

3/27/2022

College and Young Working Retreat in Columbus, OH

Message 6: The churches, as lampstands shining to the world

So, Rex retitled this conference to “touch and learn.” This weekend, we are having a conference on touching and learning about the Church, touching and learning about God, the family of God, the body of Christ, the building up of the body of Christ, and the practical way to meet as the Church in every city. And this morning, we want to continue with the lampstand.

The Church: a lampstand, a light to the world.

So, we're getting this from Revelation 1:20. As Rex pointed out, “the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and of the seven golden lampstands is this: the seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven Churches.” The seven lampstands are the seven Churches. Remember Rex helped us to understand the word “Churches” here refers, not to the universal Church, but to the practical church in the city. There's churches in the city and those churches, each in their own way, become a light to the world to those around us. This morning we want to talk about that light.

Jesus said in John 8: 12—He spoke again, and He said, “I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

[02:09]

The context of this that there was a woman that was brought to him that was caught in adultery. She was caught red-handed. The woman came to Jesus and Jesus sat that lady down and he said, “never ever do that again. You have broken the Ten Commandments and you have not followed the law. If I ever catch you again, you will go directly to hell.” Alex, is that how you remember the story? How do you remember the story?

Alex: I think He was a little bit more lighthearted.

Vern: So, what happened? What'd He tell us?

Alex: Wasn't it basically just like, “your sins are forgiven?”

Vern: Yeah, before that though. I mean, who brought the woman there? Do remember?

Alex: I'm not sure.

Vern: I'm giving the hand with the stone to give a hint there what was happening.

Alex: They were going to stone her.

Vern: Yeah, they were going to stone her, and all these people came, and they were all holding up stones. They were going to kill her on the spot. And then what did Jesus tell the people with the stones?

Alex: Oh yeah, I remember this; “he who is without sin cast the first stone.”

Vern: Right, and so what happened? Did they start casting? No one cast the stones. They all went away, and then what did Jesus tell the woman?

Alex: That's when He said your sins are forgiven.

Vern: He said, “don't just go away, don't do this sin anymore. If no one else condemns you, I don't condemn you, either.” And then He said to everybody around, He turned everybody, He said “I am the light of the world.” When He

said the Churches are the lampstands, this is what He is talking about. “Neither do I condemn you. I am the light of the world.” The Churches, in the same way, should have the same feeling: “I am the light of the world.”

[04:20]

In John 1:4, John explains that, in Him was life, and the life that He had inside of Him was the light to the world. So, the lampstands were Churches that had a life that became a light to the entire world. Now when we think of light, we often think that what the Church should be doing is telling the world all the things that they're doing wrong—we need to be that beacon, to be out there to let all the world know everything that's wrong. And that's why a lot of people are afraid to come to Churches. So, we are the body of Christ, we are those that love one another, but to the world, to the people, the Church has a responsibility to be a light, and that responsibility is not that we need to judge the world and let them know what's wrong, but to do exactly what Jesus did: “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”

[05:30]

In Matthew 5:14, Jesus told them, “I am the light of the world.” He told the people, “you are the light of the world,” told the disciples “you are the light of the world, you need to be the light to this world.” He said, “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden, neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Now the Church, in this manner, is kind of different than what we have seen this week in many different aspects. This is another matter. The Church should be in the world giving a light. These verses are saying the Church shouldn't be hiding their light under a bushel. Churches, we can do that by spending all our time together with people that are around us, the people we know, that's putting our light in the bushel. We have many good gatherings, many positive things, many happy things, many good times together. But Jesus said, no, you need to be in the world. The Church needs to be a beacon of light around worldly people.

[07:00]

This morning, the topic is “how can we, as the Church, be in the world?” Jesus told His disciples right before He left, “I'm not taking you out of the world, sorry about that. You're going to get persecuted and stuff like that. Sorry about that, too. But I'm not taking you out, because you need to be a light that is in the world.” The purpose of the Church is to shine out to the world. The purpose of the Church is not to be for ourselves and to love ourselves, but to be that light that shines out into the world. That means we need to know how to deal with the world.

One of my favorite passages in the Bible is when Matthew the disciple got so excited about Jesus, that he made a big party and he invited all his sinner friends. There were prostitutes. There were tax collectors, which were terrible people extorting the people of Israel—who knows all the manner of sins that these people had. And Matthew just thought, “what a great guy this Jesus is, and I just want Him to meet all these people.” Or maybe he was challenging, “I wonder if Jesus would actually come to my house and be among these people.” Maybe he didn't know, I don't know. But anyway, he did it and Jesus was like, “Yeah! Where's the party? Count me in. I'm there.” And there He went. He went into the party.

[08:59]

I saw one picture, you know when you Google pictures, I saw one picture of Jesus staring blankly, you know, with these eyes and with the halo over his head amidst the party while everyone is there around, dancing and stuff. I don't believe it; I don't believe he was there. If I saw that man in a party, I would run. He was not like that. You know what's more amazing than the fact that Jesus went to the party was that the people wanted to be with him.

[09:30]

You know how many times all these sinners and these people were gathering around him? They liked to be with Jesus. I mean it kind of was like, Matthew was like, “Hey, I got this guy” and all the sinners and tax collectors are like “Eh, I'm

busy, I'm busy, I don't want to go to the party." And they heard Jesus was coming and they all ran to the party. They wanted to all meet Jesus. What kind of man was this that He was there? He was the light of the world. There was some attraction about Him that people just loved Him. That's the way the Church should be. If the Church is a place that people are afraid to go—they're scared to walk in the door, they're thinking that everyone's going to judge them, everyone's going to look down on them—then the Church has lost its way.

[10:21]

Even in the last book of the Bible, it's told to us that you need to be a lampstand, a light that's shining out in the world. But that wasn't the way of the Pharisees and Sadducees; those were the religious people of that day. They did not accept that.

So, Jesus in Luke 15—and I'm just going to spend some time this morning on this story, because the story just shows how Jesus was the light of the world, how He welcomed sinners. Now the tax collectors and sinners—here they go again, they're all gathering around Jesus. I don't know what it was. If you think about it, do the people of the world—not talking about the Christians—do they like gathering around you? Anna, do you have some friends that really like to be with you?

Anna: I hope so.

Vern: You hope so? Miss Faulk—I don't know your first name.

Eileen: Eileen

Vern: Eileen Faulk, right? Do you have friends like that?

Eileen: I think so.

Vern: You think so? What's their names? Do you have a friend who's not a believer in Christ?

Eileen: Yeah

Vern: You do? What's the name?

Eileen: Lauren

Vern: Lauren. So, we'll pray for Lauren. Lauren is around you, and you know, it's not a small thing, Eileen, that an unbeliever wants to be with you. that's a really great thing. If unbelievers are afraid of us, something is wrong, because our job is to be a light to the world.

[12:12]

I know sometimes we may have been taught, it might have been contrary to your thinking that, when I walk in the room and everybody's telling dirty jokes and then they're all "Oh... Vern's here, okay, let's stop." Then I feel, "praise the Lord, I am testifying Christ." I know maybe we're taught that. That's bad if everybody has to sit up right in there. Do you think when Jesus came to Matthew's house, the prostitutes started covering themselves and everyone kind of sat? I don't believe so. I think they asked Jesus, "I got this great music, you want to dance?" How else would they like Him? What if He was like, "No, I don't dance, no, I don't drink." I'm not inspiring everyone to go do things with people, but how do you be the light to the world?

[13:10]

There's this brother in Chicago who Daniel and I coordinated together with. His name is Howard Purino. He was a young college student. Someone wanted to preach the gospel to him and he said, "okay, you really want to preach the gospel to me? Meet me in the bar at 3:00 p.m. tomorrow," and then he went away thinking, "The guy will never show up. I did it—I got rid of that guy, that pesky guy, who wants to bring Christ to me," and the guy showed up. I asked him, "Howard, did he order a beer or something?" He said, "No, he ordered a coke." So, he didn't drink, but he sat down in the bar, and

that day, Howard Purino got saved, and he became a very strong believer in the Lord. To be the light of the world—okay, I'm not encouraging people to go to bars. Don't say "Vern said it was okay." I'll repeat what Rex said: "If the Lord told you to sin, you know it was not the Lord." But there Jesus was, and the people were gathering around Him.

[14:26]

Now, there was another group that was there—the Pharisees and the teachers. Don't think these are bad people, these are good, religious people. They would be people that, when you see them in Churches, you would respect them and you'd think "wow, I want to be like those Church leaders. Look at their life; righteous. Look at the way they know the Bible; I mean, they memorized the scriptures, they knew things inside out. The scribes were writing things all day long and these teachers—they knew how to teach. These were not bad teachers; they were good teachers who knew how to teach the law. They were good, respectable people. And there they were, and this is their attitude toward those people: this man welcomes sinners and eats with them. They're not giving him a compliment. No, that was a that was a derogatory comment. This man welcomes and eats with sinners! They were so upset.

[15:25]

Now you have these two groups of people. You have the one who just wants to get rid of all the sinners of the world, and then you have the group that is the sinners of the world, and they're all together around Jesus. So, Jesus tells a story, not just for the sinners, but for the religious people. So, He said there's a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, "Give me my share of the estate." So, he divided his property between them. It was an inheritance that he had received, and you're supposed to wait, as the son, to receive your inheritance after your parents die. You don't ask for the money before they die. It's just like telling them, "I wish you were dead and give me my money." So, this guy made a pretty bad statement, but not actually a horrible person, so all together, this younger son, he got the money (his dad was super rich), and he took off on his camel named "Lamborghini," and he went to the city, and he just spent his money, and he had a great time. Of course, we would all say, "wow, what a terrible thing." You know, I'm not sure—what's your name? McNaughton.

Channin: Channin

Vern: I'm not sure, Channin, if I just pulled out 1 million dollars that you would just save it carefully and be...you know? What kind of car would you buy?

Channin: A truck

Vern: A truck, yeah. Those trucks are expensive, they're like 60 thousand dollars. And Channin in her truck would ride out. Because we all have this kind of attitude of, you know, we all would spend money. So don't get down on this guy a little bit. You know, he went out and he hired himself out to a citizen of that country. Oh, so, firstly he spent everything—severe famine, and he began to be in need. He squandered his wealth and, of course, that's where we get the word "prodigal." A lot of versions would put that he did something to get rid of it. Actually, he just made a huge risk. The word "prodigal" at that time meant risk. Now, it means, like, you know, a p*** star. Or you know, we think of prodigals as the greatest sinner—this kind of thing. But he didn't do that; he went and hired himself out to citizen of that country. And then Jesus added in this little part that He really wanted to get to these religious people because what did they hate more than anything? Pigs—because they were not allowed to eat pigs, they despised pigs and they despised anybody who ate with pigs. So, if you want to make the story really bad, you say that he went to be with the pigs. And pigs really stink; you'd much rather take care of cows or sheep or goats, but not pigs. And he went out and he went to feed the pigs, and he longed to fill his stomach with the pots the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

[18:45]

If that that time, you were a pharisee or you were these people listening, these religious people, you would've been there, like, "yeah, he got what he deserved, even more, hope he just dies there. That guy, you know, if he was going to do that to his father, and he was going to live that kind of life, he's going to spend his money, he had to be punished." That's how religious people looked. That's how we look at the world, and that's how many Churches look at the world:

“You want to live that life? You got what you chose. We choose to live another life; righteously and blessed before God. Look at how wonderful we are, look how great our marriages are, look how great our life is. You want to live that life? You get what you deserve.”

So, I think the Lord really had them there, and they just were waiting for the final line for Jesus to come back. There all going to clap and say, “yep, He got it.” They didn’t understand that Jesus was not going to say that. So, then Jesus said, “And when he came to his senses, he said ‘how many of my father servants have food to spare and here I am starving to death.’”

[20:06]

I just want to detract a little bit with the sentence, with this phrase here. I will be forever known for pressing the wrong button; remember that guy that couldn’t figure out the buttons? I’m trying the trigger—yes, there we go. So, He said, “when he came to his senses...” It’s a really important phrase that we need to learn. As we’re now beginning to turn and say Jesus is going to start talking about how to be the light of the world, how to reach that one that is prodigal, how to go to the one that is there and is ready to receive the Lord.

He came to his senses. Because in this, as we’re talking about this, don’t get any ideas that, because of this story, the Church needs to go out and maybe start a soup kitchen, help those that are down. It’s not that we shouldn’t, but we’re looking for those that come to their senses. When they come to their senses, it’s really easy. If you take me correctly, the Church has no business getting involved with people who are suffering from depression—there are therapists and there’s medication, and there’s things that can really help. But when a person who’s in depression comes to their senses, it has nothing to do with dealing with their depression. The Church can come in as the light of the world. The Church has no business getting involved with people who are caught in addiction, but when a person who’s caught in addiction comes to their senses, then the Church should be there as the light of the world. There are recovery houses and there are programs to help those that are in addiction that are extremely effective, but they need the Church when those such people, because some of these things drive people to come to their senses. And then our job is to help them come to Jesus Christ. That’s what the Church is doing. You may say, “no, the Church should do this and this...” God never gave us that charge or that thing. God gave us the charge of helping people know Him, helping people know that they are forgiven.

[23:02]

Addiction, for example, is a horrible thing that can take people through huge amounts of trauma, and in that trauma, at a certain point in time, then they have an open heart to experience the forgiveness of Jesus and they need that so bad in their recovery. I met with a young man for quite a long time with coffee every week and when I first met with him—he was actually first contacted by James—when I first met with him, he didn’t tell me his life. At about 5 weeks or 10 weeks, he let me know he’s a recovered alcoholic, and I asked him, “why wouldn’t you let me know? You’ve let me know everything; why wouldn’t you let me know?” He said, “because I know churches feel like they want to tell you to stop going to AA,” and he said, “Vern, if you ever tell me not to go to AA, it’ll be the last time you see me,” And I said, “I respect that, I understand that,” because those things are needed. But for some reason, Churches get so proud, that they feel like they can do everything in the world—they can’t. Our job is to be there when someone comes to their senses. This is our work. Well, how do you know when someone comes to their senses? That’s why I asked “do you have friends that are in the world, that are unbelievers” because you have those friends, you don’t go and just start, you know, preaching to them and try to tell them. But every once in a while, someone may come to their senses.

[25:05]

In Chicago, when I was there years ago, there was a family—it’s actually the same brother who I told you got saved. They lived in a very nice house and across the street, we lived in a place called Little Italy. If you take the Untouchable Tours, you will go right through the neighborhood that we lived in. It was the place where Al Capone was and others. And there’s still quite an Italian mafia there and one of the families lived right across the street from the saints.

And so, this man who was pretty young at the time—his name was Coco—and he never worked a day in his life. When we met him, he was a collector for the gambling profits. And one day, I asked Coco, “You don't need to tell me too much, but when you collect, was there ever some tragedies?” He said, “Let's just say don't go look at the bottom of lake Michigan.”

Well, one day, this Coco, he's always watching this family give hospitality. He said he would watch people come in with sleeping bags and all kinds of stuff and they would come, and they would go after the weekend's over. They would come again, and he would see all these happy faces and everything like that. So, one day when they were having a young people's gathering, he walked in the house. Just like Rex said, the family was like, “is he casing the house?” And he said, “I'm really interested in God. I came to a point in my life where I just don't know where I should go, what I should do, I'm really interested in God.” And they said, “that's good, glad to hear that. What can we do to help you?”

“I want to come to one of your gatherings.” And they're like, “...Okay” It was really hard. He came to a gathering, emptied out his heart, cried before the Lord, just opened up to receive Jesus Christ. And then he would come to meet in my house for home gathering for years, and every time just begin to grow in the Lord Jesus.

It's not an easy home gathering. The first thing his son did—who is my son's age—is there in the basement, while we're praising the Lord, he just punched my son in the mouth, and then one of the other kids took a bat and ran after him. It was kind of a rough family, but it was amazing. You never know when someone will come to their senses, and I don't believe we need to really try to, you know, figure it out or probe; it will come.

I think our job is, we just need to be in the world. But if all our friends are in the Church, how do we have the chance to be the light to the world? The Church needs to be out on the street, the Church should not be holed up in a building. The Church needs to be out with people, and I say Church I mean us—we need to be out there in the world. Like Jesus said, we don't need to be *of* the world, but we need to be *in* the world.

[28:39]

So, the story continues: he came up with a good sermon he was going to give his father. He had three points. “Firstly, dad, I sinned against heaven and against you. Second, I am no longer worthy to be called your son. And thirdly, make me like one of your hired servants.”

I think the Pharisees and the religious people were still on board; that's okay, he's a bad guy, but if he does those three things, that's not bad. Let him earn his way back into the father's grace. Right? Isn't that what he should be doing? He made a mess of himself, let him make it right. So, they're probably still thinking, “not bad, the story is going good.” Well, the story continues. So, the son came to the father, he started his three-point sermon, “father I have sinned against heaven and against you; I am no longer to be called your son.”

So, what's interesting, is the father while he was still a long way off, he saw him and was filled with compassion, and he ran up to his son. I think that's how the son would react, “Whoa!” The father was crazy. And it says, “he saw him from a long way off,” which meant the father was always looking for him every day. You can just imagine that, after the son left and the father's out there working in the field, every day, he's waiting; “maybe today the son will come home, maybe today the son will come home, maybe it's the day now that he has come to his senses.” Every day, he's there, waiting, waiting. And then he threw his arms around him and kissed him. See, there, he kissed him—that was the habit with the Churches. No wonder why Paul said you should give everybody a hug and a kiss. This is how you be the light of the world. He ran to his son threw his arms around him and hugged him and kissed him. It's amazing. But still, the son was going to give his sermon. He pushed his father away. “father, number 1: I sinned against heaven and against you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son.” I think the servants were running behind the father and they caught up at this time and by that time, the father just put his hands on the son's mouth. “stop, I don't even want to hear your sermon anymore, and he said to the servants, “quick bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger. Find a really good ring—you know that ring I have stored over in the, you know, in my special ring box, not the bad one, but get the best one with the three-part diamond, the big carat diamond on it— bring that one, put it on his finger and put sandals

on his feet. Bring the fattened calf, get a whole big calf, kill it, and let's have a feast and celebrate!" Wow. Then he said, "For my son was dead and is alive again, and he was lost and he is found!" So, they begin to celebrate.

[32:19]

By that time, the religious people were saying, "This guy is nuts." I mean what would you say if you were the father? Wouldn't you say, "Son, I'm glad you came to your senses." I mean I think I would. "I hope you learned your lesson." At least, I would say that. "Hope you learned your lesson and I hope that, you know, next time you have these thoughts, you think twice about it. See where it got? Did you learn? If you learned, I might, you know, give you something, but you've got to earn, now. You've got to prove to me for a few years that you can do a little bit better." What was his father doing? So that's why I have up here "The Prodigal Father."

There's a book by Tim Keller that's called *The Prodigal Father*. Who is the real risky person here? Who's the person who really just threw away all the wealth: the son or the father? It's the father. He threw away everything he had, and he just gave him everything that he possibly had, and just threw it away on the son. Isn't that amazing? This is being the light of the world.

You know, the Church is not a place to continue another religious institution. When Jesus came to the Earth, He had no intention in establishing another institution to care for people. When Jesus came to the Earth, He was interested in having a group of people be light to the world and He's giving this demonstration. Of course, if you were a sinner or tax collector at that time, can you imagine the two groups? I can just see it, you know. The sinners and tax collectors: "Yeah! That's right, we're all received, we're all having our sins are forgiven." And all the others are like, "You know, what is going on? What kind of person is that? No father would do that. Where's your righteousness? Where's your stand? Why would you just put all the things on him?" But isn't this the story of the Church?

[34:24]

You know, unfortunately, today Churches don't have this reputation. I just want to be very sober with this. This is not what people think when they think about going to Church. When you ask someone "do you want to go to Church?" they do not think of a father taking out the best ring and putting it on him. They do not think about a robe and let's kill the fatty calf. They think about "What will they think of me? How will they look at me? How will they look at my lifestyle? How will they at what I do? How will they see what I have?" That's what people think about Churches. And you know, today, I think we need to change the perception of Church. The perception of Church should be a place where people are just received recklessly. Well, you may say "well, but if you don't talk to them about their life, then how will they know?" You just let the light shine. Just like Coco—nobody needed to say anything. One day he came to his senses, and he came, and he just changed. No one needed to talk. He quit his collection that day and we didn't even know at the time, but he did stop his mafia connection that day, and a couple months later, he got a real job for the first time in his life, which was very good and changed his reputation.

And his mother was so impressed—she was a Catholic who went to the Catholic Church seven times a week—she went up to the priest and said, "Your church is no good. My son has been a mafia person for his whole life, and there's only one church who knows how to change him and I'm going to that church."

[36:22]

You know, the light of the world is just to welcome people, and to just be there where people are at. Churches should have a kind of experience of going out. One time, I had the opportunity, a couple years ago, to coordinate with someone who was in charge of a recovery house to take care of former alcoholics. It was not to deal with people who were in alcoholism, but people who had made the transition and now are trying to live better. So, we had a bible study there. I and a couple other brothers went for about a year, and there often were like 25 of these people. Some were wearing bracelets—they'd just gotten out of prison. And we were not doing anything else except going through the Bible. We could only share for 30 minutes, then they had to have a cigarette break. They were not allowed to smoke in the house, so they all went outside, took their cigarette break, then we continued the Bible study.

Every week, we were there, and one time, they looked at us, and they said, “you know, you're the first pastor that was ever willing to come into our house and meet with us.” I said, “why is that?” They said, “They only want us to come to their Church; they're not interested in coming to be together with us.” Well, I can kind of see—this group, at least, were a little vulgar and I never had a Bible study where there was swearing and stuff as they were reading the Word.

And one guy, during the Bible study says, “Wow, this is amazing; we can swear and read the Bible.” And I'm sitting there thinking, “Is this right? I'm not sure. Should I say 'no, I'm not allowing swearing'? I'm not sure, I don't know.” But I loved being there with all these young men. And it was just so enjoyable to speak with them and to talk with them. And they were so happy to be with us. And the questions were not—I don't want to mention them in the meeting because they're not appropriate to talk about here, but it was good for me, because it was in the world. This is what people in the world talk about. They talk about things that we do not talk about here in the meeting. But if we want to be the light to the world, we have to be the kind of person that can be around people in the world.

I feel myself very short in this matter—I have a lot of consideration and prayer. I just feel sometimes, I don't touch the people that have come to their senses. They say something, and I don't catch it. Sometimes, I feel I'm too busy with things and I'm not with the people. Many things like that, but I feel the Lord is convicting me more and more. If I'm the real Church on the earth, and if I'm really the light of the world, there needs to be some shining out and touching of people's lives. I enjoy it when a Christian brother or sister is touched by me, but that's not my only purpose. There needs to be people that have no belief in Christ—atheists, people who don't want anything to do with God—and I'm also a blessing or an influence on their life.

[40:06]

So, he said the son of mine begins to celebrate, but the older brother—we need to continue the story a little bit, because who's the older brother? He's the pharisees and the religious people. Jesus would not let them go. He knew they were angry by this point; He knew they were criticizing Him; He knew they were condemning Him. So, He said the older brother became angry and he refused to in. As the older brother was walking to the house, he could hear the bass drum and he could hear the shouting and the celebration and they had a DJ who was playing and had a great time, and they were just really with it. And the son heard that, and he was just angry.

So, the father went out and pleaded with him, and then he answered the father: “look at all these years I've been slaving for you,”—that's what he thought of his Church, slaving for the father— “and I never disobeyed your orders.” He's a hypocrite because he's disobeying the father's orders right now. “Yet, you never even gave me a goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But this son of yours...”—He won't even call him his brother; shouldn't older brother be happy his younger brother is restored? “...who has squandered your property with prostitutes...”—where did he get that? You know that's not part of the story? He just made that up; he didn't even talk to him yet. How does he know he's with prostitutes?

“...and he comes home, and you kill the fattened calf for him.” You know, this is the story of the older brother. The father said, “You always you are always with me and everything I have is yours, but we had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again,” and then the final words, “was lost and now he's found.” The Church's business today—to be the light of the world—is to know the Father's great love. The Father loves us so much. We know how He's welcomed us when we were lost. He knows the chasm that was between us and God. He knows the great distance we were away from God, and we were received into His presence, and now as the Church, we are there to be this light to people, to let them also know that the chasm between them and God can be taken care of, and that the life that they lived can be forgiven, and that the way that they feel alone and lost in the world can be changed to be someone who can enjoy all the riches and the wealth of the Father.

So, I leave this with you—this is our mission: the Church is the light of the world, a lampstand on the hill, that by our good works, people can glorify God. Now you understand those words “and a lampstand to shine out to all the world.”

Amen