TOPIC: FOLLOW THE LIGHT. BE A LIGHT.

The world's problems can only be solved by Jesus Christ – the Light of the world.

KEY POINTS

- Where do we begin in tackling the issues of our day and time? How much time, energy, skill, stamina and money do we have to address the problems in our own country and around the world?
- In the day and time the apostle John lived in, they also had terrible problems to deal with. By the time John began to write his gospel, the Romans had reduced Jerusalem to rubble, and the scattering of the Jewish people was in full swing.
- And so he began: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He continues in verse 4: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." God is life. God is light. God *gives* life. God's life, in His human incarnation, is light to all humanity.
- John does not begin his book by addressing the problems of his day. Instead, he begins by highlighting the solution to all human sin and all human ills: new life in Christ Jesus, the Light of the world (John 8:12; John 9:5).
- For all the things that bring death to humanity, for all the things that extinguish hope for the future, and for all the things that destroy the fabric of our society, Jesus provides the one and only solution: new life in Christ.
- Our world is full of confusion. All levels of government in our country are struggling to find answers. The United Nations is struggling to find answers. Philanthropic organizations like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are struggling to find answers.
- Therefore, it is incumbent upon the people of God to tell the world, "We have the answer!" Jesus Christ is the answer to the world's problems. The gospel is powerful, life-changing, light-giving deliverance from sin. We need to let the light of the gospel shine into our dark, confused world.
- The apostle Paul put it this way: "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6 NKJV).
- At the beginning of time God commanded light to shine out of darkness in the physical realm. Now, through Jesus Christ, He shines spiritual light into our hearts and into the spiritual darkness of our world.
- And if people do not know or see Jesus, they see us. Jesus said: "You are the light of the world" (Mark 5:14). The apostle Paul also instructs us to "become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).
- The Shining Light can
  -fight the injustice of human trafficking (e.g. John Newton)
  -combat political corruption (e.g. Chuck Colson)
  -deal with intellectual atheism (e.g. C.S. Lewis)
  -quiet loud, powerful opponents of the faith (e.g. Lee Strobel).
- This is the privilege we have: to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, which truly provides the solution to all the evils of humanity and to live a life that clearly radiates the light of Christ that is in us to the world around us.
- 1 John 4:17b NKJV "… As He is, so are we in this world…."

KEY SCRIPTURES

John 1:1-9; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6;
Philippians 2:14-16a; 1 John 4:17b

DISCUSSION TOOLS

1. How does light affect darkness? Does darkness affect light the same way? Discuss.
2. Describe a time when you clearly saw the light of Jesus shining in someone else. How did you/others react?
3. How are you being a light to your world?
4. What responses have you received from others in your circle of influence that reflect that you are being a light to them?
5. What most troubles you about the condition of our world? How are you addressing it – ignoring it, campaigning against it, praying about it, or doing something else? Explain.
6. What steps will you take to "trim your lamp" and allow your light (the light of Jesus within you) to shine brighter?

Notes

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Prayer Time

Light of the World, shine on and shine through me, helping others to find their way to You[1]. In Jesus' name, amen. ([1]Geron Davis "Shine On", adapted.)

Life Group ice-breaker: Have you ever experienced an electrical blackout? What did you /your family do to cope?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, JULY 17, 2016
PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS/COMMENTS:

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