
 - a. There will be activities that others enjoy in which we cannot participate.
 - b. Our first instinct will be to try to fit in, but just not really be a part of the evil.
2. However, it is also a time of great opportunity.
 - a. It is a time when we can let our light shine brighter than at others.
 - b. It's a time when more people are receptive to the good news than any other.

B. I challenge us all to let our lights shine brightly for all to see.

1. Rejoice in such a way as to motivate others to ask the source of your joy.
2. Be ready and eager to share with them the reason for your confidence. **S#28.**
I Pet. 3: 15 – .. **sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make**
a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope
that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

INVITATION :

A. If you have let your light go out, now is the time to rekindle it.

C. If you are not a Christian, you cannot be a light for God .. **S#29.**

why not become a Christmas light today

Lesson Text :

Matthew 5: 1-16

1 When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. **2** He opened His mouth and *began* to teach them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

13 You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; **15** nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **16** 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.