

Media Notes

There will be new members joining at the 11 a.m. worship service with a congregational response slide.

We will say the Apostles' Creed responsively with words on the screen at both services before Joys and Concerns.



Key Questions, Metadata and Outline

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about how we are the light of the world. It considers that we are the light of the world with others, for others and it is the light of Christ that we shine.

Why is this sermon important?

It can be easy to believe that our faith is about a one-on-one relationship with God. This sermon is a reminder that faith is lived with others, for others and is not primarily about us. We share God's light, not our own.

What is the context of this sermon?

This sermon is the third in the "Today" series. It is the day before Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the MLK Day of Service which our church is putting on for El Dorado for the first time this year.

What are the next action steps?

Serve as a volunteer as part of the MLK Day of Service tomorrow
Punch holes in the darkness.
Be a shining light today.

What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news is that we shine the light of Christ.
Together...
For other people...
The source of our light is never-ending.

Metadata

1. Topic(s)
 1. Mission, community

2nd Sunday after the Epiphany [Green]
Today - I will be a shining light.
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado
Text Online at <http://j.mp/1xh6A6W>

January 18, 2015
Matthew 5:13-16
Preaching Target Word Count: 2,447
Video is not available online

2. Sermon Books of the Bible
 1. 1 John, Matthew, Psalms
3. Series
 1. Today
4. Speaker
 1. Andrew Conard
5. Tags
 1. light, darkness, missions, evangelism, community, service, MLK, Martin Luther King Jr, together

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Illustration - Flowers in Yard

Illustration - Lights of First UMC

Missionary Purpose of the Church

Transition

I will shine the light of Christ

10

Good News

Call to Action

Invitation

Closing Prayer

Matthew 5:13-16, CEB

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its saltiness, how will it become salty again? It's good for nothing except to be thrown away and trampled under people's feet. 14 You are the light of the world. A city on top of a hill can't be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on top of a lampstand, and it shines on all who are in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Father who is in heaven.

Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

Introduction

Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

*** Start Sermon Timer ***

Series Review

Are you busy all the time? Do you find yourself exhausted at the end of most days? Ever feel overwhelmed by the expectations and obligations in your life? The Bible offers relevant answers that have the power to change your life. Join us for a new worship series designed to help us do the things that God wants us to do today.

Today, we have been blessed.

Today, we have been set free.

Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

Opening

Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Downtown El Dorado Street Lights

Downtown El Dorado is one of the best looking places in town. I love the way the streetscape looks. It is beautifully decorated, especially as we are coming out of the Christmas season. It just looks good, particularly at night. The street lamps are a design that remind us of an earlier day and they light up the night.

London's Gas Lamps

"In the United Kingdom, British Gas employs 30,000 workers. Five of them could be said to carry a torch that has been burning for two centuries. They are the lamplighters, tending to gas lamps that still line the streets in some of London's oldest neighborhoods and parks."

Here is one of them... (Put up image and leave up during this section of the sermon.)



...
"London still has about 1,500 gas lamps. The group English Heritage decided to preserve them after almost all the others were replaced by electric lamps. These look almost exactly the same as when they were first installed 200 years ago. They're just a little taller to accommodate modern traffic."

...
"He's joined by Iain Bell, British Gas' operations manager and a history buff. Bell describes what this area would have looked like before the lamps arrived.

"The streets would've been pitch-black. They would've been very smoggy. They'd have been quite dangerous, because the only light the public would've had would have been a candle," Bell says.

If you wanted to walk to the local pub, you could hire a child known as a link boy to light your way with a torch.

“Some of the link boys weren't as nice as you'd expect them to be,” says Bell. “They actually would mug you. So they'd take you down a dark lane, and then you'd be set upon and robbed.”

When street lights arrived, nightlife in London transformed.”¹

Transition

“With all this, it is difficult for us to imagine how dark and frightening the night was for those who lived years ago. Light, whether natural or artificial, was a precious commodity.”²

Darkness

Above the Arctic Circle

“Perhaps the only place where people still tune the rhythms of their lives to the lights in the sky are those who dwell above the Arctic Circle. Despite the modern convenience of the light switch, there is no ignoring the fact that the daylight hours all but disappear for several months.

Season of Physical Darkness

[In some of the Scandinavian countries, they have names for this period of darkness.] From mid-November to mid-January, the sun does not rise above the horizon. In fact, from August until mid-November, residents can count on losing 10 to 15 minutes of light each day until the depths of the winter solstice. At best, those high above the Arctic Circle may look forward to only two or three hours of indirect or half-light around midday for nearly two months. Yet while the stars that light the sky during this time may shine for long periods, they are not enough to dispel the gloom that pervades the streets and can easily poison the soul.”³ This can affect the body, mind and soul.

¹ Ari Shapiro, “*Carrying The Torch For London's Last Gas Lamps*,” January 15, 2015, accessed January 18, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/blogs/parallels/2015/01/15/377470376/carrying-the-torch-for-londons-last-gas-lamps>

² “*Lamplight vs. Starlight*,” Homiletics Online, February 4, 1996, accessed January 17, 2015, http://www.homileticonline.com/subscriber/btl_display.asp?installment_id=2551.

³ “*Lamplight vs. Starlight*,” Homiletics Online, February 4, 1996, accessed January 17, 2015, http://www.homileticonline.com/subscriber/btl_display.asp?installment_id=2551.

Stars are Not Enough

You don't have to live above the Arctic Circle to know what it is like to live in darkness. We can be standing outside in the bright, white light of the sun and still experience emotional or spiritual darkness. All of us, at some point, struggle with looking around and seeing darkness.

Transition

In response to all this, "Jesus urges us to serve as lamps for one another, not stars that only dazzle and inspire. Jesus calls us to be lights for the world. ..." ⁴

Let's take a closer look at this passage of scripture and what it means to be a shining light today.

I Will be a Shining Light - With Others

Context of Sermon on the Mount

The scripture passage from Matthew is part of the Sermon on the Mount. In this portion of scripture, Jesus lays out many of the central themes of the message that he would preach throughout his life and show us in his death and resurrection. You might consider it Jesus' inaugural address or his guidebook for living as children of God as part of God's kingdom. He gives the new law and the way that we are to live as children of God.

Word Study: Light With Others

Jesus wanted us to think as a group, as a church, about being the light of the world. Hear again Matthew 5:14:

"You are the light of the world. A city on top of a hill can't be hidden." ⁵

In this sentence, the word "you" is plural and the word "light" is singular.

All of you together are one light.

The challenge from Jesus to be the light of the world is something that we take on together as a community. The city on a top of a hill can't be hidden because it is more than just a single light. It is the combined brightness of each light burning in its own way but for a common purpose.

⁴ "Lamplight vs. Starlight," Homiletics Online, February 4, 1996, accessed January 17, 2015, http://www.homileticsonline.com/subscriber/btl_display.asp?installment_id=2551.

⁵ Matthew 5:14, CEB.

Illustration - Candlelight Christmas Eve

You may remember a few weeks ago at Candlelight Christmas Eve, the single light that entered the darkness of the sanctuary pushed back the darkness as it spread from person to person throughout the room. Each candle doing a bit of the work and together filling the room.

Illustration - Street Lights

When you drive downtown at night, the whole streetscape is light from building front to building front. A single street lamp does not do the job on its own. It is the work of all the lights together that keeps the darkness away.

Illustration - Electronic Sign

Picture the electronic sign out in front of the church. It is made up of thousands of single lights. Each one can only do one thing - it is either on or it is off. One of them by itself would not do much good, yet when all of them are put together and working toward the same mission they are effective.

Transition

We do not live as Christians alone.
Today, I will be a shining light – with others... With you.

I will be a Shining Light – for Others

Light for Others

This light that we shine together is not for us, it is for other people.

Hear again these words from Matthew 5:15

“Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on top of a lampstand, and it shines on all who are in the house.”⁶

It shines on all who are in the house.

The lamp doesn't shine for itself, it shines for other people.

Illustration - Christmas Lights

Being a shining light for others is like when you put up Christmas lights on your house. They are outside. They shine for other people, for everyone who goes by to enjoy.

⁶ Matthew 5:15, CEB.

Illustration - Flowers in Yard

Being a shining light for others could be compared to the time and effort you take on landscaping or flower beds in your home. You are certainly able to enjoy the results of your work, yet the people across the street probably enjoy it as much or more than you do.

We live across the street from one of the best kept yards in El Dorado. The flowers are beautiful. It is a pleasure to see. The time and effort is at least partially for the benefit of other people.

Illustration - Lights of First UMC

Just outside the north doors of the sanctuary are two prominent lights marking the door and the steps. I imagine that even before there were street lights on Central, the lights of this church were shining for other people.

Missionary Purpose of the Church

Being a light for others anticipates the missionary purpose that Jesus gives to the church at the end of this gospel, in Matthew 28:19-20:

[Jesus said,] "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age."

Jesus calls us to make disciples of all nations.

Together we are light so that all people might have the opportunity to be transformed by God's love.

Transition

Today, I will be a shining light – with others... With you.

We are a shining light for others

This light that we shine together is not for us, it is for other people.

I will shine the light of Christ

Good News

The good news is that we shine the light of Christ.

Together...

For other people...

The source of our light is never-ending.

The scriptures tell us:

"This is the message that we have heard from [Jesus] and announce to you: "God is light and there is no darkness in him at all."⁷

"Within you is the spring of life. In your light, we see light."⁸

"Your word is a lamp before my feet and a light for my journey."⁹

This is what makes it possible for us to be a shining light today.
It is God's light.

Call to Action

Tomorrow you have the opportunity to tangibly shine God's light in our community by serving as a volunteer on the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

Our Missions team has planned a morning of service from 10 a.m. to noon at the High School Commons area as part of the MLK Day of Service. This annual event honors Dr. King's legacy and is an opportunity for us to be a shining light with others and for others.

You will have the opportunity to create letters and care packages to send to members of the armed forces, no-sew blankets for the Butler County Sunshine Children's Home and create items to be shared with patients and families through Because We Care Comfort Carts in area hospitals, joining hundreds of thousands of Americans across the country in volunteer service.

Invitation

Rev. Samuel "Billy" Kyles is a preacher who knew Martin Luther King, Jr. He was on the balcony of the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis in 1968 when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. In 2010, Rev. Kyles was interviewed by Liane Hansen for NPR and told this story:

"It is said that Robert Louis Stevenson was a man who never enjoyed good health. He spent a lot of time in his room even as a child. He was always looking out the window. His nurse asked him one day, Robert, what are you doing? He said, I'm watching that old man knock holes in the darkness. She said, what are you talking about?

⁷ 1 John 1:5, CEB.

⁸ Psalm 36:9, CEB.

⁹ Psalm 119:105, CEB.

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He would climb up the ladder and light the light, come down, move the ladder to the next pole, climb up, come down, move the ladder. And everywhere he would light a light it appeared to him with his little quick mind that a hole was being knocked in the darkness.

And so I'm suggesting that those of us who have the strength and the ability, we should be knocking holes in the darkness. So, Martin Luther King came to Memphis - it was a dark place to come, but he came and he came knocking holes in the darkness."¹⁰

Let's punch holes in the darkness together.

Be a shining light today.

Will you pray with me?

Closing Prayer

O Lord Jesus,
We confess that there is darkness in our hearts and souls.
I am sorry for the times when I spread darkness instead of light.
Thank you for being the light of the world and the light of our lives.
Please drive all the darkness from us and fill us with your blessing and light.
Show us the way, the truth and help us be a shining light today.
In your Holy name, Amen.

	8:30 AM	11:00 AM
Sermon Time		

¹⁰ "Rev. Kyles Remembers Martin Luther King, Jr.," National Public Radio, January 17, 2010, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122670935>.