

## BEING THE LIGHT

**DURING THIS ADVENT SEASON WE HAVE BEEN PREPARING FOR THE LIGHT, SEEING THE LIGHT AND WALKING IN THE LIGHT. NOW IT IS TIME TO BE THE LIGHT! AFTER THIS SEASON OF LIGHTS IS OVER DOES A LIGHT SHINE WITHIN US? DOES THAT LIGHT SHINE FROM US?** FROM THE MESSAGE IN MATTHEW 5:15-16 JESUS ENCOURAGES US BY SAYING *“Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.”*

AFTER THE CELEBRATIONS OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS AND THE SONGS ARE PUT AWAY FROM ANOTHER YEAR AND WE GO BACK TO OUR “DAILY LIVING”. I WANT TO ASK YOU **“WHAT KEEPS YOU GOING? WHERE IS YOUR LIFE GOING?** THESE ARE NOT EASY QUESTIONS SIMPLY BECAUSE FOR MOST OF US WE ARE JUST LIVING DAY TO DAY. IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THAT WAY!!

**DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN AS A YOUTH YOU HAD THIS LOVE FOR LEARNING, A THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE, AND THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE FUTURE? WHERE IS THAT THIS MORNING? JESUS HAS TOLD US TO BE CHILD-LIKE IN OUR FAITH. HAVE WE LET THE NEGATIVES OF LIFE, THOSE “BAD” THINGS PULL FROM US THAT CHILD-LIKE FAITH AND THAT ENTHUSIASM FOR LIFE? WORSE YET HAVE WE ALLOWED THE LIGHT TO GROW SO DIM WITHIN US THAT NO ONE CAN TELL A DIFFERENCE IN US FROM ANYBODY ELSE? DO WE CARRY THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD WITHIN US, JESUS CHRIST, TO SHINE OUT INTO THE DARKNESS?**

WHEN JESUS WALKED THIS EARTH HE MADE A DIFFERENCE, HIS WORDS, HIS ACTIONS DREW PEOPLE TO HIM. **DO OUR WORDS, OUR ACTIONS DRAW PEOPLE TO US. DO OUR WORDS POINT THEM TO JESUS CHRIST? DOES OUR LIGHT SHINE BRIGHT ENOUGH FOR OTHERS TO SEE?** THERE IS A LOT NOT RIGHT WITH THE WORLD TODAY, I BELIEVE EACH GENERATION THINKS THAT!! HOWEVER, WHEN THINGS SEEM TO GET DARKER AROUND YOU IT IS THEN **THAT SMALL AMOUNT OF LIGHT CAN SHINE THE BRIGHTEST!!! AND THAT IS US.**

I HEAR OF A NUMBER OF INCIDENTS WHERE INDIVIDUALS ARE EVEN SUING TO REMOVE THOSE ITEMS OF CHRISTMAS THEY FIND “OFFENSIVE”. WHEN WE ARE LIVING AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT, THEN AS IT SAYS IN PHILIPPIANS 2:13-16 *Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is God’s energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure. Do everything readily and cheerfully—no bickering, no second-guessing allowed! Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this sinful and polluted society. Provide people with a glimpse of good living and of the living God. Carry the light-giving Message into the night”.*

WE HAVE, AS ANOTHER VERSION, SAYS IT, "THE WORDS OF LIFE". **THE MESSAGE OF CHRISTMAS IS NOT JUST WORDS, NOR IS IT SOMETHING TO KEEP WITHIN OURSELVES.** THE MESSAGE OF CHRISTMAS AND EASTER IS MEANT TO BE SHARED AND MOST IMPORTANTLY LIVED OUT. **IF WE NEVER LET OUR LIGHT FROM WITHIN SHINE OUT THEN WHAT EXACTLY IS IT WE ARE DOING?** SOMEONE LET THEIR LIGHT SHINE ON YOU, A MOTHER, FATHER, SISTER, BROTHER, GRANDMA, GRANDPA, OR A FRIEND. THINK ABOUT THIS, **IF THEY HAD NOT WHERE WOULD YOU BE TODAY?** ACT 26:18 SUMS UP OUR MISSION QUITE CLEARLY *"To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."* THAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A LIGHT.

**IT IS INTERESTING TO LOOK AT THE PROPERTIES OF LIGHT.** ONE PROPERTY WE HAVE BEEN REFERRING TO ALREADY AND THAT IS **LIGHT THAT REFLECTS OFF SURFACES AND ENABLES US TO SEE THINGS.** IF WE SHINE OUR LIGHT AND IT REFLECTS OFF SOMEONE ELSE, WE CAN SEE THAT **LIGHT COME BACK TO US.**

**LIGHT HAS ANOTHER PROPERTY - SPEED.** HOW FAST OR WITH HOW MUCH SPEED DOES OUR "LIGHT" TRAVEL? **IF WE ARE NOT SHINING THEN AREN'T WE KEEPING OUR LIGHT TO OURSELVES?** AT THE FUNERAL OF NED I TALKED OF HOW NED REACHED OUT TO ANYONE AND EVERYONE. HIS LIGHT TRAVELED FAR AND WIDE. AND TALK ABOUT REFLECTING BACK!, OVER AND OVER AGAIN, I WATCHED HIM AND THE PEOPLE AROUND HIM.

**THAT LEADS TO THE PROPERTY OF LIGHT CALLED REFRACTION.** IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN LIGHT MEETS A DENSER MEDIUM IT BENDS. **THIS PROPERTY IS USED IN OUR GLASSES FOR VISION AND MAGNIFYING LENSES.** SO WHEN WE MEET SOMEONE HOW DOES OUR LIGHT "BEND"? **WILL PEOPLE SEE CHRIST, OUR LIGHT OR WILL WE BEND SO MUCH THEY MAY NEVER SEE JESUS?**

**THERE IS ANOTHER PROPERTY OF LIGHT THAT I FOUND INTERESTING.** IT IS CALLED **INTERFERENCE.** **IT MEANS WHEN TWO LIGHTS MEET DEPENDING ON THE THEIR MAKEUP** THEY CAN EITHER MERGE AND ENHANCE ONE ANOTHER AND GIVE A BRIGHTER LIGHT, OR THEY **MIGHT INTERFERE** IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MAKE THE MERGED LIGHT LESS BRIGHT. **IN THE FIRST CASE IT IS CALLED CONSTRUCTIVE AND SECOND CASE IS CALLED DESTRUCTIVE.** WHICH ONE ARE WE? CAN WE MEET WITH OTHERS AND HELP TO MAKE A BRIGHTER LIGHT OR DO CERTAIN THINGS GET IN THE WAY AND WE BOTH END UP WITH A LIGHT THAT DOES NOT SHINE AS BRIGHT? WE ARE LIKENED TO A BODY WITH CHRIST THE HEAD, AND WE ARE ALL LIVING, MOVING PARTS. WE CAN NOT GO AROUND HAMPERING THE FUNCTIONS OF THE BODY. **WE SHOULD NOT, WE CAN NOT DIM OTHERS LIGHTS!!!!**

**WHAT CAN PREVENT US FROM SHINING THE BRIGHT LIGHT OF JESUS CHRIST IN OUR LIVES?** LOOK AT OUR LIVES AND IF WE SEE SIN IN OUR LIVES THEN PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS AND THE GRACE OF GOD TO REMOVE IT. WE WILL NOT BE AN EFFECTIVE LIGHT TO OTHERS WHEN WE JUST IGNORE OUR SIN., WHICH MAY BE HARMFUL WORDS, OR OTHER NEGATIVE ACTIONS.

**IF WE DESIRE THE LIGHT OF JESUS CHRIST SHINING OUT FROM US WE MUST BE DIFFERENT – IN A GOOD WAY!** ROMANS 12:2 SAYS *“Do not be conformed to this world”*. DO YOU MULL OVER IN YOUR MIND THAT AS A CHRISTIAN HOW YOU ARE TO BE DIFFERENT? ONE VERY VISIBLE WAY CAN BE POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE IS OUR WORDS. **NOTHING CAN DULL OUR LIGHT AND WITNESS MORE THEN WORDS CARELESSLY SPOKEN IN HASTE OR ANGER.** MOM'S ADVICE *“IF YOU DON'T HAVE SOMETHING NICE TO SAY, DON'T SAY ANY THING AT ALL”*. WORDS CAN GET US IN TROUBLE, BUT A WORD SPOKEN IN LOVE CAN LIFT THE HEAVIEST BURDEN SOMEONE HAS!!!

**I BELIEVE NO WHERE MORE DOES THIS IDEA HIT THE TARGET THAN ON SOCIAL MEDIA - TWITTER, FACE BOOK, SNAP CHAT AND EVEN OLDER EMAIL.** WE CAN ALL FALL INTO THIS INSTANT COMMUNICATION NOT JUST YOUNG PEOPLE. THE WORDS THAT I HAVE READ ABOUT GOING BETWEEN CANDIDATES, IMPROPERLY BETWEEN TEACHER AND STUDENTS IS UNBELIEVABLE IN THEIR CONTENT AND TONE. **SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE FOR GOOD, BUT WE HAVE TO BE AWARE OF THE SPEED OF OUR COMMUNICATION. FOR OUR LIGHT TO SHINE IT MUST SHINE THROUGH EVERYTHING WE USE.**

MAGGIE GAVE ME THE VERSE FROM LUKE 6:38 *“do to others as you would have them do to you”*. NED LIVED BY IT. THERE IS NO DOUBT HIS LIGHT OF CHRIST SHONE BRIGHTLY BECAUSE HE CONSIDERED OTHERS NEEDS. **IN DOING THAT WE MUST HAVE PATIENCE, GIVE OTHERS THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT, MOST LIKELY THEY ARE GIVING YOU THE BENEFIT OF DOUBT.** THAT DIFFICULT PERSON YOU CAN'T WORK WITH, JUST REMEMBER THEY TOO WERE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD AND ARE LOVED BY GOD! **BEING A LIGHT MEANS LOVING OTHERS THE WAY GOD LOVES THEM.** WHEN WE LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR AS OURSELVES THEN WE CAN HELP THEM. JOHN WESLEY'S THREE SIMPLE RULES – **LOVE GOD, DO NO HARM AND DO GOOD!!!** EASY, NOT REALLY, BUT GOD DOES NOT LEAVE US ON OUR OWN TO BECOME THAT BETTER PERSON. JUST ASK HIM, HE WILL COME THROUGH FOR YOU, ME, EVEN THAT DIFFICULT PERSON!!!

**THAT BRINGS US BACK FULL CIRCLE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT WE ARE NOT THE SOURCE. WE ARE NOT THE “LIGHT OF THE WORLD”** THERE IS A STORY A PROFESSOR TOLD TO HIS CLASS...A child found a broken mirror and saved the largest piece. When he had time he would round this piece of mirror. As he became a man, he grew to understand that this was not just a child's game but a metaphor for what he might do with his life. He came to understand that he was not the light or the source of light. "I am a fragment of a mirror whose whole design and shape I do not know. Nevertheless, with what he had he could reflect light into the dark places of this world into black places in the hearts of people and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise. And then he took his small mirror and, holding it carefully, caught the bright rays of daylight streaming through the window and slowly reflected them onto all that were in the room. Are you allowing the light of Christ to reflect off the mirror of your heart? Are you allowing God to shine through?

IN THIS ADVENT SEASON THAT IS COMING TO A CLOSE WITH THE BIRTH OF JESUS, IF WE HAVE PREPARED FOR HIS LIGHT, SEE HIS LIGHT, AND WALK IN HIS LIGHT, THEN MOST CERTAINLY WE WILL BE HIS LIGHT SHINING INTO THE DARKNESS WHEREVER WE MAY GO. **THAT IS WHAT ADVENT HAS BEEN ALL ABOUT AND HOW WE CAN “MAKE CHRIST KNOWN IN OUR COMMUNITY AND AROUND THE WORLD” AMEN**