



Experience 15: Sharing

Friday, January 29, 2021

Matthew 5:14-16

"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."

ESV

I don't know about you, but for me Jesus' words above have always seemed like a lot of pressure - how am I supposed to be the light of the world? I'm just a person with a lot of faults, insecurities, and doubts. When I think of being the light of the world, I tend to picture the person who's willing to talk to their seatmate on an airplane, sharing the gospel with them at 35,000 feet. Friends, I hate talking to people on planes. I've been on a lot of planes in my life, and my favorite thing to do when I get on is to immediately put in my ear buds and read a book while listening to music until I reach my destination. I've done this on countless airplanes all around the world - up to 16 hours at a time (thanks, Delhi to Chicago flight!). I have remained strangers with so many people who I have slept next to (or on), eaten silent meals next to, awkwardly tapped on the shoulder so they'd get up and I could use the bathroom, all without knowing their name or

any personal information about them at all. I've always felt a little guilty about that, but not guilty enough to strike up a conversation.

But there's such good news in this picture that Jesus painted. In His picture, we don't have to generate our own light, and we don't have to shove our light into places that don't want to be lit. We're just lamps, shining the light of God through us wherever we are! All we have to do in this scenario is not cover up our light so others can see it. Rather than putting it under a basket, we simply have to live our lives in such a way that it "gives light to all in the house." That seems a lot more manageable to me than striking up conversations with airplane strangers. It just begs the question- who else is in the house?

What does it look like to shine our light so that others around us will "give glory to your father who is in heaven"? As we practiced the past few Fridays, the very beginning of sharing is to figure out what we're excited about personally in our connection to Jesus – where is there currently light shining in my life, that I can simply not cover up? What is the good news that I've found in Jesus recently? What makes me glad to be following Him right now?

Once you've established for yourself what it is about following Jesus that's so good for you right now, the next step is to Connect – notice who it is in your life that you can "shine" on. That doesn't mean you have to bombard friends and acquaintances with verses or

prayers to pray. You don't have to lead them down the Romans Road or convince them of the 3 Spiritual Laws; you simply get to be yourself, your awkward, unsure, authentic self, and let the things you're finding hope in be evident so others can find hope in them as well – let yourself be on a stand and light the room around you. Who has God put in your life that needs to have some light illuminate their dark spots?

Actions to take

- Read our passage for today again. What kind of light are you currently shining right now? Is it one of anxiety and despair? Or are you able to shine hope and peace in the midst of uncertainty? Write down your thoughts about this in your journal.
- Now it's time to Connect! Write in your journal a list of 100 people who you have some sort of relational connection with. It could be family, coworkers, friends, that guy you always see at the coffee shop.

As you write the list, next to each name write one of these labels:

- N – Not a Follower of Jesus
 - F – Follower of Jesus
 - U – Unknown
- Look at your list. How many people in your life are Followers of Jesus already? If you're like me, you had a lot of Fs next to names on your list. Thank God for bringing these people into your life.
 - How many on your list have a U? Pray for each person on the list, then pick one and ask God to give you a chance (and the courage!) to ask them something about their spiritual life next time you see them.
 - How many in your list have an N next to their name? When I wrote my list, I realized I didn't have nearly as many Ns as I thought I would. I had slowly started to surround myself with other Christians, until my main circle was all Followers of Jesus. If that's the case for you, ask God to help you broaden your circle so that the light He shines through you doesn't only shine on Christians. If you're unlike me and had a lot of Ns on your list, praise God! Ask God for a chance to let His light shine through you in one of those relationships this week – not that you would be able to drum up all the right words and all the right answers, but rather that as you rely on Jesus, this person would see that and know Who it is that shines through you.