**Keep Your Lamp Trimmed and Bright**

\*Select and direct two young men to count the individual lights in the auditorium and be ready to report their findings in a few minutes (they are free to move around and use pencil and paper or calculators as needed).

**Introduction:** John 1:6-13, Jesus was *“the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.”*  (see also 12:46) The KJV renders John 1:9 somewhat differently when it says that Jesus *“lighteth every man.”*  In this *lighting,* man was not entirely passive while Jesus acted upon him. Note that v.7 that the *witness of John* had to be both proclaimed and *received,* or *believed.*  Also, once the *true light* was manifested, such provided an opportunity for man to *receive* Him, which in turn allowed him to *become* a child of God (become *lighted*), v.12.

As little children in bible class, we sang a song about these things- “This Little Light of Mine.” It is indeed *our* light, but the original *illumination* of it did not come from us. Rather, it came from the *“true light”* which *“lighteth every man”!*

\*\*Everyone look up and around for a moment. Ask the two young men selected to report their “count” of the lights. Did you count the “Exit” lights? And, the ones in these alcoves? What about this one on the pulpit? And those over the baptistery? See? Those not “shining” are much harder to count! What about all these “lights” in the pews- did you count them???

Now consider that each of those (non-human, however many in total) individual lights came on with the simple flip of a switch, and will remain illumined for its entire lifetime unless otherwise turned off (and as long as brother Nathan remembers to pay the electricity bill!). This is very different from the meeting place of those in Troas, cf. Acts 20:8, where there were likewise *“many lamps,”* but they did not come on with the flip of a switch!

What if the “lamps” here in our auditorium were of the same type as those in ancient Troas? What if it was **your job** to prepare, light, and maintain them for each assembly of the saints? How much time and effort would be required to reach, fill, trim (or replace) the wicks, and light them each time?

Now take it one step further and imagine that it was your job to keep those (insert # from total count) oil lamps burning continuously- kind of like the fire on the altar of Lev.6:12-13. Or, more to the point, how much time and effort would it require on your part to keep just **one oil lamp** burning brightly and continuously? That would be a considerable task requiring constant attention, wouldn’t it?

So, how is it that many of us think we can just *flip a switch* once a week on Sunday morning for an hour or so and keep our lights burning for the remainder of our lives? **Lights go out without thought, care/provision, and attention to detail, cf. Matt.25:1ff.**

**Spiritual “light” serves at least two primary purposes:**

1. **Personal Illumination**, 1John 2:7-9; and,
2. **Illumination for others**, 1John 2:10-11.

But, a light that is only “on” .006 percent of the time (1 out of 168 hours per week) accomplishes neither of these purposes!

**Please consider the following from Matt.5:14-16:**

* As Christians, we do not “create” our own light, but are supposed to *reflect* the light of Jesus, cp. John 1:9.
* Our “light” is supposed to *illumine* the world, v.14a.
* Our “light” is supposed to be such that it cannot be *hidden* (or *extinguished*), v.14b.
* Our “light” is surely not supposed to be *concealed,* v.15a.
* Our “light” is supposed to *made available,* v.15b.
* Our “light” is supposed to illumine those *in the house* (those in proximity),v.15c.
* Our “light” is supposed be utilized to lead others *to glorify God-* not to *you,* v.16.

Conclusions

* Lights/lamps that are not continuously refilled and constantly trimmed either do not burn brightly enough to do any good, or they go out completely.
* Lights/lamps that are concealed, or only allowed to shine for a small percentage of the time, do little to guide *anyone* (including self!) to God, or to glorify God.
* Lights/lamps must not only be given the right *attention* to be maintained, they must also be given the right *focus* to be effective. How’s your light/lamp doing?