

# Does our Light impart life?

**Reference: SHM-S10-010-Mw-R00-P2**

(Originally spoken on 24 May 2015, edited on 28 May 2015)

Web site: <http://www.ajourneyinlife.org> and <http://www.ajourneyinlife.com>

This message is protected by copyright © 2015 Lim Liong. Permission is given to reproduce part (where the meaning is retained and the part is not quoted out of context) or all, of it, for personal use or for distribution, on condition that **no changes are made** and the message is **distributed free** of charge. Please do so prayerfully and discreetly.

Unless otherwise stated, Scripture quotations are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

The paragraphs above as well as this paragraph must be included when the message is reproduced so that others who reproduce it will be conscious of the conditions stated above.

Let us turn to **John 8: 12**

## **John 8: 12**

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

We have seen that the Lord Jesus is the Light of life and He wants to impart to us that Light of life. So if we want to find true meaning in life, it is important that we understand how we can have the Light of life for ourselves, so that there will be meaning in life in us.

But how about our relationship with other people: Can we also transmit the Light of life to others? How can we do that?

It is possible for us to have received the Light of life and yet not transmit that Light of life to others. But God expects us to fulfil that mission.

## **2 Corinthians 3: 5-6**

- 5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,
- 6 who also made us adequate *as* servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

We are called upon to be servants of a new covenant and in this new covenant, we are expected to impart life.

The apostle Paul says: "as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." The apostle Paul was comparing two covenants: the covenant of the Law, and the covenant of the Spirit through the Lord Jesus Christ. The covenant in the Old Testament based on the Law can cause death; it can bring about death (the letter kills), while the ministry of the Spirit gives life. We are expected to be ministers or servants of a new covenant, where, through the ministry of the Spirit, we impart life.

Let us then now go on to a situation which may be a little puzzling to us.

**Philippians 1: 15-18**

- 15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will;
- 16 the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;
- 17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.
- 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

How is it possible for the apostle Paul to rejoice when people are proclaiming Christ with wrong motives – out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause the apostle Paul distress in his imprisonment? How can we understand this? Why should the apostle Paul rejoice when people are doing things with the wrong motive? Should he not be angry; should he not condemn them; should he not tell people not to listen to them?

Well, the apostle Paul explained, "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice". So what was it that he was rejoicing in?

He said, "...whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice." So his meaning is he was rejoicing because Christ was proclaimed. So what does that mean?

Christ, when He is proclaimed out of wrong motives, can that do us any good? If it cannot do us any good, why would the apostle Paul rejoice? So the implication must be that it can do us good; it is possible to do us good even though they were proclaiming Christ in pretense.

The basic reason is that when Christ is proclaimed, the truths that are proclaimed about Christ, if they are correct, there is light. There is light that comes forth when Christ is proclaimed, but when the heart is wrong, there is no life. There may be light but there is no life. What then is the benefit?

In life, it is important for us to look at the total picture of what is taking place: how God works, how we live, how we respond, how things happen.

A person can communicate to us with a wrong motive and he does not impart life, but because what he tells us is true, is correct, it is what God has been saying; if our hearts are open, if we look to God, God can speak to us, God can impart life to us; not because of the person who is proclaiming it but in spite of it.

This is something important for us to understand. When God works in a situation, it can be because of our faithfulness, but it can also be in spite of our unfaithfulness.

In the time of the Lord Jesus, the Pharisees were often denounced by the Lord Jesus as hypocrites: they said things, but did not do - like people who say, "Do what I say, but do not do what I do because I do not live by what I say." (They may not put it this way but the meaning is something like that.)

The Pharisees could have said various things that were correct: how we ought to live, to love God, serve Him; they also said many things that were wrong. But those things that they said that were correct, if we listen to those things that are correct, we respond to God, we look to Him and God speaks to us, we can receive life from God.

So the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. So while the communication may not come with life from the person who speaks, the Spirit of God can work in that situation to give us life.

Let us look at **Romans 7: 12 and 13**.

**Romans 7: 12-13**

12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

13 Therefore did that which is good become *a cause of* death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

The letter kills, but the letter can bring light – The letter referring to the Law: it is holy, it is righteous, it is good. So, it being righteous, holy and good, how can it kill, how can it bring about death? The apostle Paul says: “...the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life”.

Basically, the letter of the Law tells us how we should live and how we should not live; it teaches us the right way. So it is holy, righteous and good but it does not give us the life to live that way. It tells you, “You must love God with all your heart”, but it does not empower you to love God with all your heart. It tells you, “You must love your neighbour as yourself”, but the Law in itself, by itself, does not give us that life to love our neighbour as ourselves.

So in order to benefit from the Law, we must come to God. We must recognize that we have no life apart from God; we have to come to Him to receive His life. It is only through His life that we will be able to live for God according to His commandments.

The same principle applies when we seek to help others. Even if your life is not right, even if you speak with the wrong motive, it is possible for people to benefit if what you say is correct. Even if you do not impart life, God can still speak to them. But that does not mean that it does not matter; it does matter. If what we speak is without life, it will do damage to us; it can also kill others if they do not come to God to seek Him.

The other way around: If you speak correctly and you impart life, it does not mean that the person will receive life. It is quite possible for many people listening to communication that has light and life to continue to walk in the darkness and not to benefit at all.

We see this in the life of the Lord Jesus: All that He said were light and life. How many people benefited? Very few: Many listened, but because their hearts were not right, their motives were not right, they were looking for the wrong things, they were not responding to the true meaning of what He was communicating.

This is a very serious matter. We may think: "If I can hear something that is really good and with life, I will be full of life." That is not true. If that were the case, then all those people that the Lord Jesus spoke to would have much life, but these were people – many of them – who cried out, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" So too the people of Israel: God led them out of Egypt; God led them through the wilderness; God spoke to them; but they rebelled. In their heart they were longing for the wrong things.

So, there are different issues that we need to pay attention to, both in terms of our own development, as well as in terms of how we seek to help others.

For our own development, we need to make sure that our hearts are right: that we desire what is truly good, we want to identify with God; not just to have zeal but to have zeal of the right kind, zeal in the context of a deep love for God, identification with Him, appreciation of His ways, His will, so that we can walk with Him and do His will.

If we do not do that, then we can easily end up with zeal of the wrong kind. And zeal of the wrong kind is usually associated with some aspects of the wrong spirit: something wrong in the heart that leads to zeal of the wrong kind. Yes, there can be elements of good intention, but something is hindering the reception of what is in the heart of God.

Paul was very confident in the flesh before he responded to the Lord. He thought he was right; he was confident and that confidence in the flesh hindered him from truly receiving the Spirit that came from God, to understand who the Lord Jesus really was. But because Paul was honest, humble enough to recognize where he went wrong, he was corrected and he learnt to love God in the right way.

The Jews, they had a zeal for God but in many instances, as we read the Scriptures, we can tell they were motivated by self-seeking in various forms. Sometimes, it was out of jealousy; sometimes out of fear, but there was a certain kind of zeal for God.

So we need to beware. We may also develop a zeal for God: considering how we can serve Him, do His will; but is it truly for God, is it truly a love for Him, a love for people, a concern for the well-being of others? If we do not develop that right spirit, then in the first place, we will not benefit from the **Light of life** from the Lord Jesus. So, first we need to benefit and we need to make sure that, we come to Him, we have the right spirit.

Secondly, in our seeking to help others, we can also end up like these people who preach out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives. These people wanted to cause Paul distress in his imprisonment. So too, many may proclaim Christ out of various kinds of motivations that are not pure.

So we need to ensure purity of motive when we seek to serve God, that we do so because we truly appreciate Him, we love Him, we want to honour Him; we want to help people to find true value, meaning, and purpose in life, not for personal gain but for their well-being. If we do that, then it is possible for us to proclaim Christ and to bring light and life in what we do.

This does not guarantee that the people that we minister to will benefit; that is still up to them – how they choose, how they respond. But on our part, we would have done what we should and where people benefit, where people respond well, draw near to God, then we can be satisfied that God has worked in that situation because of us. Because we have been faithful, so God has the freedom to work through us, the ministry of the Spirit can flow through us freely. But otherwise, it is possible that God may work in spite of us, people can still benefit, but God will deal with us in judgment for the wrong spirit within us.

So, people benefiting or not benefiting by itself cannot be equated with the success or otherwise of our ministry. It all depends on how we do so and how they respond.

So, let us then ask the Lord to help us to evaluate our lives as to whether in our daily living, we come to Him so that we will receive life from Him as the light shines upon us, or are we self-confident and we do not think that we need Him constantly to enable us. After some time, we may think we can do it ourselves.

Likewise, in our contribution in the Lord's work, we need to be conscious that we need Him to enable us in all the things that we do and that we must ensure that our motives are truly pleasing to God, we are moving together with Him.

Let us come before the Lord and ask Him to help us so that we will be able to understand more accurately what is taking place within our hearts and also that He will help us to understand what is taking place when people respond or do not respond, so that we can contribute in the most meaningful way.