

1) Jesus now compares us to light ...

Matthew 5:14–16 (ESV)

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

1) If you stop to think about it, the first statement made here is phenomenal! “We are the light of the world” – no pressure, right?

a) This statement may also be a little confusing as well if you are remembering what Jesus says in ...

John 8:12 (ESV)

I Am the Light of the World

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

b) So, if Jesus is the light of the world and He says to us that “we are the light of the world” how do we deal with that?

c) I think Paul answers the question very well in two different letters – first he says to the Galatians:

Galatians 2:20 (ESV)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

2) In Philippians he says it plainly ...

Philippians 1:21 (ESV)

²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

a) The common idea in these two scriptures says we, as the radical disciples of Jesus, must live **as** AND **for** Christ and by doing so, we are shining lights showing clearly what Christ is like.

i) As that likeness of Christ, we are indeed the light of the world because we are true representatives of Christ.

3) In the rest of this passage Jesus also makes clear several other things:

a) If we are truly that light as we should be, then we will be like a **city on a hill** – we CAN NOT hide our Christlikeness.

i) The city on a hill cannot help but show its light! ***It has no choice!!!!***

b) And if we are truly that light, we will make no attempt to hide our light no matter what the cost.

4) Now, reading verse 16 again, there is one other very important aspect of this “***being the light of the world***” we must consider carefully.

Matthew – Sermon on the Mount

16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

- 5) We must never lose sight of the fact that God is to be glorified by our good works – **not us!**
- 6) I read an article recently by a fellow by the name of John Piper. In it he made a point that I think we should truly consider, he says:

What people see from the outside is our “good works.” But that is not who we are. The good works have a light source from inside. The key to understanding the light that shines out through good works is the aim of the works, namely, that people see and *give glory to God*. Why do they give glory to God and not to us? **Because the light that is shining out is the light of God, or the light of Jesus who is the revelation of the glory of God.**⁴

- 7) This fits nicely with what we quoted from Paul a few moments ago.
- 8) Piper then asks the question but, before we get to that he makes some other interesting points.
 - a) He goes on to point out that our being salt and light is most fully realized when we as believers respond to persecution and hardship with joyful endurance.
 - b) He further points out that in this context, the beatitudes and particularly the beatitude blessing those who are reviled, persecuted, and spoken evil of, truly fits well with the command to let one’s light shine.
 - c) The conclusion again being that joy in suffering is what most vividly displays God’s glory in a dark world.
 - d) This joy arises when believers remain hopeful and joyful despite suffering that would normally lead to despair.
 - e) Such joy prompts observers to ask what sustains it, and Jesus’s answer is the believer’s hope of a great heavenly reward – Christ himself as a treasure greater than worldly comforts.
 - f) When good works are flavored by this joy and accompanied by testimony and the Spirit’s work, others may come to recognize and glorify God.

How do good deeds grow from who we are in such a way that they make God look glorious?

- g) I really think his point and the answer to his question is tied up in how we handle the bad situations in our lives.
- h) Whether it is persecution, hardship, or simply a bad day – it is our showing joy always as we go about working for the Lord that truly allows others to give glory to God.

What are your thoughts on his ideas?

Are there other ways that we can glorify God “by our good works?”

⁴ https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-does-it-mean-to-let-our-light-shine/?utm_source=Crossway+Marketing&utm_campaign=c439a1f7ac-20251215+Gen-WhatDoesItMeantoLetOurLightShine&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-c439a1f7ac-528930153&mc_cid=c439a1f7ac&mc_eid=ca5d9b5ef8

Matthew – Sermon on the Mount

So, back to us as disciples – What are ways by which we hide our light?

- i) Denying Christ by our actions - sinning.
 - j) Failing to cease opportunities to share Christ with others.
 - k) Not being ready to cease opportunities even when we have them –
 - i) lack of knowledge
 - ii) lack of any plan as to how to approach the person
 - iii) being afraid to share.
 - iv) Being too “right” - overbearing – “Bible thumping” – making people run when they see us coming.
 - l) Living just like the rest of the world.
 - m) Being a “grumpy Gus” all the time.
- 9) Of course, showing our light is exactly the opposite of those traits:
- a) Never denying Christ by our actions – doing our best not to sin.
 - b) Always keeping our antennas up so we can cease opportunities to share Christ with others.
 - c) Staying in the Word and being prepared.
 - d) Not being overbearing.
 - e) Not living like the rest of the world.
 - f) Showing our joy as we meet and talk to others.
- 1) One of the major purposes of the Sermon on the mount was to show Christ’s fulfillment of the Law and Prophets.
- 2) These next few verses are where he states that purpose,
- 3) As we proceed, we will be spending some time looking at how the **“fulfilling of the Law”** is actually realized.
- 4) It is important that we understand how the Law is fulfilled in such a way that when we look at verse 19, which talks about not nullifying commandments, it does not become a contradiction for us.

Matthew 5:17–18 (ESV)

Christ Came to Fulfill the Law

¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

- 1) First, let’s get some facts laid out – Law and Prophets:
- a) Law is the commands of the Torah – Genesis through Deuteronomy,
 - b) The Prophets are all the books of the Prophets (Nevi'im).
 - c) The rest of the Old Testament books are collectively called the Writings (Ketuvim).
 - d) In synagogues on the Sabbath, a rabbi would always read from the Law and often from the Prophets.

Matthew – Sermon on the Mount

- e) It was then followed by instruction and exhortation.
- 2) It is important to see that in the context of these two verses when Jesus speaks of the Law, he is **not** talking about any of the extra stuff the Scribes and Pharisees have added.
 - a) He makes this explicitly clear as he concludes his remarks to some Scribe and Pharisees who came from Jerusalem to challenge him regarding his disciples not washing their hands before eating.
 - b) The Torah makes no such requirement.
 - c) In verses 7 through 9 of chapter 15 he quotes Isaiah saying ...

Matthew 15:7–9 (ESV)

⁷ You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:

- ⁸ “ ‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
- ⁹ in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”
- 3) Obviously, the “commandments of men” are all those extra things which have been added by them through the years.
- 4) Ok so, He says here that He is not going to abolish the Law or the Prophets but fulfill them.
- 5) One comment I read regarding verse 17 adds some dimension to this idea.

This statement frames much of the Sermon on the Mount and is seen by most interpreters as Jesus both upholding the authority of the Old Testament Law and reinterpreting its application for His followers.

- 6) One major and very important piece that plays into this – especially the “reinterpretation” – is what is called the “Oral Tradition.”
 - a) The Oral Tradition refers to interpretive traditions about the Torah that developed alongside the written Torah.
 - b) Much of its developed form took shape in the late Second Temple Period.
 - c) These interpretations were mainly a product of the Pharisees and some scribes.
 - d) They were preserved, taught, and transmitted by Pharisees and scribes and really did not get formally compiled until around 200CE in what is called the Mishnah.
 - e) One author states:

Matthew often draws on and quotes from the Jewish Scriptures, but Jesus also interacts a good deal with the oral tradition of the elders and the shaping of the Jewish tradition. Jesus is negative toward the law only when it has been misinterpreted.⁵

- f) We will talk more about this “Oral Tradition” in a couple of weeks.

⁵ Patrick Schreiner, [*Matthew, Disciple and Scribe: The First Gospel and Its Portrait of Jesus*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2019), 29.

Matthew – Sermon on the Mount

- 7) We can easily see Jesus fulfilling the Prophets.
 - a) This is one of the major features of the entire Gospel of Matthew especially the first portions.
- 8) As we will see, fulfilling the Law is not quite so simple or straightforward.

Jesus says *He is not going to abolish the Law – so, we might ask; Why can't the Law be abolished – just go away?*

- 9) Paul says a lot about this in Romans but, in 3:20 he really gives one or the most compelling reasons ...

Romans 3:20 (ESV)

²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

- 10) He goes on to say later further expanding this idea ...

Romans 7:7 (ESV)

The Law and Sin

⁷ What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.”

So, let's try to move this concept forward.

How do we define sin – do we use the Law?

- a) The Law defines God's morality and how he wants us to live.
 - b) Without knowledge of sin, we are back to our own “moral compasses” – not a good place to be.
- 11) In answering the initial question, we should also remember that scripture tells us that the Law is perfect...

Psalms 19:7 (ESV)

⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

- 12) So, if the Law is perfect, then what we must deal with next is what Jesus means when He says He is fulfilling the law.