

Like a Shining Light

Matthew 5:16

"...let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."
NIV

After giving us the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5, Jesus tells us of being salt and light for the world. In verse 16, He says "let your light shine before others, that they may see your deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven."

There is a story of a crude little lifesaving station on a dangerous seacoast notorious for shipwrecks where the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the turbulent sea. They would go out day and night tirelessly searching for those in danger or lost. Many lives were saved by this brave band of men who faithfully worked as a team at the lifesaving station, and by and by it became well-known.

Some of those who had been saved, as well as others along the seacoast wanted to become associated with this little station and it soon began to grow. But some members were unhappy that the small station was so unattractive and poorly equipped. They felt a more comfortable place should be provided. The small station, of course, had to be torn down to make room for all the additional equipment, furniture and systems. The life-saving station had become a popular gathering place, and its objectives began to shift. It was now used as sort of a clubhouse. Saving lives, feeding the hungry, and calming the distressed rarely occurred by now.

About this time, a large ship wrecked off the coast and the boat crews brought in loads of cold, wet, half-drowned people. They were dirty, some terribly sick and lonely. The beautiful new club suddenly became messy and cluttered. A special committee saw to it that a shower house was immediately built outside so victims of shipwreck could be cleaned up before coming inside.

As you'd expect, some wanted to end the club's lifesaving activities and all involvements with the victims, but some still insisted on saving lives. After strong words and angry feelings, there came division and separation resulting in more Clubhouses along the shoreline with fewer life-saving stations. Shipwrecks still occur in those waters, but now most of the victims are not saved. Every day they drown at sea, and so few seem to care.

If we liken our church to the life-saving station in the story, we have to ask ourselves some serious questions. When Jesus says to shine your light before others--- that challenges us to make a choice. Are we choosing to be like the members committed to saving lives? Or like those settling into a comfortable new Clubhouse?

Are we ready to choose to follow Jesus, in even more meaningful ways than ever before, and use our new mission hub as a vital life-saving station?

Are we choosing to letting our lights shine? To point people to Jesus and show them how great our God is...even in the dark, messy shipwrecked places.

It is our prayer that all members at Hope would commit to learning together how to actively use the words of Jesus to minister to the lost and brokenhearted through the Red Letter Challenge. And that we all would devote ourselves to prayer, worship, and service to fully experience God's love and grace...immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine.