

Message #56

Luke 11:33-36

Back in 1980, Bill Rogers won the Boston Marathon. On the women's side, the woman who appeared to win that year was named Rosie Ruiz. But to Bill Rogers and others, something didn't quite look right about her. She did not look haggard enough after running 26.2 miles, she did not look sweaty and she had too much body fat. Her hair was perfectly styled and her face was barely flushed. Those who run a grueling 26.2 mile marathon typically don't look like that.

Eight days after the race, it was discovered she had cheated. She had not run the full course and she was stripped of her title. She was pretending to be something she was not. By the way, as a post script to this, in 1982 she was arrested for embezzling \$60,000 from a company. In 1983 she was arrested for an involvement in a cocaine deal. She works for a medical lab in West Palm Beach Florida.

Many years ago, there was a man in ministry who fell into terrible sin. Ultimately, his sin found him out and he went to the Elder board and confessed it and removed himself from ministry. During the time between the sin and the acknowledgement of the sin, he had a very hard time looking people in the eyes. It got to the point that he could not sit on the platform and look at the congregation because what he was projecting physically was not real spiritually.

When it comes to the spiritual life, the word of God makes it very clear that there will be those who pretend to be what they are not. There will be a few who will wear a spiritual costume that says, "I am really spiritual"; "I am really right with God"; "I really love the word of God."

Many of these people will look impressive, just as if they were the real thing. They will look and act the part. They talk the talk. They sound spiritual, they look spiritual. They look authentic. But what is really going on inside is not what they appear to be.

When Jesus Christ was here on earth, there were many of these types of people. In fact, most of the people were religious pretenders. Jesus wanted people to realize that there will come a day when the charade will end. There will come a day when the party will be over and they will go into eternity. Jesus Christ wanted people to take a serious look at themselves in view of their relationship with Him.

No one may be right with Him if they are living a dark and depraved life and if they are living a dark and depraved life, it will eventually be fully exposed and seen. What Jesus says in this text is:

A PERSON WILL RADIATE THE REALITY OF WHETHER OR NOT HE IS RIGHT WITH GOD BY A REFLECTION OF LIGHT OR DARKNESS.

There are things you will see and spot that just won't seem quite right for one who is not right with God. There will also be things you will see and spot for one who is right with God. One may fool people, but no one will ever fool God.

God sees the reality of the internal, not just the external. Jesus Christ knew the truth; what is really going on inside will eventually be seen outside.

God loves people who are for real. God loves people who are honest. He loves people who do not play games especially when it comes to Him.

As we come to this part of Scripture, we need to remember the context. Many religious people were claiming they were right with God and at the same time they were calling Jesus Christ Satanic and demonic (11:14-15). These people were trying to convince others that they needed more proof that Christ was from God (11:16, 29). Jesus warned the people that there was a lot of demonic activity taking place and if they did not have Him in their lives, their future would be worse than their present condition.

In the aftermath of this, Jesus gives this illustration to point out two realities:

Reality #1 - What one is will be seen.

Reality #2 - Each individual needs to examine self to determine what one really is.

There are four points Jesus makes by using this illustration:

POINT #1 – Light is meant to shine so people can see it. **11:33**

Lamps have always been important and they certainly were in the time of Jesus Christ. Most lamps were made of clay and they had a wick and they were filled with olive oil that was the fuel. The lamps were critical for light in darkness. These lamps were not like our LED bulbs, but it was more of a flickering candle type of lamp. Depending on the size of the room, the lamp gave its flickering light to a relatively small area.

The illustration that Christ uses is one of a person who lights a lamp. No person in his right mind would light a lamp at night and then hide it in something or under something.

No person would light a lamp in a living room and then put the lamp in the cellar or put it under some basket. No sane person would ever do something like that. There are three reasons why no one would do this:

- 1) It would be a total waste of fuel. You would burn fuel for no purpose.
- 2) It would be a total waste of purpose. The purpose of lighting a lamp is to be able to see.
- 3) It would mean no one could see anything. All would be sitting in the dark.

It would be absolutely foolish to hide light that is intended to shine so all could see.

Back in 1993, I shot an Elk in the Teton National Forest in Wyoming, just before dark. I was on top of a mountain and I shot the Elk several hundred feet below me and he was down the mountain. There were four of us hunting and our horses were on top of the mountain. Well, I notified one of my hunting partners that I was going down the mountain by foot to take care of the Elk. My partner said I'll get the horses and we will come down to where you are. We were probably a mile from the horses. By the time I got down to the Elk and by the time they got to the horses, it was dark. So in the dark, those guys were coming down the mountain on horses trying to find me. Now in my pack, I always carry a flashlight. So I turned it on so I could see what I was doing and they could see where I was. Now just imagine how foolish it would have been for me to say, I think I'll hide this light under a boulder on the side of this mountain so they can't see where I am. Had I done that, I would have sat in the dark until daybreak and I would have been a fool.

That is precisely Christ's point here. When we have Jesus Christ in our lives and we are right with God, it is expected that we will shine forth that reality. We won't hide the reality, we will shine it. It would be very foolish to hide this as it would be to hide a light. Jesus Christ is the light (1:4-9; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36). Once we have Jesus Christ in our lives, we are to shine forth Christlikeness so that we glorify God (Matt. 5:16). If we don't, we are foolish.

It would be good for each of us to ask why is it that God saved me? Why is it that God did not just rapture us the moment He saved us? Obviously, God wants us here for what purpose? It is clear He wants us to shine forth light. We have been saved in part to radiate the light of God to this world. We need to speak up for Jesus Christ and defend our faith. We need to be serious about the word of God and reflecting it to others.

It makes no rational or spiritual sense for one to be right with God and then try to hide that. We are expected to radiate the truth from our lives and lips. The normal, customary, sane, rational use of a lamp is to shine forth light. The normal, customary, sane, rational use of a believer is to shine forth the reality of Jesus Christ in our lives. If we do not shine forth God's grace, we are a waste of God's light and power. The result is that people will be left in darkness.

POINT #2 – Light or darkness shines through people by their eye focus. **11:34**

When we track the theme of the “eyes” through the Bible, we discover that it is often used in a context of focusing on the word of God (Ps. 19:8; 119:18; Is. 6:10; II Cor. 4:4).

What will actually determine your spiritual health will be your focus with eyes on the truth of God. There will be a single focus, a single-mindedness for one who is truly right with God. There will be integrity in the relationship, proved by the focus on that which is righteous and true.

The eye focus on the truth of God becomes the clear means of sending light or darkness to the entire body. The idea behind the word “clear” is that of focusing the eye simply and singularly on something (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 47).

This is a rare word that comes from a root word that means to go on a voyage (*Ibid.*, p. 866).

The point Christ is making is that when an eye keeps its single focus on the light of the word and does not go on some voyage away from the light, the entire body will be full of light. On the other hand, if an eye goes on some voyage into evil, then the whole body will be full of darkness.

A great illustration of this very point is a camera. That camera will reproduce what the focus of the lens is. It will reproduce a picture of its focus. So it is with people spiritually. They will produce a picture of their real focus. If they are focused on the righteousness of God and Jesus Christ and the word of God, they will reflect it. If they are focused on the things of this world, things of religion, their lives will reflect it. Whatever you feed into your eyes and lens will eventually fill up the picture of your life.

The Apostle Paul wrote: “and do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead expose them” (Eph. 5:11). Focus on darkness and the result will be a disaster. Paul also wrote: “for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8).

We have the responsibility to analyze the focus of our eyes. We have the responsibility to fill our eyes and minds with the word of God, and as we do that we will reflect that. What we focus on with our eyes and minds will be fully displayed in our lives.

This is such an important point to grasp. If we are not devoted to the light of Jesus Christ and the light of the word of God, then we put ourselves on a path of darkness dominating us. Frankly, I fear for many people who are focused not on the word of God, but their denomination or their religion. No amount of light will help someone blind and it is Satan who blinds people from seeing their need to believe on Jesus Christ and get serious about the word of God (II Cor. 4:4).

POINT #3 – We are to watch and examine ourselves to determine whether we are inwardly light or dark. **11:35**

The verb “watch out” means to look, behold and contemplate. We need to carefully check ourselves to see that we are actually taking in light things and not dark things.

What Jesus Christ is saying is watch your inside. Look at yourself and see what is really going on inside you. Don’t look at what you are projecting, look at what is “in you.” Look inside and make certain you are not dark. Do an honest, personal introspection of self.

Christ is challenging each individual to conduct an honest self-examination of one’s own true spiritual condition.

This is the real problem of the Pharisee. A Pharisee loves to look at and judge others, but he does not want to look at and judge himself (Luke 11:39).

Every God-honoring believer will be doing a constant analysis of himself to see what is really there. Every Christ-like believer will be judging himself so that he does not have to be judged. We all have 168 hours per week with which to work. Do we use those hours for godliness or worldliness?

POINT #4 – We will ultimately shine forth externally what is real internally. **11:36**

One will radiate externally what one is internally. When you see one truly shining forth grace righteousness, you are looking at one who is right inside. One will eventually radiate what one really is. One focused on light will radiate light. One focused on darkness will radiate darkness.

Light comes from God and darkness comes from Satan. The matter of who or what is dominating us is a matter of focus. If we love the Lord and are focused on the word, we are filled with a light that will radiate from us. If we are not focused on the Lord and the word, we do not shine for the glory of God because we are living in darkness.

Judas was an imposter and no one but God knew it. But the truth is, God did know it. God knows what we are. God knows the truth and wise are those who honestly evaluate it.

It is possible for a while for people to wear some religious costume. It is possible to outwardly look one way and inwardly be another way. **It is possible to fool people but it is impossible to fool God.**

It is extremely important that we respond to light because the alternative is we are dark.