

Jesus Wow! Series Part 18

Jesus is the Lamp

Mark 4:21-22

Pastor Andrew Neville 16/8/20

Sermon Summary

Hidden within two short verses, Mark 4:21-22, lies a message that God is in control of **all** matters that go on within His universe, and especially our planet. Despite the angst that builds within us over events that go on outside of our control, God is in control. In Him only can we place our hope.

In these times that are changing lies an opportunity to point someone toward Jesus. A pandemic that attracts fear and uncertainty in every corner of the planet also promotes the deeply sought peace that is only found in Jesus.

With today's Mark passage, one also needs to read the corresponding Matthew 5:14-16 version. There is a definite difference in the telling of it. It reminds us that Jesus often retold his parables and messages many times, often with a subtle shift in understanding, depending on who his listeners of any one moment were.

Mark's version clearly places Jesus as **The Lamp**. But a lamp that is temporarily hidden – concealed from view.

Pastor Andrew posed the question that a couple might face at some point: When do you tell people you are pregnant? Some tell (especially family) almost immediately. But others wait for week 13 to pass before telling the world – just in case something goes wrong in that first trimester.

In a manner of speaking, this is what God is doing with Jesus: He chooses to keep Jesus temporarily hidden (see verse 21). The translation “**a** lamp” should really be “**the** lamp” because Jesus is the only light of the world **concealed** at the time but meant to be **revealed** (See verse 22). The entire object of a light is to use it to see something. Jesus as the lamp will be brought out to shine in a world of darkness.

Many times, throughout the story of Jesus, we see him remaining concealed. He tells someone who has been supernaturally healed **not to tell anyone** (See Mark 1:44). The spiritually blind cannot understand his parables (see Mark 4:11-12). One of the reasons for Jesus' coming to this earth **was to die for our sins**. Only the blind who could not see were capable of getting angry enough and fomenting the mob violence necessary to have him “lynched” – crucified.

Read Acts 2: 22-23. Note especially: it was “by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge...” that Jesus be crucified. Blindness and wickedness combined to kill Jesus, but all in God’s plan.

During Christ’s short lifetime on earth, his true nature was only partially revealed by God. The full understanding of who He **IS** has been revealed by the church since armed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Being a witness for Jesus, since Pentecost and particularly nowadays, is not easy! People don’t want to hear. Like the ancients, our hearts are hardened.

Dr. Sam Chan, a medical doctor and a doctor of Philosophy, is an evangelist out of Sydney. He has a new message. Our shelves full of books are no longer relevant in today’s world of digital learning. The modern culture does not read books. It is all on-line nowadays. That is why universities so quickly switch to on-line teaching during pandemics.

If we told a story today about a God-man who came to earth on a spaceship with a plan to change the way we live so that we could live forever in another dimension, it would be regarded as bizarre by many.

Sam Chan suggests a new way of witnessing to the hard of heart. Friends-ship is the catchphrase for this method. One can only start by cultivating a relationship with someone over a coffee. Once intimacy is truly established, such folk can be invited to dinner with other Christians.

In a one-on-one conversation it is easier for unbelievers to excuse themselves when the conversation gets awkward for them. But in a group situation where the ratio of Christians to non-Christians is 2:1, the outcome is often very interesting. But, listen, listen and listen – the unbeliever **MUST** be allowed to speak, even exhorted to do so if necessary.

It is hard for the unbeliever not to be impressed when a number of people present Jesus in so many different ways. We are rapidly approaching the time when God said: “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11).

We Christians know that the God of the Bible is in control. Remember that He oversaw the death of Jesus. In these times we must grasp the opportunities to hold up the lamp of Christ for people to see. (See Matthew 5:16).

Pastor’s Questions

1. Think of many, in fact search for, biblical examples where God has had control over world events affecting humans. [We ought to have a competition on that point!]

2. Think creatively as to how your Life Group might use this “friends-ship” suggestion culminating in a group dinner with a mix of Christians and non-Christians. (It is called Creative Hospitality).
3. If you wish to go it alone, think of fellow Christians who would join you in this form of evangelism.