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SERMON TITLE: "Jesus and You: the Light of the World"

SCRIPTURE: John 8:12-20

DATE: May 13, 2018

Check out the service at www.fpcd.org.

READ Proverbs 31:10-31 Happy Mother's Day!

Last week we talked about Jesus giving believers "streams of thirst-quenching living water," which is the Holy Spirit. It is a way of being—you are filled by a part of the Trinity. This week we talk about the next step; how do we apply the truth of the Holy Spirit in you? Let's hear it. READ John 8:12-20

It is still during the Festival of Tabernacles and every night four huge candelabras were joyously lit, making the temple visible far and wide. The joyous celebration meant God had shined upon them to bring them deliverance and salvation. The light represented God in action. Then Jesus says ***I am the light of the world.***

The light arising from the temple and spreading to all the world is Jesus. He is the Word of God revealed for us, showing us how to live. We are to follow. By following we avoid the perils of darkness—and we aware of the dark things in this world.

But when we follow Jesus, we will have his light of life. Jesus wants to take us to the next level: living out our faith. We are learning to walk in Christ's pathway.

The Pharisees are predictably not interested. They default to arguing with Jesus. Jesus charges them with judging.

But then there are those who go for it; who learn to apply Truth and live in the Light of Life.

So today, we are going to hear five stories of people who joined Jesus in spreading His light into the world.

The first person is Mike Smith, age fifty-two. If you watched the Kentucky Derby you saw Mike Smith, the jockey who rode Justify, the horse who won the Derby. The horse was a longshot. Not since the 1800s has a horse won the event for 3-year-old horses without running a race as a 2-year-old.

Because of this fact, the media was all in a stir and a reporter interviewed Mike immediately afterward while still

on the track. But his attention was focused upward. He was praising God while she was asking her questions. Let's watch it.¹ (See video online, as listed below.)

"I want to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for blessing us," he proclaimed for all the world to see and hear. He continued to look up to acknowledge the Lord, even after he answered her question. He expressed the light of the world to millions of viewers around the world.

But if the Pharisees heard his words, do you think they would have agreed with him? They would probably say, "Jesus helped you? Your witness is not valid."

But Mike Smith said, "He is my light." Sing this chorus with me: *We are the light of the world, we are the city on a hill; we are the light of the world, and we gotta, we gotta, we gotta let the light shine!*²

Mike Smith knows Jesus helped. He said, "My strategy going in is to pray to the Lord first of all and then just hope for a good break." Jesus and Mike: the light of the world.

The second person's testimony was displayed by her eight granddaughters at her funeral. A thousand people were in attendance and thousands watched on TV as Barbara Bush's granddaughters one by one read Scriptures that reflected her, one of which was Proverbs 31, which was read earlier. She never held a job, yet she shaped generations with her faith and wisdom. Her son, Jeb, said, "She was our teacher and role model on how to live a life of purpose and meaning. The little things we learned became habits and they led to bigger things like, be kind. Always tell the truth. Never disparage anyone. Serve others. Treat everyone as you would want to be treated and love your God with your heart and soul. What a blessing to have a teacher like that 24/7. Recently, I asked her about dying. Was she ready to go? Was she sad? Without missing a beat, she said, "Jeb, I believe in Jesus and he is my Savior. I don't want to leave your dad but I know I will be in a beautiful place." Her husband was the only boy she ever kissed. He said, "I have climbed perhaps the highest mountain in the world but even that cannot hold a candle to

¹ <https://www.nbcports.com/video/mike-smith-it-takes-horse-justify-break-curse-apollo>, accessed May 8, 2018.

² Kari Jobe, "We Are." See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0jhYYRl928>.

being Barbara's husband."³ The Scripture says *Let her works praise her in the city gates*, and Barbara was indeed honored as a woman who fears God. The Pharisees might have resisted her confidence that Jesus would save her, but her witness stands: Her family gives proof to the validity of her faith.

Sing with me: *"We are the light of the world . . .*

Next is the story of Liz & Eugene Short, who travel worldwide to help mostly poor people prepare business plans and conduct business. They have provided micro loans of \$100-200 to 8,000 women in India who repay them. They loan money, receive it back, and loan it again. Liz asked one woman how this small loan would help. She smiled really big and said that she would now be able to feed her children twice a day instead of once.

They helped a timid woman named Anita start a business by giving her two sewing machines. She asked for a \$500 loan to buy more machines, which she paid back in six months. She asked for \$1,000 loan, which she paid back in six months. In three years her family was able to buy a car, in five years, a new house. This newly confident woman now employs five other women and owns three clothing stores. She helps support her church, and is teaching others in the church how to give.

Liz and Eugene provided ESL schooling; computer training, and scholarships for over 100 orphans, of which twenty-five are now attending college or have graduated. They have helped people in Africa also, including helping a community in Rwanda by rebuilding a coffee plantation, starting a school for 1,000 children, and building a medical clinic. They are not wealthy people, just using their God-given skills and resources to walk in Jesus' light. They have done this for thirteen years. They are 75 years old and feel God blessed their efforts beyond imagination.

Sing with me: *We are the light of the world . . .*

Peggy and Irving had not been married long when they went to Corpus Christi for Christmas. Driving home they passed a stranded motorist. Peggy writes, "As we passed the girl we realized how young she looked and she was alone. She looked like she was really frightened as we pulled over. I got out with Irving to make sure she knew we were there to help. Irving changed her tire and then told her that the donut tire was not safe to drive on all the way to Dallas. She worked at Budget Rent-a-Car in Dallas but she

had no money for a tire. We followed her to Wal-Mart and bought her a tire and took her to lunch while her tire was being changed. I gave her my name and address and she said when she got paid on Friday she would send me the money. We took off and sure enough that Friday she mailed us a check and a thank you card for helping her. For several years she sent us a Christmas card and every time would say how grateful she was to us for stopping to help her."

Would the Pharisees stop to help someone? Remember the story of the Good Samaritan when the religious leaders did not want to get involved with the hurt man so they walked by on the other side? So you can how the darkness operates. But . . . *We are the light of the world . . . And we gotta, we gotta, we gotta let the light shine*"

My final story is about a man named Max McLean. You have heard his voice if you have the Listeners Bible app on your phone. Max went to University of Texas. He was shy, so he took a theater class to gain social confidence. He discovered he had talent. Then, someone challenged him to read the Bible. I think it was his future wife. He became a believer as he read Jesus' story. He embraced the Light of the world. He says, "There are ultimately only two roads in life, to follow Jesus or to not follow Jesus. The decision you make sets the course for the rest of your life in terms of pursuing what is true, meaningful, and significant." So, after some time, he and his wife moved to New York City and founded a non-profit organization called Fellowship for the Performing Arts. Theater engages the senses, he says, and it helps open you to the Gospel, or at least have the opportunity for it to become meaningful. Once Christ is meaningful, then you think *what is this telling me?* Then you assent. Then you have to change your will. Imagination is engaged, then you apply the truth.⁴ Take a look at this clip of *The Screwtape Letters*. Screwtape is a senior devil who is teaching a young devil named Wormwood, how to entice Christians away from devotion to God.⁵

Max has devoted himself to what he loves in order to bring the light of Christ to people.

"I am the light of the world," said Jesus. "Those who follow me will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

What is your story? Have you considered sharing it with others? The stories I shared have either been shared with me or have been shared publicly with the world. Let's make it public. To have Jesus is to have the light of life. Let's share that light this week. AMEN

³ Chris Spargo, "George's tears for Barbara," April 21, 2018. See <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5641737/Barbara-Bush-funeral-Lady-laid-rest-Texas-Jeb-Bush-giving-eulogy-mother.html#ixzz5ExHYf0lv>, accessed May 8, 2018.

⁴ <https://fpatheatre.com> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lv2ZLj1N9cc>.
⁵ Max McLean in "The Screwtape Letters," a theatrical adaptation of *The Screwtape Letters* by C. S. Lewis, Clip shown (1:53-2:45) from interview in San Jose Center for the Performing Arts, Stark Insider, Publ., September 2, 2012, accessed May 8, 2018. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1MJPuF13f4>