

**Matthew**  
**The Light of the World (Part 2)**  
**Matthew 5:14-16**  
**November 23, 2025**  
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Well, I encourage you to take your copy of God's Word and turn with me again to Matthew, chapter 5, as we continue our journey through “The Sermon on the Mount.” I want to read for you the paragraph we're examining where Jesus talks about “The Power of Our Influence.”

Matthew, chapter 5, beginning in verse 13, you follow along in your copy of the Word of God.

Jesus says to us:

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Jesus here tells us that if we have come to belong to His spiritual kingdom, then God has given to us a powerful influence on the unbelievers in the world around us. Jesus uses salt and light to describe that influence.

Now, last time we began to consider the second of these pictures or images, that we are the light of the world, in verses 14 to 16. Let me just briefly remind you of the flow of Jesus' thought as we unfolded it last time. First of all, we looked at “The Picture That Jesus Uses.” Verse 14 says, “You are the light of the world,” and Jesus likens us as His followers to two kinds of light. First of all, “The collective light of the lamps of an entire city;” that's the end of verse 14. And secondly, “The individual light of a lamp in a single room;” that's verse 15. And now, light in

our world serves two purposes. First of all, it “Exposes the filth hidden in the darkness.” If you want to clean your house, you have to turn on the lights where you can see what's there. But at the same time, light “Reveals the beauty hidden in darkness.” That's the picture.

Now that brings us to “The Point That Jesus Makes.” We looked at this last time. The point that Jesus makes from that picture is, first of all, “Our Influence Is Inevitable.” Notice verse 14, “A city set on a hill (the collective lamps in a city on a hill.) cannot be hidden.” Just as you cannot hide the lights of a city on a hill at night, you can't hide your influence as a Christian. It's inevitable that a true Christian's light will be seen. Jesus also makes the point that “Our Influence Is Intentional,” verses 15 and 16. That is, God intends that our light as believers should serve two distinct purposes. Last time, we looked at the first of these purposes, and that is “To Give Light to the World.” Notice verse 15, “nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.” Now that is true, not only in the first century, but in a home, the practical purpose of a lamp was to put it on a lampstand, so it shares its light. But Jesus is making this, by analogy, an application to us. We were once darkness; we were in the darkness, and the darkness was in us, but in sovereign grace, God made us light. He changed our nature, and He made us light, and then God, having made us light, placed us on the lampstand where we are. He placed you in the place where you live. He placed you in your family and in your workplace and in your school and in your neighborhood. God has placed you on the lampstand where He wanted you, and He wanted you to give light to the world. We now have a powerful influence on the unbelievers around us. Like Jesus, in John 3, as we saw last time, “We expose what is false and sinful” simply by our words and by our characters and by our works, we shine the Light on what is false and sinful. But like Him, “We also illumine what is true and beautiful.” Now, that's where we left off last time.

Today, we discover a second purpose that God has in making us light. God also intends our light “To Bring Glory to the Father.” That’s the message of verse 16, look at it with me’ “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” We don’t get to decide how we’re going to apply this metaphor of light. Jesus finishes this paragraph with a command, a prescription for our behavior. Now, verse 16 is so crucial, both to understand, but also, since it’s been so abused and misused throughout the years, I want to study this verse as its own unit. I’ll show you how it fits into the flow of the context, of course, but I want to take this verse kind of as its own unit this morning, because within this verse, Jesus makes three insightful observations about good works that we need to understand. Let’s look at them together, “Three Observations about Our Good Works.”

First of all, “Our Good Works Must Be Deployed as a Means of Our Influence.” Notice verse 16, “Let your light shine (Let your light shine.) before men...that they (What?) may see your good works.” In other words, Jesus says, “I want your good works to be part of the way you provide light to the world around you, to the unbelievers around you.” Now before we consider what this passage teaches, I want to make sure we understand what it’s not teaching, because “Our Lord’s Words Here Have Been Terribly Misused.” They have been misused in a couple of ways I’ll point out to you. First of all, they’ve been misused “To justify not sharing the Gospel— Well, you just be salt and light;” don’t worry about opening your mouth and sharing the truth of the gospel; you just be salt and light.” That’s a misuse of these words, as we’ll see.

Secondly, they’ve been misused “To identify the grounds on which we’re made right with God.” Some people teach that good works are how we earn a right standing before God, how we earn our way into heaven. In Roman Catholicism, in liberal Protestantism, and all false religion, good

works are part of the grounds or the basis on which a person gains a right-standing with God. We'll see that that doesn't stand up to what the Scripture teaches.

A third misuse of these words is “To focus the church mostly on humanitarian causes.” There's a place for those, we'll see, but there can be easily an overemphasis on that, and this verse has been often used to encourage that overemphasis.

And then fourthly, this verse has been misused “To summarize the church's primary mission.” This verse does not set forth the church's primary mission, as we'll see.

But what is the legitimate focus then of this passage? It describes how we as individuals are “To shine as light to the unbelievers around us.” Now in the New Testament, there are three primary means by which believers serve as light to the world around us, to the unbelievers around us. You need to know all three of these. Here's how you can be light on the lampstand where God has placed you.

First of all, believers serve as light by “Our Message,” that is the message of the Gospel. I'm not going to take you to 2 Corinthians 4:5-6, because we looked at it last week, let me just remind you that the Gospel is the Light of God to bring Light into dark hearts. And when you and I share the Gospel, we proclaim the truth about Jesus and how a person's made right with Him by repentance and faith in His finished work, that provides Light, and God uses that Light by His Spirit, when a person hears the Gospel, to say to that person, “Let there be light,” just like He did in the creation. And suddenly, that person understands and grasps the Light and is changed by it. Our message serves as Light to the world. We proclaim the Light of the Gospel, and the Spirit uses that message to speak Light into the sinner's heart.

A second means by which we serve as light is “Our Character.” When you and I embody the qualities outlined in the Beatitudes, in verses 3 through 12 which we studied together, when we look like that, we serve as light, as living illustrations of our Lord Himself and His character, as well as the power of the Gospel to change sinners like us into people like that. Let me just say, “You can be and are light by simply manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, by manifesting those qualities in the Beatitudes. When you live like that, you are light to the people around you because it looks entirely different than how they live their lives, and the people around you, do. John Chrysostom, one of the early church fathers, said, “Nothing makes a man so illustrious as the manifestation of virtue, for he shines as if clad by sunbeams.”

But in our text, Jesus focuses on a third means by which we provide light to unbelievers. Our light must shine forth to them through “Our Good Works,” that's the point of verse 16. Look at it again, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works.” That's how your light shines, through your good works. Now that shouldn't surprise us, because the Apostle Peter, speaking to Cornelius and his household in Acts, chapter 10, verse 38, describes Jesus like this. He says, “Jesus of Nazareth...went about (What?) doing good.” That's who He was, that's what marked Him, and we also have been called to good works.

Turn over to Ephesians, chapter 2, verse 10. The famous passage, verses 8 and 9, we're saved by grace through faith; we're not saved by works, verse 9, but, verse 10, “we are His workmanship,” that is, we are His, you could even use the Greek word, could be ‘masterpiece,’ “We are His workmanship (masterpiece), created in Christ Jesus for good works.” We're not saved by good works, but we're saved for or unto good works. And then He says, and those good works are those “which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” Good works are to mark our lives as believers, just like they did our Lord's. Turn over to Titus; Titus,

chapter 3, verse 8, “This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God (those who have come to faith in Christ) will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.” Look down at verse 14, “Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.” We shine as light in the world through our good works.

Martin Lloyd-Jones says:

Our lives should always be the first thing to speak.” Listen to that again, “Our lives should always be the first thing to speak.” And if our lips speak more than our lives, it will avail very little. So often the tragedy has been that people proclaim the Gospel in words, but their whole life and demeanor has been a denial of it.

Our light shines to an unbelieving world in all three of those ways, and it must shine in each of them, not just one of them, but in all three of them, because really, these means are like a three-legged stool, if you remove a single one of them, the whole stool collapses. We're no longer light if any one of these is missing.

You see, we can be what we ought to be and do what we ought to do, but if we fail to proclaim Jesus in the Gospel, then we're not light. On the other hand, if we do proclaim Jesus in the Gospel, but we fail in our characters or in our good works, we undermine the very Gospel that we are proclaiming. So these three means don't come individually—they come together. John Stott says, “We are called both to spread the Gospel and to frame our manner of life in a way that is worthy of the Gospel.” So we are to deploy our good works as a means of our influence; “Let your light shine through your good works. “

Now, that brings us to a second observation in our text, and that is, that “Our Good Works Must Be Defined by God in His Word,” our good works must be defined by God in His Word. Look

at verse 16 again, “Let your light shine...(and that's when others)...see your good works.” But what exactly did Jesus mean by “good works?” He's not making this comment in a vacuum. The rest of the Scripture fills out what He understood good works to be and what we must understand good works to be. And this has been very confused over the last couple of hundred years. In fact, over the last one-hundred-and-fifty years, massive differences have developed in the large Christian community as far as how to define what Jesus meant here by “good works.” Now, stay with me, this is important, but let me give you “A Brief History Perspective (Lesson).”

First of all, “Theological Liberalism defined good works solely as improving the society around us.” Liberalism began in the late 1800s with several German theologians and quickly spread across the globe. What you need to know about liberals, theological liberals, is this, they deny everything miraculous in the Scripture, from the Old Testament miracles, to the physical resurrection of Jesus, to the miracle of the new birth, every miracle they deny. “God doesn't intervene supernaturally in our world,” liberals would say. And that leaves them with the ethics of Jesus. Instead of spiritual salvation, they taught the goal of the Christian mission was simply to do good to your fellow man. So liberalism, then, became consumed with humanitarian causes as opposed to the Gospel. This new approach was called “The Social Gospel.” If you've been around any time at all, you've heard that expression.

Now that was followed by Fundamentalism; “Fundamentalism defined good works as solely proclaiming the Gospel.” Fundamentalism actually began in the early 1900s as a right and good response to liberalism. Men who loved the truth arose to defend it and to defend the Scripture. They defended the Scripture against attacks in areas like the virgin birth, the deity of Jesus, the inerrancy of Scripture, the reality of biblical miracles. But eventually, fundamentalism broke

into two groups, into what we could call “Ultra-Fundamentalism”—there were those who rightly fought liberalism, but they simply couldn't stop fighting. So they ended up fighting with other true Christians about all the other issues on which they disagreed. These people became “Ultra-Separatists.” They repudiated any humanitarian work at all as liberalism. So, in repudiating liberalism, they said, “Look, if you're involved in anything humanitarian, then that's liberalism,” and they said, “The church should only proclaim the gospel.” One other group that came out of fundamentalism was “Evangelicalism.” From the 1950s through the 70s, this group really was the core of orthodox Christianity. They defended the truth of Scripture against liberalism without some of the excesses of the fighting fundamentalists. However, sadly, over the last fifty years, evangelicalism, under that title, has become entirely astray. It has completely lost its biblical moorings and its understanding of the church's mission.

There's one other movement you need to know about, that again, you may have heard of, may not have heard of, but it began about thirty years ago. It's called the “Emerging” or “The Emergent Church.” They “Define good works as solely humanitarian causes.” Out of the carnage of pragmatic churches, which many of you come from, arose some people heavily influenced by postmodernism and the absolute rejection of truth. The leader of their movement, Brian McLaren, denied the reality of hell, and he denied the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ. Their theology was really just warmed over liberalism, and they too, like liberals, focused on the ethics of Jesus. McLaren said that “Jesus' message was about poverty, slavery, and a social agenda, not about justification from sin.” Along with the theology of liberalism, many in this emergent movement embraced its ethics, but they called it something different. They called their approach “Missional.” Maybe you've heard that word around. It's now been used in many different ways and many different definitions, but they're the ones who originated

this word. McLaren described missional like this, “It is a generous third way between the conservative personal savior Gospel and the liberal version of it.” He went on to say, “My missional calling is to help our world (Don't miss this, ‘help our world.’) get back on the road to being truly and wholly good again”

Rob Bell, another one in the “Emergent Movement,” said, “For Jesus, the question wasn't how do I get into heaven, but how do I bring heaven here?” Instead of the label, “Social Gospel,” the liberals had used, the Emergent Church embraced the label “Social Justice” for essentially the same thing. Now, the “Emergent Movement” has died; it doesn't exist anymore, but its rebranding of the ethics of liberalism has hugely influenced many who claim to be evangelicals and in the mainstream of Christianity. Let me give you a couple of examples, and these are a couple of many that I could use. David Platt, for example, a heavy influence in the Southern Baptist world, David Platt, in his book, *Radical*, writes this, listen to what he says, listen carefully, “As we meet needs on earth, we are proclaiming a gospel that transforms lives for eternity,” as we meet needs, we are proclaiming a gospel. Tim Keller writes:

The purpose of Jesus' coming (He's talking about the incarnation now, the purpose of Jesus' coming.) is not just to bring personal forgiveness and peace, but also justice and shalom to the world. The work of the Spirit of God is not only to save souls, but also to care and cultivate the face of the earth, the material world.

Now, what you see there is Keller confused the purpose of Jesus' first coming with the purpose of Jesus' second coming. N.T. Wright wrote this:

The gospel is (He is about to define the gospel, the gospel is.) the announcement that Jesus is Lord, Lord of the world, Lord of the cosmos, Lord of the earth, of the ozone

layer, of whales and waterfalls, of trees and tortoises. The gospel is the proclamation that Jesus is Lord of those things. (He says.)

Now, the practical result of this influence into some of those who claim to be in mainstream Christianity has been to downplay the proclamation of the Gospel and to emphasize, to overemphasize humanitarian causes. Listen carefully, today, well-meaning Christians and churches are busy alleviating human suffering without ever directly sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But what does the Bible teach? What should churches and each of us as individuals be doing to provide light to the world around us? What does the Bible say about good works? Let me give you a little theology of good works.

Number one, “Only believers can perform good works.” You know, I ask the average Christian, they're a little confused on this, you know, “Can an unbeliever do good works of any kind?” And they'll equivocate on you. The Bible doesn't equivocate. The Bible's answer is “Absolutely no!” Jeremiah 13:23, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?” Can you change your nature? No! “*Then* you also can do good who are accustomed to doing evil.” Or there's Romans 3:12, “THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”

Romans 8:8, “those who are in the flesh (That is, those who have not been redeemed, who have not experienced the new birth, those who are in the flesh,) cannot (The Greek word is ‘they lack the power,’ ‘they lack the ability.’) to please God.” That's what the Scripture teaches.

Now this issue was at the heart of the Reformation. In his book, *Bondage of the Will*, Martin Luther argued that it's impossible for unbelievers to do anything that can properly be called a good work. Why? Because to be a good work, it has to be done in faith toward God. Hebrews 11:6, “And without faith it is (What?) impossible to please *Him* (God).” Martin Luther wrote, “Good works are works that flow from faith and from the joy of heart that has come to us

because we have forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ.” Good works only come from a redeemed heart.

Number two, the Bible also teaches that “Good works are evidence of true saving faith.” It's so important for you to understand that good works cannot save you from your sin. Good works cannot earn you a right-standing before God. That's what most of the world thinks, you know, “If I'm good enough, then God's going to accept me. If my good works outweigh my bad works, then I'm going to make it.” That's not what the Bible teaches. You will never get to heaven by your good works. Here's Titus 3:5, “He (God) saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy.” It's only God's mercy, not your works.

Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Friend, if you're here this morning, and you don't know your Creator, you don't have a relationship with Him as Father, understand this, you will never come to know God through your good works. You will never earn your place in heaven through anything you do because it will always fall short, because it's not done in faith, and “without faith, it is impossible to please Him.” No, what you need to do is recognize that your only hope is repenting of your sins and putting your faith in the finished work of Jesus of Nazareth, God's eternal Son made flesh. God sent Him into the world to live a perfect life, the life He commanded you to live, He commanded me to live, that we haven't lived. He lived that life, and He earned the right to be our Substitute, to stand in our place, and for all who would ever believe in Jesus, on the cross, God treated Jesus as if He had committed their sins so that the debt was paid in full, so that God could be just and forgive our sins against Him because the debt had been paid by His Son, and then, God raised Him from the dead on the third day. Your only hope of heaven, of forgiveness, of knowing God your Creator, is not

through your works, but through His work, His finished work on the cross. That's my plea with you even today.

But for all the rest of us, even as believers, none of our works are without defect, but are always mixed with sin. Listen, your good works, Christian, that you now perform, and the Bible calls them good, understand that they're only good to God, they're only acceptable to God because of Jesus' death and because of His continuing intercession for you in heaven. Right now, God is pleading that the Father would accept your imperfect works as good because of Jesus. But good works performed by those who are in Christ prove that we have genuine saving faith. Turn over to James, chapter 2, verse 14. James says, "What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that (kind of) faith save him ( the kind of faith that has no works?)" The answer is "No, it can't!" Look down at verse 18, "someone may *well* say, 'You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works,'" and James says, "Listen, I'm going to show you my faith. I'm going to prove the reality of my faith by my works" (Paraphrase). Look at verse 26, "For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." What he's saying is this, "If you profess Christ," if you say, "Tom, listen, I'm a Christian, I prayed a prayer, I walked an aisle, you know, I'm convinced I'm a Christian," James says, "Okay, then let's see the good works that have followed that profession because only those good works will prove that you're really a Christian" (Paraphrase). If there are no good works, you are not a Christian—it's a false profession. Your faith is dead. It won't save you. Luther writes, "Works are fruits and signs of faith," and then he says this., he says, "God will not judge you by your name whether you are called a Christian, but he will tell you if you are a Christian, tell me where the fruits are by which you can prove your faith."

Thirdly, the Bible teaches that “Everything a believer does for God's glory is a good work.” Jesus, in Matthew 5:16, uses that expression, “good works.” That expression is used several other times in the New Testament. I don't have time to walk you through all of them but let me show you a couple that fill out our understanding of what Jesus means. I'll start by just referring to one, and that's in Mark, chapter 14, verse 6, the story where Mary anoints Jesus' feet and head with oil, oil, you remember, Jesus said in preparation for His burial. When she was done, Jesus says this is “a good work (deed)” she has done. In other words, Jesus was saying that worship, which is what Mary was doing, is a “good work.” If your heart's been engaged in worship this morning, that is a good work.

But turn to 1 Timothy; 1 Timothy, chapter 5, and verse 10. In context, we're talking about widows who are to be supported by the church, who is be put on the list to be supported, and in verse 10, he says only those are to be put on the list that have “a reputation for good works.” What are those? Well, “she has brought up children; she has shown hospitality to strangers, she has washed the saints' feet.” She has been engaged in menial tasks, serving believers. “She has assisted those in distress,” she has helped those who are in the hospital or those who are sick or whatever, and “she has devoted herself to every good work.” Those all are good works. Look at chapter 6, verses 17- 18. Paul says, Timothy, “Instruct those who are rich (the wealthy believers there in Ephesus)...to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.” In other words, wealthy believers are rich in good works when they use their resources to help others financially. Look at Titus; Titus, chapter 2, this one's really important, Titus 2, verse 14 says, “who (Christ) gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” In context, what are the good deeds he's talking about? Well, it's in Titus 2, and all of those descriptions earlier in Titus 2

about how men are to be, and older men and how younger men and older women and younger women, how they're to live and to be, those are all good works. In context, in other words, living out the qualities of Titus 2, in our homes and our relationships, those are good works. When you're what you ought to be in your family, when you're what you ought to be in your interactions at work and at school, you are displaying good works. What I want you to see is that those passages show us that everything a believer does for God's glory is a good work.

The Bible also teaches, fourthly, that “Doing good works for (to) unbelievers is not the primary mission of the church.” Scripture lays out the church's duty to the world in unequivocal terms; it's to make disciples of Jesus Christ. The Great Commission, in Matthew 28, Jesus says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” That is repeated and modeled in the book of Acts; that is the church's mission. William Hendrickson, the great Presbyterian commentator, writes, “The primary duty of the church remains the spreading forth of the message of salvation, that the lost may be found, those found may be strengthened in the faith, and God may be glorified.” John MacArthur writes, “When people look to the church to end poverty, halt human trafficking, bring drinking water to Africa, or cure AIDS, they're looking in the wrong place. The church is not commissioned to do any of those tasks.” Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, in their excellent book, *What is the Mission of the Church?* they write this:

In all our passion for renewing the city or tackling social problems, we run the risk of marginalizing the one thing that makes Christian mission Christian, namely, making disciples of Jesus Christ. The church is sent into the world to witness to Jesus by proclaiming the gospel and making disciples of all nations. This is our unique and central calling.

Now, I would even go so far as to say this, and this may shock some of you, “In the New Testament, the primary focus of our good works is not unbelievers, but believers.” Galatians, chapter 6, verse 10, “...let us do good...especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Why would that be the focus? Well, John 13:35, Jesus says, “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love (What? Not for the world, but love.) for one another.” That's how we demonstrate a changed heart. So, the primary focus of our good works is other believers.

However, don't misunderstand, we are also to do good to unbelievers. Galatians 6:10 says, “Let us do good to all people.” 1 Thessalonians 5:15, “...always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.” But our good works directed to unbelievers are governed by two clear biblical principles: number one, they are never an end, but always a platform for proclaiming the Gospel; and number two, good works toward unbelievers are primarily the duty of individual believers, not the overarching mission of the church. The mission of the church is making and equipping disciples. Now, the church can be involved in good works toward unbelievers, but never in a way that diminishes or obscures its primary mission. So, our good works then, must be deployed as a means of our influence. They must be defined by God and His Word.

But there's a third observation back in our text in Matthew 5:16, and that is, “Our Good Works Must Be Directed toward God for His glory.” Notice verse 16, “Let your light shine before men in such a way (in order) that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Notice the ultimate goal here is not that they see your good works; the ultimate goal is that they “glorify your Father.” In fact, Jesus speaks very clearly to this. Turn over to Matthew chapter 6, verse 1, “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed (or seen)

by them (beware of that); otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.”

Look, if you're doing what you're doing to be seen, if that's your real goal, then when they see you, you've got all the reward you are going to get. That's what Jesus is saying. But look at verse 2, He gives an example, He says, “So when you give to the poor (when you give benevolence to help those in need), do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be (Here it is.) honored by men.” The Greek word translated ‘honored’ there is ‘glorified.’ They want to be seen so that they will be glorified. You see, hypocrites want their works to be seen so men will glorify them; sincere believers want their works to be seen so that men will glorify God. Matthew Henry writes, “What lies between God and our souls must be kept to ourselves.” In other words, you don't go display that you're praying as a good work, you don't stand on the table at a restaurant and pray out loud so everybody can know you're praying before your meal. No! He says, “What lies between God and our souls must be kept to ourselves. But that which is of itself open and obvious to the sight of men, we must take care to make congruous to our profession and praiseworthy.”

Now, this is how he applies it. “Those around us must not only hear our good words but see our good works.” Seeing our good works is simply the means to the real goal. The only legitimate goal is when the people around us see us and glorify our Father who is in heaven. The goal is that they come to recognize the source of our good works, our Father. Titus 2:10, right? It says, we're to live in the way that we're commanded to live so that we “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.” That's the goal.

Now, what does Jesus mean here when He says the goal of our good works is that unbelievers will glorify our Father? How do unbelievers glorify our Father when they see our good works? Well, in two different ways. First of all, some unbelievers will display God's glory in “His

Gracious Salvation of Them.” I think that's the idea here, “...glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Ultimately, our goal is to live in such a way, let our good works be seen in such a way, that they glorify our Father so that some of the unbelievers around us truly glorify God by putting their faith in His Son through our witness. Look at 1 Peter 2, 1 Peter 2, verse 12, it says, “Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.” There are two ways to take that expression, “glorify God in the day of visitation.” One of them is, as one author puts it, “Peter was teaching that when the grace of God visits the heart of an unbeliever, he will respond with saving faith and glorify God because he remembers the testimony of believers that he had observed.” So that's one way they see our good works and glorify our Father. Some of them come to faith because of the testimony of the reality of our faith through our character, through our words, and through our good works.

But there's also a second goal of our good works. Some will come to glorify God in his gracious salvation of them, others, unbelievers, will come to display “God's Glory in His Just Condemnation of Them.” I think that's what Peter means here in 1 Peter 2:12, in part when he says they will “glorify God in the day of (His) visitation.” He's looking forward to the future judgment, and he says, “Listen, those in your life who see your character, who hear your words, who see your good works, those in your life who see all of that and refuse to repent and refuse to believe in Jesus Christ, at the judgment will have to admit to God that through your works, your character, and your words, God gave them plenty of light, and so they are without excuse.” In that way, they will glorify God in the day of the visitation, not of His grace, but in the day of the visitation of His wrath.

As we finish our time, Christian, I want to remind you that we are only light because of Jesus. He's the Sun and like the moon, we only shine because we reflect His Light. But unlike the moon, our light is not solely a reflected light; He has made us inherently Light. Ephesians 5:8, "You were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord." And you are placed by God where He's put you on the lampstand where you live; He's placed you there to shed forth Light by your words about the Gospel, by your character living out the implications of the Gospel, and by your good works. And as you do that, you are providing Light for all those around you. But here's the good news, someday, when we're in His presence, you'll shine more brightly than ever. Matthew 13:43, Jesus says, "Then (Speaking of the future, then.) THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father." That's our mission today and our mission forever, to reflect the glory of Jesus Christ for the glory of His name.

Let's pray together. Father, thank You for our time together this morning. Thank You for Your precious Word. Thank You for our Lord's teaching here. Lord, help us to let our Light shine on the lampstand where you've placed us in the world. Lord, by our words, help us to speak the truth of the Gospel. By our characters, help us to reflect the character of Jesus Christ, the fruit of the Spirit, the Beatitudes. And Father, by our good works, as we, like Jesus, go around doing good to one another and to the unbelievers we encounter, may we shine forth as Lights in the world. And Father, help us to realize that no one of those means is enough. It's a three-legged stool. Without one of them, our testimony as Light collapses entirely.

And Lord, I pray for those here this morning who are still dark; they still live in the dark and the darkness still lives in them. Lord, I pray through the Gospel they've heard this morning, You would bring them to true repentance of their sins and faith in Your Son, the only way we can be right with You through His life and death and resurrection. And Lord, I pray that You would

work that in their hearts today. That You, who said, “Let there be light (in the world);” and there was light,” would use what they've heard today to speak Light into the darkness of their hearts.

We thank You that You are more than able to do that, and we give You thanks, in Jesus' name.

Amen.