



February 2020: YOU ARE THE LIGHT

Written by the Rev. Dona Johnson
Based on Matthew 5:14 & John 8:12

You are the light of the world! Jesus says to His disciples, you are the light of the world. He doesn't say you are to be light. And He doesn't say you have the light. You are the light of the world! In *Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, "The light is not some instrument put in their hands, such as their preaching. It is the disciples themselves. The same Jesus who, speaking of himself, says, 'I am the light,' says to his followers: 'You are the light in your whole existence, provided you remain faithful to your calling'" (Bonhoeffer, 117).

If one small flickering candle can light up an entire room, what impact does one generous act of kindness do to light up the human heart?

On Christmas Eve, our new house church community purchased beautifully wrapped boxes of chocolates and gave them to many of the retailers in our village. One of our visits was to a young couple who had just opened a small hotel. They are also expecting their first child. We had no idea if they were people of faith and we had no idea how we would be received. We wished them Merry Christmas and, in addition to the chocolates, we also offered a prayer of blessing for their business. You should have seen their faces. They lit up with huge smiles, saying repeatedly, "Wow, I can't believe you did this — this is great!"

In being Christ's light, we are also given a remarkable responsibility. Stewards of the light are not to keep this light hidden away within the walls of the church, but they are to carry it out, protecting it, cupping its flame in their hands (holding fast to the Word) in a world that wants to so often extinguish it. In Luther's commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, he writes, "Those who are called to be the light are called to instruct souls and point them to the eternal life ... he who wants to be light must see to it that he does not creep into a corner, but stand forth publicly and be not afraid."

How are you being the light of Christ to others in your neighborhoods and community? Stewards of the light use "all" the available resources to push back the darkness in our world — time, talents, treasure and testimony. The light of Christ shines brightest when generosity is our first response. When we give without calculus and beyond measure from our wealth and possessions, our ministries and congregations are strengthened, and our witness is intensified.

You are the light of the world! From Genesis to Revelation, the light of Jesus Christ (God's love for and His covenant with creation) peppers the whole biblical landscape. As the light of God's love never fails to illuminate, let us rejoice in the incarnation of God in Jesus who continues to call us to shine!



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