

THE PARABLE OF THE LIGHTED CANDLE

Text: LUKE 8:16-18

INTRODUCTION:

1. Tonight we will look at the parable of the lighted candle.
2. The word *parable* literally means "to cast alongside." A parable is a story that teaches something new by placing the truth alongside something familiar.
3. Everyone is familiar with lighting candles (8:16; cf. Luke 11:33-36). This parable is also found in Matthew 13 and Mark 4. The fact that our Lord repeated this parable several times emphasizes its great importance.

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S TESTIMONY (8:16).

1. It is not difficult to understand the meaning of this parable. The candle (or lamp) represents the light of the Gospel. We often sing,
*Send the light, the blessed Gospel light;
Let it shine from shore to shore!
Send the light, the blessed Gospel light;
Let it shine for evermore!* - Charles Gabriel
2. The Psalmist wrote, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). "The entrance of thy words giveth light" (Psalm 119:130).
3. The Greek word translated "vessel" is used in various ways. For example, in Luke 17:31 it is translated "stuff." "In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back."
4. Don't allow "stuff" to obscure your light!
5. Some "stuff" is good -- family, work, hobbies, etc. But these should never "cover" the light (8:16)!
6. In Mark 4:21, our Lord said, "Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?"
7. Preachers have pointed out that the bushel represents business and the material things of this life; while the bed represents comfort and ease (cf. Mark 4:19).
8. They "are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke 8:14).
9. In other words, we are not to let worldly pursuits and worldly pleasures dim our light. We are to let it shine.
10. We are to let our light shine everywhere we go. Some of you have the opportunity to preach to more lost sinners than I do. You see them every day on the job, on the bus, on the train, in school, etc. Do not hide your light!
11. One of my favorite children's songs is "This Little Light of Mine, I'm Going to Let it Shine..." "Don't let Satan blow it out..." (cf. Luke 8:12).
12. This is one of the great themes of the Bible, and it is repeated over and over.

13. Our Lord said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16).
14. "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops" (Matt. 10:27).
15. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:4, 5).
16. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9).
17. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21).
18. Referring to John the Baptist, our Lord said, "He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light" (John 5:35).
19. John 8:12 says, "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."
20. Our Lord said in John 9:5, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."
21. John 12:35, 36 says, "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth."
22. In John 12:46, Jesus said, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."
23. The Lord told the apostle Paul, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18).
24. Ephesians 5:8 says, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."
25. First Peter 2:9 says God has called us "out of darkness into his marvellous light."
26. You and I are going to be held responsible for the light that we have received. That is the message of this parable (Luke 8:16-18). And it is taught throughout the Word of God.
27. Daniel 12:3 says, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S APPOINTMENT (8:17).

1. There is a day coming when every man must stand face to face before God. When the great American statesman, Daniel Webster, was asked to share the greatest thought that had ever passed through his mind, he said, "my accountability to Almighty God."
2. Over and over again we see this principle in the Bible, that when things are hidden, in due time they will come to light.
3. First Corinthians 4:5 says, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."

4. In Luke 12:2, our Lord said, "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known."
5. Our Lord said in Matthew 12:36, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."
6. Everything will all come to light. The lost shall have their appointment before the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15).
7. For the Christian, our appointment will be at the judgment seat of Christ.
8. For the Christian, The apostle Paul said in Romans 14:10 and II Corinthians 5:10, "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (cf. I Cor. 3:13-15; II Cor. 5:10, 11).
9. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12)
10. In this world many things get covered up and hidden. People are often not what they appear to be. But at the judgment seat everything shall be made manifest (Luke 8:17).
11. Some people feel our Lord is referring here to the parables themselves. Are not the parables themselves a deliberate obscuration of the truth to the unsaved? (cf. Luke 8:10).
12. The old-time preachers used to say the same sun that melts the wax, hardens the clay.
13. However, the ultimate purpose of the parables is not to hide, but to instruct. The parables are not meant to conceal truth; they are meant to reveal truth.
14. Repeatedly, our Lord said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Luke 8:8). Our Lord said this several times in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and then again to the seven churches in Revelation 2 & 3.
15. There is a solemn warning given in II John 8, and it is often overlooked -- "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."
16. Some careless Christians will be "ashamed" when our Lord returns. "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (I John 2:28).

III. THE CHRISTIAN'S HEARING (8:18).

1. Our Lord said, "Take heed therefore how ye hear..." (8:18). The man who receives God's Word properly and uses what he hears will have still more given to him (8:18).
2. If we use what God has given us it will increase. But if we do not hear what God has given us we will lose everything (cf. Luke 19:26).
3. It is foolish to hear the Word of God, and not obey the Word of God (cf. Luke 6:47-49).
4. It is a serious thing to hear and understand the Word of God, because this puts on us the obligation to share the Word with others.
5. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22).

CONCLUSION:

1. Consider the Christian's testimony, his appointment, and his hearing.
2. Here is a quote from H.A. Ironside:

Our Lord suggests the possibility of hiding the light under a bed. Now the bed, of course, speaks of taking one's ease. Have we not known many like that? They are interested in the things of God so long as those things do not interfere with their own comfort. How many forget that Sunday is, in a very definite sense, the Lord's Day, and yet they will stay out late on Saturday night, wear themselves out in business or pleasure, and then lie in bed on Sunday morning until it is too late to gather with the people of God, on the plea that they must have rest for body and mind. Surely, a little forethought would suggest carefully conserving the last hours of the week in order that one might be at his best on the Lord's Day, to use the full time for God in such a way as to bring glory to His name by participating in the worship of His people and in the various activities connected with the gospel testimony. It is so easy to hide one's light under the bed and excuse oneself on the ground of physical weariness. Many might have far more active participation in the things of Christ if it were not for slothfulness. I would to God that we Christians might be as much in earnest about witnessing for Christ as are the devil's embassies in serving him. What a stir there often is when a gospel meeting runs over nine o'clock, and yet worldlings can be out at the theatre, or other ungodly places, until midnight and think nothing of it. It is a shame that Christians are so slack in manifesting devotion to Christ...May we not all challenge our hearts as to whether we give Christ the first place and make the things of God our immediate aim; or whether, after all, we think first of our own comfort and put the things of God in a secondary place. Our Lord tells us that "nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad." Elsewhere we are told that some day we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ in that solemn day when all the purposes of the heart are manifest. How many of us will look back with grief on our lack of real devotion to Christ when we were in this scene! What we need to do is to live more and more in the light of that day of manifestation.