

Let Your Light So Shine Before Men (Matt 5:14-16)

The Lord said, **“A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 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. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”** (Matt 5:14-16). Here, the Lord is speaking about each one of us, and how we need to be a source of light to society and to the world.

He gave us light in order that it might appear before men, and we become enlightened and guided towards God. This is why He said to the Jews about John the Baptist, **“John was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light”** (John 5:35). The lamp refers to God’s commandments or to the one who carries it to the people.

Evil works against good and resists it. The devil covets the children of God and does not wish them to be the light of the world because he himself is darkness and the ruler of darkness. This is why the devil agitates his evil followers and helpers against the believers. They attack the faithful because of envy, jealousy, hatred for the Kingdom, misunderstanding, or due to the continual struggle between the Kingdom of God and that of the devil. This is what Herod did with John the Baptist because the light of John showed Herod’s sins (Matt 14:3-5).

Sometimes the bushel appears in the form of competition. It is strange to find competition in the construction of the Kingdom of God where servants oppose each other’s efforts. Everyone tries to put a bushel over the other’s work while the field of service has room enough for all. Selfishness puts a bushel over the other person’s lamp. **“The harvest truly is plentiful but the laborers are few”** (Matt 9:37).

There are virtues which cannot be concealed. You can conceal your prayer, fasting and charity, but can you hide your truthfulness, faithfulness and grace when you deal with all people? Can you hide your smooth style and your selected words which contain no defamation, roughness and disgrace to anybody and which do not hurt any feelings? There are ways of behavior which cannot be hidden such as: your temper, politeness, personality, wisdom, pattern, and gentleness. All these are seen by others without any attempt from you. The main thing is to possess within yourself a pure heart; not to ask praise of people and to work in secrecy as far as you can and not to mention your good deeds before others. However, you may not speak about yourself; your good deeds will speak on your behalf while you remain silent.

Every deed you do, is done to God’s glory not yours. The Psalmist says, **“Not unto us, O’ Lord, not unto us, but to Your name we give glory”** (Ps 115:1). It is enough for you that the Lord sees your good deeds, but if men see them, it will be for God’s glory. People will praise God because they see His image in you and observe in you the nobleness of Christianity, and know that God’s commandments can be carried out practically. As God created the sun, the moon, and the stars to illuminate the material world, so He wishes that the spiritual lights illuminate the way before men.

Rev. Dr. Louis Maram Reddy
Pastor, St. Mary’s Church, Tomahawk, WI