

Good Lamps

Bibliology – Communication

Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not give up. Instead, we have renounced shameful secret things, not walking in deceit or distorting God's message, but in God's sight we commend ourselves to every person's conscience by an open display of the truth. - 2 Corinthians 4:1-2 HCSB



The Messiah once taught, "You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."¹

What does a good lamp do but pass light on from the source to the world? It would be a very poor lamp that drew more attention to its own shape and form than to the light. Christ is the Light of the world. Life was in Him, and that life was the light of men. That light shines in the darkness, yet the darkness did not overcome it.²

John the Baptist was an example of an outstanding "lamp" and the Scriptures say of him; "He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light."³

Our unfortunate problem in communicating the Gospel is that we often bring so much attention to ourselves or our thoughts⁴ that we are effectively veiling the light from the eyes of men. Like dirty lamps, we preach the Word, but not all of it. Like broken lamps, we preach the Word, but do not practice it; so we short out before actually being able to illumine anyone.

Paul took hope in the mercy he had received from the Lord and was grateful for the opportunity to minister to others. This helped him in tremendously difficult circumstances to not give up. He polished, dusted and shone himself, renouncing "shameful secret things" and "not walking in deceit", so as to pass on the most biblical lumens possible.

He did not distort God's message in a sick attempt to make it more palatable or conform to the world's latest ideology. He presented it in an open display of the truth. That means that he taught the Word as it was, applied it correctly and without apology, and made sure that his life backed up what he was preaching. He did not boast of his own skills or present himself in a white sequined suit. He did not speak like a bumpkin and so distract people from the Truth by his errors and poor presentation that the Word came to no effect.⁵ He made sure that neither his excellent performance nor his crass presentation stood between the people and their God.

¹ Matthew 5:14-16

² John 1:4-5

³ John 1:7-8

⁴ Proverbs 30:5-6

⁵ Proverbs 16:21