

EAST CAMBRIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

“A first century church in the 21st century”

Bible Reading Plan

Week 36

- 2 Chr 29-31; *1 Cor 8*
- 2 Kg 18-18; 2 Chr 32;
Ps 67; *1 Cor 9*
- Isa 36-37; Ps 123; *1 Cor 10*
- 2 Kg 20; Isa 38-40; Ps 68;
1 Cor 11
- Isa 41-44; *1 Cor 12*

Leading Services

Announcements: Ron V.

Morning:

Song Leader: Bill G.

Opening Prayer: Richard L.

Lord's Table: :Larry L.

Asst By:

Closing Prayer: Brock G.

Evening:

Song Leader: Mike V.

Opening Prayer: Larry L.

Closing Prayer: Ben V.

Scripture Reading: Richard L.
(Zechariah 13:1-9)

Sermons



Light

Back last fall, Bear, our golden retriever, lay stretched out in the sun. On a whim, I said, “Bear, “Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun...” He raised his head, thumped his tail, and went back to snoozing. What do dogs care about Scripture?

But you and I do, and Scripture tells us about an even sweeter light: Jesus Christ. He is the light of the world. And because we belong to Him, so are we! Read it yourself: “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16). What a privilege to be the light for a bleak, gloomy world, darkened by sin. And what a challenge! How can we meet it? How can we let our light shine?

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“The light is sweet”

1. We start with shining hearts. I mean three things by that. First, *we must think often about our motives for shining*. Check the text: (1) We are “set on a hill.” God has elevated you and me, just ordinary people, so that we “sit in heavenly places.” Talk about incentive! (2) We can shed “light to all who are in the house.” Our task is noble: we can dispel darkness, that arch-metaphor of sin. What a power this is! And (3) we can “glorify [our] Father in heaven.” No, we can never repay God for His goodness to us, but we can *want* to try. As astounding as it seems, we can actually influence men to give glory to God. How compelling!

Second, *we must think humbly*. We are reflectors, not generators, of light. Jesus is the generator. We play the moon to His sun. That means we must stay close to Jesus or our light will die. When we forget that, we become self-righteous, striving for the short-lived reward of public applause and bringing only shame on God.

Third, *we must think purely*. “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8). We mustn’t think constantly about evil - not even in order to fight it. That will turn us into suspicious, “spiritual nags,” who light the way to bitterness, but not to God.

2. Shining talk is another way to let our light shine. Kindness and truth come immediately to mind. What a warmth radiates from kind and gracious speech - and remember, light heats as well as illuminates. We all shrivel under constant carping and grumbling. To keep the balance, though, kindness must join with truth, because truth is the ultimate kindness. Truth is the watermark of honor and integrity. We all long to trust others. We are tired of cynicism, of between-the-lines communication, of the *caveat emptor* in life’s marketplace. But trust and truth must start with us. We cannot expect from sinners what we will not give. Let my speech be seasoned with gentleness and honesty (read Ephesians 4:25-32).

3. We are to reflect Christ in shining conduct. That is the main point of our text - that our good works may bring glory to God. Look yonder at the Judean seacoast northwest of Jerusalem. Do you see the light shining from Joppa? It comes from the home of a woman with the lovely name of Gazelle. Just think - all that light is reflected by a sparkling needle! Can we match it? We must try, for the human misery in this world defies imagination. I write about Dorcas in the present tense because her light still shines. Think about the lasting power we have for good if only we will use our skills and gifts as Tabitha did. We can light the world, each from his own corner.

But after the surface needs of man are met, there is still a dark place in the house: the corner where sin dwells.

4. That calls for shining teaching of the gospel. We must *tell* the gospel as well as live it. All our good deeds cannot save even one soul. We must tell sinners about the soul-saving, life-changing gospel of God’s grace. He changed each of us; He can change the whole world. I must let that truth shine from my lampstand, not hide it under the basket of fear or laziness.

Well, it’s winter now, and old Bear keeps shifting about, hunting for the scarce sunlight. He doesn’t know or care much about Ecclesiastes, but he surely does know that “the light is sweet.” He’s probably not the only one.

- James W. Ward