

Jesus is the light of the world and at the point of our salvation Jesus fills us with the light of his life. Now, we too, are the light to the world and we are to let our lights shine into a world lost in darkness. Jesus built and continues to build his church with those who have received the light. Therefore, when we all come together in unity our lights shine brighter together than anyone’s individual light shines. This is the beauty of Jesus’ Glorious Church.

In our Seven Series in 2021, we saw that in the first three chapters of the book of Revelation John the revelator sent seven letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor. Do you remember how the churches were represented or pictured in the revelation Jesus gave John? Let’s read it again.

Revelation 1:12-18 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.

14 The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.

15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.

16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. **18** I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

Revelation 1:19-20

“Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. **20** 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 Church is a Lampstand

The Seven Golden Lampstands are the seven churches, with Jesus standing in the middle, fully aware of what was going on in each. Jesus states: “**I know your deeds.**” Then each church, the lampstands, receive commendation and/or condemnation for their thoughts, deeds, and actions.

Why? The letters were sent in love, due to God’s concern that the churches would let their light go out and lose their influence and impact in a world of darkness.

God didn’t want them to lose their effectiveness as God’s light to their communities.

A Seven Golden Lampstand of God’s Presence, Life and Light

In those days, anyone reading the letters to the seven churches would recognize the imagery of the lampstand described in the book of Exodus lighting up the Holy Place in the tabernacle.

The lampstand is described in great detail in **Exodus 25:31-29** and **Exodus 37:17-24**.

- The Lampstand represented the presence of the Lord and was never to be extinguished.
- It presented the life and light that God gives to his people.

But also, except for God’s presence in the Most Holy of Holies behind the curtain, the lampstand was the only source to shed light within the tabernacle walls, in the Holy Place.

Light Shining On The Bread of Presence

The lampstand was one of the few pieces of furniture commanded by God to be placed in the tabernacle where it would bring light and illumination to the table of the “shewbread,” the loaves of bread known as the “**Bread of Presence.**” **Exodus 25:20**

The lampstand illuminated the table of the shewbread representing 1) the provision of God, 2) the presence of God, and 3) the goodness of God. Bread is the very object that Jesus would later use to symbolize his body. The bread being his body that would be broken for us.

The Church Exists to Shine the Light On Jesus

Just like the lampstand in Exodus and the seven lampstands in Revelation, we (the church), as lampstands, know our main job is to keep shining the light on the Bread of Life, which is Christ Jesus.

John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Jesus said, “I am the bread. I’m the source. I will satisfy, not physical hunger, but true soulful hunger forever and ever and ever.”

The church exists to shine and illuminate the Bread of Life. To display God’s glory and presence. We are to turn on the light and let it shine bright.

Let’s think this through for a minute.

- Jesus is the light of the world. He fills us with light and we are to let our lights shine.
- Just like the lampstand in Exodus our main job is to keep shining the light on the Bread of Life, which is Christ Jesus.

So, one of our main responsibilities is to use our light to highlight the goodness of God and reveal God’s Son, so that the world can see, understand, and know Jesus.

Keep the Lampstand Burning At All Times

One of the primary jobs of Old Testament priest was to make sure that the light of the lampstand never burned out. It was to always shine bright.

For us to keep the lampstand of the church shining bright, effectively, and continually we need to:

1. Keep our wicks trimmed, to keep our personal lights burning.

- We need to trim away the sin or impurities in our lives. **1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

2. If for any reason our light begins to dim, we must immediately take action.

- **Revelation 2:4-5 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. 5 Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.**

3. We need a continual source of the oil of the Holy Spirit.

- **Romans 8:9-11 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.**

4. We need to keep our lamp free from obstructions.

- **Matthew 5:15a Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl (a bushel).**

5. We need to keep our lampstand in the proper place. God has us strategically placed in our culture to show himself to the world.

- **Matthew 5:15b Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**

Next Step: I will inspect my lampstand and see if my light is still shining bright.

Spotlight Jesus

The church as the lampstands primary purpose is not to shine a light on everything, but to focus and keep shining a spotlight on Christ Jesus. Our light should be concentrated on showing others who Jesus is.

We must watch out for distractions or losing our focus.

Is it possible that some churches have a more influence in their communities than other churches because they are more intentional about putting Jesus in the spotlight?

Maybe some churches have gotten distracted, lost their focus, and are shining their spotlight on other things, rather than the one who will draw all people unto himself.

John 12:32-36 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

In context, this was the lifting up on a cross to pay the price for my sins and yours.

Now today when “we lift up Jesus,” we are lifting his name and the Goodnews of salvation that comes as a result of him being lifted up on the cross.

It’s our job to keep lifting Jesus up. To shine the light on Jesus.

Romans 10:13-14 For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

Jesus knew that his forgiveness, made possible by his work on the cross, would compel people to follow him. As long as we keep shining the light on the sacrifice that Jesus made people will be drawn to him.

We must make sure that our lampstand doesn’t drift from its’ intended purpose. The further the light moves away from its designated spot, to shine the light on Jesus the bread, the less inviting its light becomes to those who are looking.

Maybe the reason people are not looking to the Big C Church is that we are not doing an excellent job displaying the light of God? Maybe we are using our light and moving our light to shine on:

1. Personal Agendas / to fight personal battles
 - a. We may use our lampstand to interrogate somebody or something we don’t like.
 - b. Using our lampstand to highlight our knowledge and spiritual pride.
 - c. Are we using the light to justify our opinions and win our debates?
2. Politics
 - a. Some say, “Where do you stand on these issues? You need to move your light over here.”
 - b. Joe and I were at a meeting the other day and were told buy another Pastor, “If your preacher is not talking about politics in your church you need to fire him and get another!”
 - c. Jesus is not a Democrat or a Republican.
3. Boycotts (It’s not about what we are against as much as it is about what we are for...Jesus.)
4. Good and Worthy Things
 - a. Health plans and clean eating.
 - b. Good organizations that we want to support and help like Safe Haven and others.
 - c. Humanitarian causes. (Random acts of kindness vs Intentional acts of kindness.)
5. The Church
 - a. Sometimes we use our lampstands to make our church look better. As if our lampstand only exists to illuminate itself. Even though it was beautiful, we forget the lampstand didn’t exist

in the tabernacle just so the priest could see it. It served a purpose to represent the presence of God and shine a light on the bread of life.

- b. Churches can fall into the trap of comparison as well. My lampstand in bigger, better, and holier than your lampstand.

Is Jesus saying, “Who moved the lampstand?”

When the lampstand in moved, our influence is weakened. It makes it harder for people to see the light.

Next Step: This week I will consider what I’m using my light for? What am I spotlighting?