

The Light of the World (Luke 8:16~18)

One of the greatest metaphors used to describe God's word, is that of a *light*... Throughout scripture, this world in which we live is described, as a very dark place. And because it is dark, the people who live here walk in darkness. I hope you get *the image* here. The reason people stumble and fall, is because they can't SEE where they are going. The metaphor of "*darkness*" is a picture of sin, hopelessness, death... But thanks be unto God, for he has given us the "*Light of His word!*" It is a symbol of hope, of life, joy, and on and on. While Jesus was on the earth, he proclaimed that he was the "*light of the world,*" in that he came proclaiming the good news of the coming kingdom of God! In Luke 3:18, we see a great picture of the liberating power of the gospel to those "*sitting in darkness.*" Notice, it is the preaching of the gospel that sets the captives free!

Here in this passage we just read, we find Jesus sharing another "*parable,*" one that speaks to the "*light*" that a candle gives off. Here he uses a "*candle*" to reveal yet another *great mystery* of the kingdom of God. Turn with me for a moment, to Psalms 78. This is what is known as a "*Messianic Psalm,*" meaning that it is a *prophetic word*, speaking of the Messiah. Read verses 1~4...

Here it is declared, that when the Messiah comes, he will "*open his mouth in Parables*"... The word parable means "*to cast alongside.*" A parable is a story that teaches a truth, by putting the truth alongside something familiar. Here in Psalms 78, he declares that he will "*Open his mouth in parables; I will utter dark sayings of old...*" Declaring that he will reveal, deep dark secrets of old, through the use of parables. And then he goes on to say, that the truths are to be declared with the next generation, of the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

What a wonderful Psalm that is, and it is here in Luke that we find that very Psalm being fulfilled. Here we find what is really the beginning of Jesus' speaking in parables. He had just been rejected by the chief priest, Scribes and Pharisees, as well as John the Baptist, and now he goes about preaching the kingdom of God, and doing so through parables.

A parable is a story that teaches a truth, by putting the truth alongside something familiar. The people Jesus is speaking to here in this passage, knew about sowing seeds, they knew about the various ground conditions he spoke of here, therefore, Jesus spoke a parable about sowing to reveal a "*great mystery of the kingdom.*" In this parable of the Sower, Jesus revealed how people would become part of the kingdom, by faith. He revealed that it would be by the hearing and receiving of the word into their hearts, that men and women would become the children of God! By using the four different soils, Jesus revealed that many would reject his message for one reason or another, for only one of the four soils received the seed and bore fruit, symbolizing that a very small number would embrace Jesus Christ as Lord...

Here in verses 16~18, Jesus speaks another parable, concerning that of a lit candle...

(Vs 16) ***16**No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a bed; but sets it on a candlestick, that they, which enter in, may see the light.*

Here Jesus uses yet another parable, to "*reveal another mystery*" about the kingdom. In order to understand what he is teaching here, it is helpful to begin by asking a "*Question*"...

Why do you light a candle?

The answer is simple...for the light it gives...*right?* To light a candle, and then cover it up with something, would defeat the whole purpose...*right?* As Jesus says here...***NO MAN*** *when he has lighted a candle, covers it...* Is there anyone here who'd light a candle, and then turn right around and cover it up? But as Jesus explains in the parable, when you light a candle, you set it on a candlestick, so that all who enter the room may see its light...

(Illustration: Candle) So what's the point? What is the parable teaching? Well, the candle represents the disciples...and before he revealed the "kingdom truth" that had been hidden for thousands of years, in the parable of the Sower, they were as an "unlit" candle. The lack of light refers to "being in the dark" about the kingdom, they were *without understanding*. They did not possess "truth"...the kingdom was yet a mystery to them. But now that he had "revealed" to them, a "great mystery" of the kingdom, they now possessed light, truth... He had "lit the candle" as it were...by giving them "truth." It helps to keep in mind throughout this teaching, that the flame represented "TRUTH."

(Vs 10) **Look at verse 10...**¹⁰ *And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.*

Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God...

It is the "Revelation of these Mysteries" that Jesus is referring to in verse 17...¹⁷ *For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.*

- (Vs 17a) The things that have been "kept secret" for thousands of years...will be "made known!"
- (Vs 17b) The things that have been "hidden" for generations...will "be revealed!"

And as he says here in verse ten, it would be done through the use of parables. *Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God...* But at the same time, he also declares that "others," those who do not follow him, the parables will be meaningless. Though they see and hear his teachings on the sower, *the mysteries* remained a *mystery*.

¹⁰ *And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.*

For many, though they "hear the same teachings," they will not understand... To them, the parables will be nothing more than *little stories, riddles...* BUT, to those of you who trust in me, these parables will explain the deep and profound truths, that have been *kept secret* from the foundation of the world...

So, we understand, that the lighting of the candle refers to the "revealing of the mysteries of the kingdom." Here we see Jesus revealing those mysteries to his disciples, *through the use of parables*. By revealing these truths, Jesus declares that the time has come when they no longer be hidden, no longer be secret, but revealed to men, known to men!

But here's the important part of the parable... With that "Revelation"...comes great "Responsibility." This is where we understand what He meant in "The parable of the candle." They were blessed in one sense, in that they understood the deep things of God, truths that had been hidden, things that had been kept secret for thousands of years. But at the same time, with that *revelation*, comes tremendous *responsibility*. Speaking of the fact, that they were now responsible to share those truths with others, who were yet in darkness! **Thus the analogy of the candle...**remember what he said..."*but sets it on a candlestick, that they, which enter in, may see the light.*"

Using the analogy of a candle, Jesus explains that these truths that I share with you, I want you to share with others! As a candle reflects light unto those in darkness, you are to give light to those in darkness!

Q: Would a man light a candle, then cover it with a basket or put it under a bed to keep it hidden?

Absolutely not...that would defeat the whole purpose of the lit candle! In like manner, these truths I am telling you of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, are not to be covered or hidden any longer...but to be shared with men who do not know them. As the light of the candle helps men to see, these truths that you share with men will enable them to see!

Listen, its vital we understand that the “Light” of the candle represents the “Truth” of God’s word, specifically the “Revealed truth” of the kingdom of God concerning the message of Christ. I stress that, because we need to understand, that the “*light of the candle*” is not referring to our “*good example*” of Christian living. This is not the teaching of Matthew 5, where Jesus used the candle to teach “*let your light shine*” among men, that they may see your good works and glorify God.” Though that is important, and though the bible does stress that, that is not what he is referring to here. But rather, the “*Light of the candle*” is a reference to the “*Truth of God’s word.*” Here, we are represented by the candle, while the flame represents the “*Truths*” that Jesus is revealing.

I want you to hear me clearly... Those of us who are “*In Christ*”...we have a great responsibility... That being to share the gospel of Christ, with a lost, dying world. All around us, there are people who are walking in darkness, those who have not the light of the truth of God’s word! By the parable of the Sower, and the parable of the candle, Jesus revealed that it would be the duty of church, God’s children, to share God’s word with the world. Using the four soils to illustrate, He revealed that many will not accept it, for one reason or another, but nonetheless, we must be faithful to continue to sow the seed...

The “*light*” here refers to the “*truth of God*”...the “*revealed truth of the kingdom*”... And the point is, if you don’t share it with others, those who are in darkness, **they will continue to walk in darkness!** If you don’t “*tell others*” out there, what you learn in here...you are keeping the truth from them! If you don’t “*Tell them,*” it is as though you are hiding the truth from them! It’s as though you lit a candle, and then hid it under a bushel basket or under a bed. Those you come into contact with every day, NEED the light of the candle, they need the light of God’s word! Don’t keep it from them! And if you don’t TELL THEM...it a mystery to them, they are still in the dark!

Let me ask you something...are you sharing the gospel? How many people have you shared the gospel with? The truths that God gives you in here...are you sowing them out there? Are you declaring the light of Gods word to a people in darkness?

Listen...the only hope of those people out here, walking in darkness, is that the “*Light of the Gospel*” shine unto them! If we the disciples of Christ “*do not share*” this with them, they will remain in darkness! Here in these two parables, Jesus reveals that WE are the instruments in which God will use to save the lost! Salvation comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God! Beloved, as no one would light a candle and hide it under a bushel or under a bed, we must not keep the “*Truth of this book*” from those out here in darkness! Beloved, we have been given great privilege, that of hearing the gospel of Christ, but having done so, we now have received a great responsibility...that of sharing it with others in darkness.

Therefore, we need to be extremely carefully how we hear and handle these truths... And that’s exactly what Jesus says in verse 18...

(Vs 18) ***Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seems to have.***

Jesus says, “*Knowing what I just told you, you need to be careful how you hear...and what you do with it*”

One translation puts it this way... “*So be sure to pay attention to what you hear...for the one who “shows understanding” will be given more. However, from the one who lacks understanding, even what he thinks he has, will be taken away from him.*”

In other words, if you ***show forth*** that you understand the truth of the gospel, in that of seeing the lostness of those around you, by sowing the seed, and shining the light of the gospel...God will continue to give you more and more understanding. But if you’re not sowing seed, if you’re not shining the light of God’s truth to those in darkness...he says he’ll take away what you think you have... I’m reminded what he said in Revelations, to the Ephesians Church...

⁵*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*

Beloved, God is serious about getting the gospel of His son out...and so should we... Israel had learned this first hand, when God took away the kingdom from them and gave to the Gentiles... We'd do well to learn from that lesson, and the warning given in revelations to the Ephesians church...