

Called to Glow

Before I begin with my message today, I would like to read the poem “The Glow” written by Gracie Baldwin. [Read poem]

Throughout the Bible, “light” is regularly used as a motif: a recurring image that points us towards a symbol, something with greater meaning beyond itself. Perhaps the most well-known example of this can be seen in the words of John 1:1-18. In this passage, John declares that Jesus, the son of God, has been made into flesh and sent into this world to dwell among us. Furthermore, John declares that Jesus is the light of the world, the only true light. He is the light that leads us to salvation and the light which can never be extinguished. It is written that “In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:4-5).

Similarly, in our scriptures read this morning, both Mark 4:21-25 as well as Luke 8:16-18, we are presented with another use of light as a symbol – this time, through the image of a lamp. In Mark chapter 4 verse 21, Jesus poses the question, “Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand?” He asks: Is it not meant, or rather created to shine brightly and freely? Is this not its intended purpose?

Physically, we have all been in darkness. Perhaps not total or complete darkness (as it seems we are immune to such a concept in our modern society), but darkness enough to know the difficulties that come along with it. We understand that darkness makes it difficult to find our way toward our destination. It can make us feel isolated and alone. It also may cause us to worry about the dangers that “might” be around us. To put it simply, darkness is scary.

And, YES, Jesus would agree! So much so that He commands us to shine our lamps brightly and place them on full display. However, the lights that he is speaking about here are not physical lights, nor is He speaking about physical darkness. Rather, Jesus is referring to us: God's lamps, called to shine in a spiritually dark world. He is reminding us that we are called to reflect the "light" of God: the light of love, the light of hope, the light of salvation; the ultimate, unfailing light. He declares to us that we should never dampen our lights. Instead, we should place our lights on the "lampstand;" a place of public view; a place where any and all can see the light of God and experience the salvation that is brought by it. We are called to give our worries and concerns to God so that we may GLOW to our fullest extent!

In the Affirmation of Faith this morning, we all declared that God's light shines through "us when we show compassion to those who are hurting, when we offer hope to those who are despairing, and when we stand up for justice and righteousness in a world that can be very dark and oppressive." But beyond this, we glow when we allow the Holy Spirit to work within us. We glow when we serve others; when we seek to right what is wrong and when we stand with those who have been hurt by wrongdoings. We glow when we embody the fruits of the spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We glow when we follow Jesus' commandment to treat one another as we would like to be treated. We glow when we choose God's love and embody God's love. For in John 13:35, it is written that in loving one another, the world will know that we are disciples of Christ.

In this spiritually dark world, we are called to GLOW! We are called to be a flicker of light in a valley of darkness – the light that guides us home when we are lost. We are called to shine our unique inner lights so that, in doing so, all might be pointed to the light of love, the light of hope, and the light of salvation found in only Jesus Christ. Let us then fulfil this calling.

