

## *The Parable of the Lamp on a Stand*

***“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 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.” Matthew 5:14-15***

Jesus says, ***“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 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.”*** How can we with all our mistakes, misgivings, and failures be ***“the light of the world?”*** How could God in all his wisdom choose to use us to reveal Jesus, the only hope of eternal salvation, to a lost and dying world?

As we grow in our knowledge of God’s heart, we grow in the revelation of his desire to use us. We need to move our focus, our attention on our own sins and darkness and rather focus on God’s grace and love. But faithfully in his love, he guides our thoughts to what matters: the overwhelming reality of the Holy Spirit transforming us into the image of the God who created us. Today, let’s allow the Spirit and the word to transform the way we view ourselves and how God in his infinite wisdom would use us to change the world.

***Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”*** At salvation our identity changed. We are now ***“created in Christ Jesus.”***

***2 Corinthians 5:17*** says it this way: ***“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”*** We are a new creation not by our own doing, but by the powerful finished work of Christ Jesus on the cross. At salvation our sins were wiped away, cast off as far as the east is from the west. Such was the transformation that took place in our hearts at salvation that we are filled with God himself. Jesus says in ***John 14:16-17***, ***“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of***

***truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.***  
God himself “dwells with us” and through salvation now lives inside us.

Passages like the parable of the lamp on a stand teach us to understand what God wants to reveal through us to the world. Sometimes we think God wants to reveal perfection in us, that we must act perfectly to demonstrate Christ. What we need to realize is that the greatest revelation we could give a broken and needy world is that God, through the immeasurable depth of his love, meets us in our brokenness and continually makes us whole. We need to realize that God, only by his grace, is taking what was lost, weak, selfish, and lonely and is filling us with unimaginable love and security through restored relationship with him. God doesn't want us to reveal perfection. He wants to reveal the fact that in our imperfection he has loved us from the beginning with an everlasting love.

Because we are weak and in need of God, we are the absolute best person to lead others to Jesus. If we act like we have everything together, as if nothing is wrong, then those distant from God will have no reason to believe God desires relationship with them. But in revealing our imperfection, in being honest and real with those around us, we will offer hope to a world that has none. We will reveal the core of the gospel: that God has incredible works prepared for those who simply come to him in need and cry out for his help. In our imperfection we are a perfect example of Jesus' love that comes only by grace.

God desires to shine the light of his love through us today in powerful ways. He longs to reveal to others how deeply he has loved us in his grace. He has incredible plans in store for us if we will simply be real with a world that desperately needs relationship with their Creator. Have the courage to be yourself and to be honest and vulnerable. Honesty is all your heavenly Father asks of you. In our honesty, God will reveal a greater love than this world has ever known. In the reality of who we are, God will shine forth hope, guiding those who are lost to the safe shores of restored

relationship with him. May you find peace in the fact that God longs to use us exactly as we are. May you find purpose in the works he has set before you to do. And may you find joy in the revelation of God's immeasurable love poured out on you through his grace.