

and third that these actions must glorify God. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven.”

Considering what our actions and deeds might be saying to others is important **before we do them**. As we considered earlier, if we sincerely intend to be the light of the world and to show others the love of God and to light the way for them to become the children of God, then we must be concerned with how our actions impact on others and what our actions are communicating to others.

For example, do our actions glorify ourselves, or others, or programs, or nations, or companies, or projects, etc. or do they glorify God? Do my actions—that speak louder than words—lead people to Christ and to Heaven or do they light the way to hell? Do my actions encourage people to come to church and worship and glorify God or do they encourage attendance at the temple of self indulgence.

Conclusion

When we were baptized into Christ, we were illuminated with the light of Christ and that light radiates from us now—light that is not intended to be hidden but rather to shine. And when that light of Christ shines from us it is best expressed in our actions and deeds which glorify God. It will be a light that will lead people to Jesus Christ—to His Church—lighting the way to healing, love, peace, salvation, forgiveness, and the Great mercy and grace of God.

We must be ever wary of a faith in words only. Words, no matter how Orthodox or theologically correct, if they are without deeds are not light—they are darkness. **We must not just speak a good word, we must act and do good to the glory of God.** Remember faith without works is dead. To paraphrase Elisa Doolittle’s words: Don’t just talk of the love of God, show people the love of God by your actions and deeds!

Jesus said: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven.”

Little children are often taught a simple song that alludes to this Gospel text:

This little light of mine, / I'm gonna let it shine
Hide it under a bushel? No! / I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine, / Let it shine, / Let it shine.

You and I are the light of our world today. Let’s be what we are and make sure that the light shines. **Amen!**



Light that Shines

“We must be ever wary of a faith in words only. Words, no matter how Orthodox or theologically correct, if they are without deeds are not light—they are darkness.”

Homily given at All Saints Orthodox Church
on the Sunday of the Holy Fathers
of the 4th Ecumenical Council, July 18, 2010
by Fr. Nicholas Sorensen

The Lord said to His Disciples: “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven. Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Introduction

What does it mean to let our light shine before men? In our text Jesus presents at least three truths that we should consider.

We Must Intend to Introduce People to Jesus Christ

The first thing that we learn is that light is intended to be seen. You don’t build a city on the top of a hill and intend it to be hidden. Equally, when you light a lamp, you don’t cover it up, you let it shine. Jesus said in our text that we are the light of the world and light is intended to be seen.

So we need to ask the question ***do we intend to have the light that is in us be seen*** and to illuminate the world or do we want to hide it? Do we truly want to illuminate the way into the Kingdom of Heaven for others? Do we really want to make Jesus visible to others so that they may meet Him and know His love and forgiveness? Do we sincerely want to share the treasure of Orthodoxy with others? Do we really intend to bring help to the helpless—to give direction to the spiritually lost—to bring spiritual healing to the spiritually sick—to bring life to the spiritually dead? Is it our intention to invite our friends, our neighbors, our family to our church? Do we really want them to know the love of God and the joy of the salvation in Jesus Christ?

If we understand what it means to be the light of the world then we understand that ***we must intend to let that light shine***, and to all of the questions that I just asked we would answer yes, yes, yes!!! And if our answer is yes, then we need to go on to the next truth:

We Need Actions not just Words

In our Gospel text, Jesus says “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works.” Jesus didn’t say let your light so shine that men may hear your eloquent speech or your persuasive arguments, but rather Jesus’ emphasis was on the deeds—the actions of Christians.

One of my favorite musicals is *My Fair Lady*. There is a scene where Elisa Doolittle is being courted by a boyfriend who multiplies words upon words to say “I love you” I believe this scene aptly illustrates the truth that Jesus is

teaching in our text. Elisa responds to her loquacious boyfriend in this way:

“Words! Words! Words! I'm so sick of words! . . .
Don't talk of stars Burning above; If you're in love,
Show me! Tell me no dreams
Filled with desire. If you're on fire,
Show me! . . .
Anyone who's ever been in love'll tell you that
This is no time for a chat! . . .
Don't talk of love lasting through time.
Make me no undying vow. Show me now!
Sing me no song! Read me no rhyme!
Don't waste my time, Show me!
Don't talk of June, Don't talk of fall!
Don't talk at all! Show me!
Never do I ever want to hear another word.
There isn't one I haven't heard. . . .
Don't wait until wrinkles and lines
Pop out all over my brow,
Show me now!”

Actions speak louder than words. ***What we say means much less than what we actually do.***

The Word of God needed to take on flesh and live among us for our salvation. So our words must take on flesh and be put into action. St. James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, and the brother of our Lord wrote:

“What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.” (James 2:14-17)

And the Apostle John wrote:

Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. (1 John 3:18)

If we are truly intending to let the light of Christ shine in us then we will be more concerned with our actions than with our words. Of course words are not unimportant, but our words must be confirmed by our actions.

We Need Actions that Glorify God

Returning to our text again, Jesus taught that we must first intend for the light to be seen, second that it is best seen or expressed in our actions and deeds