

## **02-5-2017 BUCYRUS UMC**

### **“SHINE THE LIGHT”**

**Pastor Mike Corwin**

**Text: Matthew 5:13-16     God’s Word: Isaiah 49:1-6**

#### **I - THE MYSTERY GIFT:**

It's over...another Christmas has come and gone and now we are starting to think about Easter in the church. I'm guessing that by now you have all probably taken down your Christmas trees, put away the lights, and tried to erase the last traces of the holiday out of your home. I think I just burned the last of the wrapping paper and boxes this last week when the wind had finally died down.

But before we completely forget Christmas 2016, I want to ask you a question first. I want you to think about the gifts you received and unwrapped and then I want you to tell me how many of you received a "mystery gift." That's one of those gifts you open up, you look at it and examine it and you have absolutely no idea what it is or what it's supposed to do. You know...a gift like this one on the screen (picture of donut cutter). It's pretty, it's shiny, it was obviously made for a reason, but you have absolutely no idea what that reason was! Anybody know what this thing is? It's a real gadget - not something I just made up. It's a donut cutter. You wheel it across the rolled out dough and it cuts out round donuts and the holes too.

I think that sometimes even well known gifts can fall into this mystery category. For instance - this year I got my grandson a drone that has a camera that he can watch by programming it into his smart phone. Any of you get one of these for Christmas? Probably not, because like me, if you got one, you probably couldn't figure out how to fly it without crash landing it, let alone download the app and get it to communicate with your cell phone. Most of us middle age or older people not only have no idea how to use some of the modern technology, but wouldn't know what to do with it if we did anyhow.

#### **II - THE REAL GIFT:**

Since we are leaving our tree here up and talking about the light of Christmas all year, I want to take some time this morning and make sure you don't have the same questions or problems with the real gift you received at Christmas. That you didn't receive the baby in the manger and then say, "Now what?" I want to make sure you didn't go through the Christmas season, got to Christmas day, considered the Christ child and asked, "What's this for?" I want to make sure that if you have put your faith

in the Christ child you know what it is and what to do with it - how to use it. That as we go through this journey of light together you know what the next step in your faith is.

Faith has three steps to it. The first is to seek it. Most people find their faith after a journey of discovery. You start out with questions that hopefully get answered along the way by teachers, preachers, the Bible, worship services, mature Christians, or some other way. As you seek, sooner or later, you will find what you're seeking - the object of our faith - Jesus. The question we answered on Christmas Eve this year, "Who is the light?" ...it's Jesus.

The second step is Salvation. When you discover who the light is and you invite him into your heart as your Savior, then you are turning on the light. When you give up your life to him, when you accept his light into your life, when you take his teachings seriously and begin to explore your relationship with him, not only do you turn on the light but it begins to glow in and around you.

So what's the third step? After you SEEK and find him, after you accept him and find your SALVATION, what comes next? What's the third step? Do we just go to church and pay our tithes? Do we pray before bedtime and say grace before we eat? Do we join committees and go to meetings? Do we just become pew potatoes until we die so they'll slap a plaque on something in our honor? What is the third step in this thing called faith?

### **III - TEXT:**

Jesus is the object of our faith and the perfecter of our faith. Without him, there would be no faith. So let's let him answer the question for us this morning. Let his words remove the mystery from the gift of Christmas and tell you what the third step of faith is.

#### **Matthew 5:13-16 (TMSG)**

*<sup>13</sup>“Let me tell you why you are here. You’re here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You’ve lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage. <sup>14</sup>“Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. <sup>15</sup>If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. <sup>16</sup>Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By*

*opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.*

Jesus is giving his "sermon on the mount" and has just finished the passage we know as "the Beatitudes" when we find these four verses. The whole Sermon on the Mount, including these verses, are given to us so we know how disciples - followers of Jesus - are supposed to live.

I like to opening line from The Message translation of the Bible. "*Let me tell you why you are here.*" It lets us know to listen up. He's about to answer our question about what to do with our faith. He starts out by telling us that we are a preservative - that's what salt was. It was a preservative that was rubbed on meat to stop its decay. Jesus tells us that we are like salt - we are supposed to be preservers of his teachings and his church in the world. If we lose sight of this mission, if we lose our saltiness, then we'll be useless, and, if we become useless, how will others ever taste Salvation? How will others ever know God through his Son Jesus? How will the decay of society be stopped?

Then he tells us what we're supposed to do with our faith - we are supposed to SHINE. That's the third step of our faith, to shine! If we've discovered the light, if we've accepted the light, and if we live in the light, then we are supposed to reflect the light to the rest of the world!

Jesus says that the only way other people are going to find God is if we lead them there with the LIGHT. Our faith isn't supposed to be a private or secret thing, it's supposed to be displayed from the hilltop. We aren't supposed to hide our light from others, we're supposed to gladly shine it out into the world so others will be drawn to it.

Jesus said that he lit our fire and now we're supposed to shine so that others can have their fire lit too. We do this through both our words and our deeds. By letting the light shine in and through us, others will come to God too.

The entire earth must be salted...the entire world must be illuminated. That's our calling as followers of Jesus Christ. To be witness to the world...TO SHINE!