

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: THE LIGHT WHICH YE SHALL HOLD UP

Scripture: Book of Mormon, III Nephi 5:9-12.

And ... they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a man descending out of heaven; And he was clothed in a white robe, and he came down and stood in the midst of them, and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him, and they durst not open their mouths, even one to another, and wist not what it meant And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying, Behold, I am Jesus Christ, of whom the prophets testified should come into the world. And behold, I am the light and the life of the world, and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things, from the beginning.

Hold up your light, that it may shine unto the world.
Behold, I am the light which ye shall hold up.

What do men see when they look at you? Do they see Christ in you and through you, or do they see only you?

All the light that men have, all their wisdom, all intelligence, comes from God through Christ. All life comes from God, and without life there could be no wisdom, no intelligence, no light of mind or spirit. Yet because man (by reason of his sinful fall) has a tendency to ignore light and see after and respond to darkness rather than light, he needs to be very careful as to the kind of light he chooses to follow, and the kind of light he holds up for others to follow. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, says the Psalmist, but the ends thereof are the ways of death. There is a light which seemeth to be light unto men, but which is darkness. There is a cunning wisdom of men which is foolishness in the sight of God.

When men walk in the light of their own eyes, or in the wisdom and intelligence of their own fallen, sinful nature, they walk in darkness. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." But there is no promise to those who walk in their own light. Listen to the promise and warning of Isaiah: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name

of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have from mind hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow."

Men are often faced with the temptation to hold up themselves as a light to other men -- to say, "Come, follow me as teacher, example, guide." There are many good men in the world, men who have received the light of Christ and who are holding up Christ as the light of the world. Insofar as they follow Christ, and transmit his light and his life to others, these good men are worthy to be followed. But if any man, trusting in his own worldly wisdom, or trusting in his own righteousness or merit or good works, sets up himself as a light of the world, and says "Come, follow me," then beware of that man, for he is walking in darkness, and inviting others to walk in the sparks of the fire he himself has kindled.

We should be very careful then as to how we choose the leaders we will follow. We should be certain that we do not choose them in the darkness of our own human wisdom, or after the impulses of our fallen and depraved nature, rather than in the light of Christ. Jesus is a light that lightens every man that cometh into the world, but evil, unregenerate, unrepentant men love darkness rather than

light, and follow men of darkness rather than men of light, because their deeds are evil.

There have been many notable examples in history of men who have set up themselves as political or even spiritual leaders to be obeyed, as light to be followed, as examples to be emulated, as teachers to be accepted and believed, but who have led their followers -- even whole nations -- into the darkness of sin, suffering, and national disaster and death. Why? Because the light of Jesus was not in them. Because, being unwilling that he should ignite the spark that would make his life burst into flame within them, and give his light through them, they preferred to kindle their own fire, and to walk in the sparks of that fire instead of in the glorious light of Christ.

Men who have come to know and accept Jesus as the light of the world have a great responsibility. Men do not light a candle and then place it under a bushel basket so that it cannot be seen, but upon a candlestick. And so we are commanded to let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven. What is the light which we should let shine? What is the candle which we should put on a candlestick? The light which we should hold up at all times is Jesus Christ. If his light dwells in you, it is your responsibility to hold up that light, to let it shine forth, to place it upon a candlestick rather than hiding it under a bushel. Hold up his light, his life, his example, his teachings, his doctrines, his gospel of salvation, and let your own life show that his light dwells in you.

It is worth noting that we do not light a candle and place it upon a candlestick in order to see the candle, but that light might be shed abroad in the room so that men can see their way clearly, and know how to choose the things they want and the places they should go. Whenever you see a man putting himself up on a prominent candlestick so that he himself shall be seen of men, rather than that men may see the light of Christ reflected in and through him, that man is walking in the darkness of the sparks of his own fire, and is not safe to follow.

When men set up themselves for a light unto the world that they may get

gain and praise of the world, that is priestcraft. There is no light, no merit, no righteousness, no truth in men, save as they receive the light, the life, the righteousness of Christ, and walk in his light. As the candle cannot burst into flame and give its light until it is touched with a flame from outside itself, so men cannot give the light of Christ to other men unless the life and light of Christ are kindled within them, or to use another figure, unless they are born from above and become new creatures in Christ Jesus. We can not generate that life or that light within ourselves. We cannot kindle it by our own righteousness or good works; but if it is kindled in us by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, it brings with it righteousness, a desire for good works, and a wisdom that enables us to choose what is good.

"He is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death." Because Jesus is the light of the world, he is also the life of the world. It is the light of Christ that enlightens the eyes. It is this same light of Christ which enlightens the human intellect or understanding. The light of Christ is in all things and through all things. It is above all things, and beneath all things, and round about all things. It is the power by which the worlds were made, and by which they are sustained. It is the power which gives life to all things, and by which all things are governed. It is the light of Christ which is the power, the force, the energy, the mind, the spirit, the electricity, or the life which forms the tiny building blocks of which every atom is made -- the protons and electrons and neutrons which are not substance at all, but spirit. Science today is being forced to the conclusion that all things are firstly spiritual, then material.

Jesus Christ then is all in all. In him we live and move and have our being. He is the light and the life of the world. He is the light which good men everywhere should hold up, in order to point other men to the way. "Hold up your light, that it may shine unto the world. Behold, I am the light which ye shall hold up. I am the light and the life of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."