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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

**August 23, 2015**

**You are the Light of the World**

**Matthew 5:13**

**Prayer:** *Father, we do again thank you and praise you for your goodness. We thank you and praise you for your grace and we just thank you for the proof of that grace that we have right here, Lord, we are still meeting, we are freely meeting, you've gathered us together, and Lord, this is just again a product of your grace. We pray for more of that grace, Lord, as we open up your book this morning, we want to learn more about you to understand more deeply what it is you've done for us; and so we pray as we open up your book you would give us the presence of your Holy Spirit to make these words of permanent value, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, last week we were looking at the light, and we were looking at this -- this light that Jesus Christ says all kingdom citizens are, and he says this in Matthew 5:13-16, he says this: "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are

*the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."*

Last week we focused on the function and the purpose of light, and we saw that light, like salt, is much more about being than it is about doing. Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth." "You are the light." So salt and light's function is really their purpose, I mean, if salt loses its function as salt, it really has no purpose at all. It's worthy, as Jesus said, of being trampled underfoot. However, if light loses its function, it too has no purpose, but there's a difference, there's a difference between salt and light. Salt either is or it isn't salty. It is all about being. But light is about being and doing. Light does more than simply exist like salt does. I mean its function as light might be just fine while its purpose as light can be not so fine. Salt is salt is salt, but a perfectly functional light can be diminished by the way I deploy it. I mean, I could put my hand over the lens of a flashlight and even though the light is still functioning perfectly, I would still be standing in the dark. It's the equivalent of what Jesus said, he said taking the light which we are and refusing to shine it or shining it in the wrong places

which we often do, is as irrational for kingdom citizens as hiding a lamp under a bushel is for earthly citizens. As Jesus said: *"You are the light."* That's our function. We are bearers of the light. However, when it comes to purpose it's here that we find many different ways that we wind up putting our hand over the lens. Jesus was not vague at all about defining our purpose in bearing the light. He said this in verse 16: *"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* That one verse, that one verse covers the what, the where, and the why of being the light. *"Let your light so shine"* covers the what; *"Let your light so shine before others,"* covers the where; and *"Let your light so shown before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven,"* covers the why.

So let's start with the what. Jesus said: *"Let your light so shine among others."* All right. How do we do that? How do we shine? We saw last week that Jesus had given very specific instructions to Paul after Paul was blinded. Remember he was thrown down from his horse in this blinding light, God speaks to him in Acts 26 and he tells him he's sending him to the Gentiles. And he said why? He said: *"To open their eyes so, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those*

*who are sanctified by faith in me."* You know, we can sum up everything that Jesus said to Paul in that statement by saying what he really was saying is I'm sending you, Paul, to shine. I mean, it's shining a light that turns darkness into light. You know, if I were to grab a flashlight and sweep the darkness outside, every single place that my light struck would go from darkness into light. And Jesus told Paul that spiritually that's what he was called to do. He was to sweep his light into the eyes of the spiritually dark and to turn them from darkness into light. And we know for a fact that that's what he did and we also know for a fact that those who he did it to and for did not greatly appreciate it. I mean God had warned the disciples and Paul knew what God stated in John 3:19, he said this, he said: *"This is the judgment: The light has come into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil."* See, Paul understood that often times his light was not going to be appreciated. Actually that's more of an understatement. Paul and his light often times were absolutely detested, but that never stopped Paul, and he paid a heavy price for his courage. In fact in 2 Corinthians 11:24 Paul says this, he says: *Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from*

my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. Now, no matter how hostile the reaction, Paul never, never lost sight of his primary function and that was simply to shine. I mean Jesus went on to say that Paul's shining was to turn men from the power of Satan to God. See, the power of Satan depends on one thing primarily. What it absolutely desperately needs is darkness. If Satan can keep us in his darkness and keep us from knowing that it is the darkness, well then he's won.

You know, one of the greatest mistakes that people can and do make about Satan and his ways is thinking that they know evil when they see it. I mean, it's thinking that the prince of this world's primary interest is in this kind of Hollywood type of understanding of evil. We may say we're more sophisticated than that, we don't think the devil wears a red suit, carries a pitchfork and pokes people and does stuff like that, but I think we all make a mistake

of thinking that all the devil wants is for people to do bad things. I mean, many folks think that pornographers, drug dealers and alcoholics are really Satan's trophies and that's just what he would like us to think. But those folks are no trophy to Satan. See, you have to remember what Satan's greatest desire is and he let us know that, I mean, we found that out in *Matthew 4:8*. And there we see the devil interacting with Jesus, and there he reveals his heart's desire. It says: *Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'*" See, more than anything what Satan craves is worship. His greatest desire was that Jesus himself would worship him. In fact he was prepared to give everything the world had to offer if only, if only Jesus would just bend the knee. See, Satan is not proud of the broken, he's not proud of the marginalized. What he truly wants is he wants the noble, he wants the gifted, he wants the lovely and he wants them to bow the knee in worship. He wants our worship. And he will lie, he will cheat, and he will even murder to get it. I mean Jesus said this of Satan in *John 8:44*, he said: *"He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own*

*character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."* Now consider what Jesus is saying here. He's telling us that lying is Satan's native tongue. That means at the very least that he's very, very skillful at it, and we are no match for his cunning. Understand that Satan is still the highest created being in the universe and that he hates God, he hates God's creation and he hates us in particular. And all of his energy is directed at keeping us unaware of this darkness that he surrounds us with. You know, C.S. Lewis once said: "There is no neutral ground in the universe. Every square inch, every split second is claimed by God and counter claimed by Satan." But you know how he claims it? He claims it by fraud. He claims it by masquerade. *2 Corinthians 11:14* says this: *And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.* You see, what God is saying is Satan and his minions, at least on the surface, they don't give the appearance of wickedness at all. In fact they often times appear to be righteous, and it's all part of the masquerade. It's all part of the darkness. And you know, God has his answer to the darkness: You. You are his answer to the darkness because you are the light of the world. We have the very same task that Paul had. You know, Paul's task was to turn men from the power of Satan to God. So Paul went into synagogues, he went into palaces, he went into

marketplaces determined to spiritually lighten them up. We're called on to do the exact same thing. We are called to go to our families, our friends, our workplace with the very same attitude. We're here to let our light shine. We're here to let it shine among men, women and children, all of whom are no match for the enemy of our souls.

Now, for many evangelicals, Satan has cleverly managed to diminish the light and he's done it by simply redirecting us. See, the gospel used to do what Paul said it was supposed to do, it used to open men's eyes to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to the power of God. But today we have many, many different gospels. And today more often than not the gospel gets buried within this notion of biblical success. You know, we learn today how to have successful households with successful kids and successful bank accounts. We learn God's secret to a successful marriage with happy kids, contented husbands and dutiful wives. It's all not bad things but you have to see the subtleness that goes underneath this, I mean, none of these things are bad and in fact, all of them are good. But over the course of time, if the good things slowly and inexorably nudge out the best thing, well then you're going to get just very used to coming to church expecting to learn how to be biblically successful rather than understanding our primary goal, and that is Jesus Christ and him



crucified. That's the heart of the gospel, and that's what the light is supposed to consist of. You see, the only thing that ultimately matters is the gospel, and there's lots of folks who feel a need to have good, godly advice about their marriage and their kids and their bank accounts and the like, but the danger here is that they would fall into the enemy's trap of ignoring the greatest need that all of us have, and that's our need for a savior. If you don't have that as a burning desire inside you, if you don't see that as a need that virtually everybody has, then Satan has done his job.

You see, the good news has always been a bad news/good news combination. The bad news is that man is fallen and that he is cursed and that every one of us are born and that every one of us live "*dead in our transgressions and sins.*" Of course the good news is that "*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,*" we just said that this morning, and he did that so that we could escape the curse by placing our faith in Jesus Christ's death on the cross, because it was on the cross that Jesus exchanged his perfection for our sin and by faith we now stand perfect in God's eyes, not because we are flawless, but because he now sees us through Christ's perfection. That's the good news that supersedes the bad news. But when the bad news consists only of -- or when the good news consists only of the idea that God loves us, period,

that he only wants success for us without the bad news of the curse of death that all of us are under because of sin, then the good news is no longer the good news and it is what I've said it is many, many times it becomes the nice news. Well, you know, the nice news consists I'm okay, you're okay, everybody's okay because after all, God is love. You know the enemy loves that gospel. And a gospel that focuses in on anything other than Christ and him crucified can be a case of Satan using the good to eclipse the best. Does that mean that we have to never spend any time whatsoever discussing biblical principles for successful living? Of course not. I mean, they're a vital part of the gospel but they are not the gospel. The gospel is what Paul preached in *1 Corinthians 15*, he said: *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you -- unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: That Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.* You see, Paul felt a constant need to remind us of this because we have a constant ability to forget it. I mean, the good news is that Christ died for our sins and that he rose triumphant from the dead and he defeated the death that still stalks the entire world outside that door. To shine my light is to

open men's eyes to the fact that they're doomed. It is to *"Turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God."*

Okay. So how do we do that? I mean, do we all put on sandwich signs that go out and say: "Repent or perish"? Do we buttonhole people and shove a tract down their throats? No, would that it would be that simple. See, here's the hard part, here's the near impossible part. We are called to shine our light but we're called to shine them into a world of blinded eyes. I mean *2 Corinthians 4:4* says this: *The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.* You know, folks don't see the gospel because they can't see the gospel, and they can't see the gospel because they are blind. So what is the point of shining a flashlight or even a searchlight into the faces of people who are blind? Well, if it was merely light itself that we were shining, there would be no point to our efforts and they would be entirely fruitless. But we're not just shining photons of energy. We are shining the light of God's truth and that truth itself has a unique power within itself. I mean, Paul said of the gospel in *Romans 1:16*: *I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.* He's telling us the gospel itself has its own inherent power to conquer darkness. And Paul, if anyone knew how extensive that darkness

was. After all it was Paul who said in *Romans 8:7*: *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.*

So here's the task. We are given the task of shining this light into blind eyes that cannot submit to God. That's an impossible task. Paul understood. He understood that God's law is a foreign and a hostile universe to a non-Christian. He understood that it is a universe that makes little sense and has no power and certainly no threat to those people who are hearing it. I mean, *1 Corinthians 1:18* says: *For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing.* I mean, did you understand what God is saying? You understand that he is saying the cross is a joke, it's a joke to those who are perishing. I mean, what God is saying is that those who need the light the most, i.e., those who are perishing, are the ones who think it's a joke. I mean they're the ones who understand the least and desire it even less. So in short, it is an impossible task to save souls, but thank goodness it's never been our task. It's always been God's task. Our task according to *1 Peter 2:9* is to be obedient, to *proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

Now then for me, there's one other overarching fact that compels me to shine my light, and it's this: It's recognizing that I

understand that I once was one of those lost. I mean I, too, thought the cross was absolute foolishness, and I thought that because I was among those who were perishing. I mean I didn't think so and it didn't feel like it, it didn't seem like it, it didn't look like it, but I was actually a dead man walking. God saved me by the power of the gospel itself. But here's why what Jesus said about the light shining is so important. God saved me by that power but it came through people, it came through human beings, people who were like Paul, unafraid of shining their light on me. You see, in *Acts 26*, Jesus tells Paul that his job is to go to the Gentiles and do five specific things: Number 1, open their eyes; number 2, turn them from darkness to light; number 3, turn them from the power of Satan to God; number 4, show them where to find forgiveness of sins; and 5, show them to a place among those sanctified by faith. That's what light does, and that's just what some folks did in my life. To put it simply, they shined.

That leads to my second point. The first point is the what. What do we do? We shine. Secondly, we ask where? Where do we shine? Jesus said: "*Let your shine among others.*" Kind of rules out the monetary for most of us. God says we are to shine our light among other people. Now we have a problem, too, okay, which people are we talking about? Because I think we don't really have a clear understanding of that as evangelicals; is it to the world or is it

to the Christian community? Now, we have Christian radio, TV, music, DVDs, movies, we have Christian conferences, camps, schools, universities, we even have a Christian yellow pages. You can get Christian plumbers, Christian dentists, Christian lawyers, Christian carpenters, anything you want. Now none of this, let me understand, none of this is bad in and of itself. The problem is it may make it way too easy for us to live in a Christian comfort zone. In essence what we may have here is the Balkanization of the Christian community. You know, one of the biggest complaints people have about Muslim communities is that many of them don't mix with the general population at all. I mean, these are folks that come into a country then they isolate themselves by staying in pockets of people, all of who see the world in the exact same way. We do the exact same thing. I mean, when we do that, we diminish the concept of sanctification. You know "to sanctify" means to set apart. And we know the scripture actually commands that. It says in *2 Corinthians 6:17: Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you.*" So God calls us to be separate. But there is a matter of degree in that separation. That has to do with shining your light. I mean, the whole point of shining your light is that there are dark places that desperately need it in the first place. You know, Paul wrote to the Corinthians and he knew they lived in an exceedingly wicked sexualized place. He told them that God

expected them to shine their light there. You know, Paul wrote in *1 Corinthians 5:9*: *I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people.* And here's where lots of folks like to park, here's where they like to stop. They say, well, there it is, it says right there in scripture, Paul says don't hang out with sexually immoral people. But that's not what God or Paul said at all. You have to look at it in context and to listen to what Paul really says, you have to read the whole statement which is *1 Corinthians 5:9-11*, he says: *I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people -- not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy or swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard or swindler -- not even to eat with such a one.*" See, what Paul is saying here is don't associate with people who call themselves Christians while they are practicing sexual immorality, idolatry, and the like. And what he's saying is don't give aid and comfort to somebody who claims he is a Christian and yet still operates in a decidedly non-Christian way. Christians are new creatures. What Paul is saying is when you come across a person who confesses that he's a new creature and he lives exactly like the old one lives, don't be tempted to give him some kind of aid or comfort in his hypocrisy. *1 Corinthians*

6:9 says: *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.* So to put in context what Paul is saying, if you claim that you're washed, sanctified, and justified by Christ and you live in a way that denies him, Paul says have nothing to do with those folk. But sexually immoral, idolaters, and the like are exactly what the world itself is made up of. I mean, it's most likely what you were before Christ entered your life as well. And if you're to separate yourself from those folks, you'd have to be cloistered away in a monastery and the darkness would never be penetrated. So we don't live in monasteries. And the light God wants us to shine doesn't really need to be shined in a monastery. It needs to be shined not just in drug dens and in the porn productions but also in the bowling league, in the PTA and across backyard fences. Anywhere the darkness is, whether it bears the darkness as a badge of honor or whether it hides it under a cover of respectability. *John 1:5 says: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* More often than not we wind up shining our light not in the darkness of the world



but in the relative lightness of the Christian community, in the relative lightness of where it is safe. And again, to what end? If you take a flashlight out in your yard in the middle of a sunny day, you turn it on, its effect is zero. Take it out on a dark night and the same flashlight is very powerful. And I know this because I was somebody who was in the dark when I first experienced the light. You know, the folks who shined that light on me went out of their way to bring their light into my darkness. One person who was pivotal to bringing me the gospel was an electrician who was sent to fix a problem in the apartment that Janice and I were living in when we were living in Michigan. I was going to school, this was many, many years ago. He noticed that I had an aquarium and he told me that he was into aquariums too, he had fish, we started talking about fish because that was something I was going to school for, and that was something I was very interested in. That discussion led to a discussion about everything and led to an invitation to come to his house, which Janice and I, we were living in Michigan, we didn't know anybody, said, hey, let's go see what this guy has to say and has to offer. And so we went to the guy's house, we had dinner, and after dinner he shared the gospel with us. We were not in the least bit interested. It was like, uh-oh, this guy's a holy Joe. I didn't even know, you know. And so we listened to him, you know, give the gospel. We said nah, not really interested. Afterwards he said well, that's fine, he asked

if he could pray for us, I said, sure, go ahead, pray. That's fine. I didn't think anything of it at all. It was just an isolated incident until years later when God finally allowed the gospel to penetrate my darkness. I now saw that electrician as one of the dots that God had connected in my life that led me from pagan to believer. This was years later, by then I had forgotten his address, I had forgotten his name, we had moved out of Michigan, we were not even there, so I'm never going to see this guy again until I get to heaven. But then I'm going to remember him for eternity. I mean, he doesn't even know that, as far as he was concerned it was a total bust, we had no interest at all, said thanks, no thanks, but he let his light shine. And where did he let it shine? Into my darkness.

That leads to my third point. See, the first point is the what. What is shining the light? It's what Paul heard from Jesus himself, it's turning *"their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."* Now that's precisely what my electrician friend offered to me. Secondly is the where, the light shines not in the light but in the darkness. My electrician friend brought his light into my darkness. And third is the question of why. You know, I wondered why at first my friend could be so

gracious when I told him we're not really interested in your gospel at all. And I thought like many people still think, that somehow or other you score points with God if you get somebody to believe in this gospel. You know, folks think that is why we share the gospel in the first place. You know, I remember I was sharing the gospel at work once with one of my employees and when another one of my employees came around and he said, "Oh, you're just doing that to score points with God." I said, "yeah, I get two or three of you guys to sign up and a get a free toaster oven." I actually said that. That's not why we share the gospel. I mean, my electrician friend didn't get upset when we refused the gospel because he understood precisely why we share the gospel. And again, Jesus made it crystally clear when he said this in verse 16, he said: *"In the same way, light your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* You see, shining our light into the darkness, that's always a good work that glorifies God. And my friend did nothing more than that. *1 Peter 2:9* says: *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* My friend just declared the praises of him who had called him out of his darkness into his wonderful light. And what I did with that declaration did absolutely nothing to diminish it. I mean, that's

because God is glorified no matter how the darkness responds to the light. You know, if someone responds like I did by rejecting the gospel, well, that rejection merely validates the justice of God. Remember, it was God who said: *"This is the verdict, light has come into the world but men loved darkness."* Well, looking back, that's exactly why I rejected the light. I loved my sin, I loved my rebellion, I loved my darkness. However, if someone responds by accepting the gospel, then they're validating the mercy of God. I mean, they're declaring the praises of him who calls men out of darkness into his marvelous light, and either way, God is going to be glorified. Which is exactly how Paul puts it in *2 Corinthians 2:15*, he says: *We are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other, a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?* You know, what Paul is saying is to those who are perishing, we literally are the stench of death. God is glorified in that. To those who are being saved, we are the sweet fragrance of life itself, and every time we shine our light, we glorify God no matter how folks react. And when we realize that, when we understand that it's not our task to save souls but it is our task to let our light shine to everyone that God has given us to shine it to, then we're freed up. We're freed up to understand that we glorify God no matter what the response is, and that puts an entirely different spin on every

person we meet.

Rico Tice, writing in The Gospel Coalition asks this question, he says: "Why did God want a Christian -- you -- to be in your particular workplace? So you can bless your boss and workers by working hard and honestly? Of course and amen. But first and foremost, he put you there so others might hear the good news." If I can put it in my own vernacular, so that they can see the light. "It's no accident you know the people you do. It's no accident they're in your path. They need Jesus. You know him. God wants them to hear the gospel. And that transforms how I view my life. It makes it exhilarating. If I'm sitting on a plane and there's someone next to me, God has put them there. He's not far from them, because I know him and am sitting next to them. That transforms whether I'll bother to try to start a conversation with them. It will transform what I aim to talk about. And it'll transform how I pray for my days ahead; I'll be praying for energy and love to make the most of every divine appointment God has already written into my schedule. We need to believe God is in charge of which desk we sit at. We need to believe God has put particular persons around us because he wants them to hear about his Son. We need to grasp God's sovereignty -- and align our days with his mission."

So with that said, our question for today is: Are you letting your light shine? Are you letting your light shine before men? And again the question is what about good deeds? God says: "*Let your light so shine among men that they may see your good deeds and glorify God.*" Someone might say, well, aren't good deeds enough to glorify God? Well they certainly can glorify God but they can also glorify me or the Boy Scouts or the Red Cross or my church group or Buddha or anybody or anything else. See, unless people see a connection between me and the fruit of the Spirit that God is growing in me for his glory, well then what will they make of the light that I'm shining for him? I mean, God says let your light shine in such a manner that people connect the dots from you to me. That's my translation. You see, when our light shines it does three things: It illuminates, it infiltrates and it indicates. It illuminates the what by turning men's eyes from darkness to light; it infiltrates the where by shining in a very specific direction, that is the darkness; and finally it indicates the why by pointing in a specific direction, and that is God's glory. Not mine. Now looking back, I thought my electrician friend, he did all three. He shined his light in my darkness for God's glory. And it was a very simple gospel from a very simple man and in fact in his mind, it didn't even work. I mean, he doesn't know it but I do, it did work. I'm proof of that. And I will never forget it and neither will eternity. "*Let your light so shine among men that they may*

*see your good works and glorify God." Let's pray.*

*Father, I thank you for the light that you have privileged us to bear. What an incredible privilege this is, Lord, that we are the ones who bring light into darkness. Father, we are surrounded by darkness, and in the middle of that darkness, understanding that the darkness is filled with blinded souls who will not and cannot see the gospel, it's an impossible task. But Lord, there's power in your gospel. It is not merely photons of energy, it is spiritual power. Father, give us the understanding that we are the ones who bear that light into that darkness. Give us a heart and a passion to do just that, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*