

Luke 11:33-36
October 6, 2019

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: When you consider the basic teachings of the Christian doctrine, how would you define “light?” [Let people engage]

- Jesus is the true light (John 1:4-9)
- It’s the presence of Jesus that shines in our hearts, such that we are children of the light.
- Jesus says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)
- “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 13:47)
- God...made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (2 Cor 4:6)

Transition: Luke shares another illustration that comes from daily life that the crowd and the religious leaders of that day could understand. Jesus creates some tension with this next illustration. Let’s read it and see what the Lord has to say about the “light.” Someone read v. 33-36.

BOOK:

The Lamp of the Body

³³ “No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. ³⁴ Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. ³⁵ See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. ³⁶ Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you.”

Process Observations/Questions:

Q V.34: Let’s make sure we understand the content. What does Jesus mean when He says, “Your eye is the lamp of your body?” [When we trust Jesus Christ, our eyes are opened, the light shines in, and we become children of light (John 8:12; 2 Cor. 4:3–6; Eph. 5:8–14)]

Q V.35: How is it possible that the “light within you could be ‘darkness?’” [The warning to ensure that the light in you is not darkness is paradoxical. Jesus intended examination of the heart’s spiritual receptivity. This paradox is intensified by the imperative “see to it.” Make sure that what directs your thoughts/life is in fact the true light. It may also mean, “If you are truly receptive to Christ (v. 36a) and there is no hardness of heart in you toward him and his message (v. 36b), then you will truly shine with the light of Christ and his gospel (v. 36c); just like when a shining light illuminates you with its rays, so will Christ illumine you” (v. 36d).]

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What is the application for us in light of this last illustration? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

If you are truly receptive to Christ (v. 36a) and there is no hardness of heart in you toward him and his message (v. 36b), then you will truly shine with the light of Christ and his gospel (v. 36c); just like when a shining light illuminates you with its rays, so will Christ illumine you” (v. 36d).

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today’s Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 217). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Light (vv. 33–36). The third illustration was from daily life, not from history, and was one Jesus had used before (Matt. 6:22–23). God’s Word is a light that shines in this dark world (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:23). But it is not enough that the light be shining *externally*; it must enter our lives before it can do any good. “The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Ps. 119:130). The brightest sun cannot enable a blind man to see.

When we trust Jesus Christ, our eyes are opened, the light shines in, and we become children of light (John 8:12; 2 Cor. 4:3–6; Eph. 5:8–14). The important thing is that we take advantage of the light and have a *single outlook of faith*. If we keep one eye on the things of God and the other eye on the world (1 John 2:16), the light will turn into darkness! There is no “twilight living” for the Christian, for God demands total submission and obedience (Luke 11:23).

Three men in the Bible illustrate this truth. They began in the light and ended up in the darkness because they were double-minded. The name *Samson* probably means “sunny,” yet he

ended up a blind slave in a dark dungeon because he yielded to the “lust of the flesh” (Judg. 16). Lot began as a pilgrim with his uncle Abraham. He ended as a drunk in a cave, committing incest (Gen. 19:30–38), because he yielded to “the lust of the eyes” (Gen. 13:10–11). Lot wanted to serve two masters and look in two directions!

King Saul began his reign as a humble leader but his pride led him to a witch’s cave (1 Sam. 28), and he died of suicide on the field of battle (1 Sam. 31). His sin was “the pride of life”; he would not humble himself and obey the will of God.

Each of us is controlled either by light or darkness. The frightening thing is that some people have so hardened themselves against the Lord that *they cannot tell the difference!* They think they are following the light when, in reality, they are following the darkness. The scribes and Pharisees claimed to “see the light” as they studied the Law, but they were living in the darkness (see John 12:35–50).

Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 237)

d. Jesus’ stress on responding to His teachings (11:33–36).

11:33–36. Jesus often taught His disciples through parables. Because they had been listening to Him they had **light** shining **on** them (v. 36). Thus, they should share that **light** (v. 33). When a person’s eyes (like lamps) react properly to **light**, he can function normally. Being receptive to Jesus’ teachings would show that they were **full of light** (vv. 34, 36) and were benefiting from His teachings (cf. comments on 8:16–18).

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (pp. 1537-1538). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

11:34–36 Jesus made an analogy between receptivity to His ministry and the ability to see. Receptivity is like having healthy eyes; one can see well (light enters the body). The warning to ensure that the light in you is not darkness is paradoxical, not illogical. Jesus intended examination of the heart’s spiritual receptivity.

Stein, R. H. (1992). *Luke* (Vol. 24, p. 338). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Context

It is difficult to relate these verses to the preceding ones. Luke may have been using them to explain that if one’s spiritual sight is not damaged there is no need for a spectacular sign from heaven, or perhaps Luke’s source had already connected them, and he was simply following it. The sayings are linked by the word “light” and function essentially as three independent proverbs. The Matthean parallels to the first two (Luke 11:33–35) are quite similar in wording and order (Matt 5:15; 6:22–23), but the third (Luke 11:36) is found only in Luke. The first saying likens Jesus’ ministry to light (cf. 2:32; 8:16), which is not to be hidden but made available to all (cf. Isa 48:6). The light of Jesus himself, which shines for all to see, makes any other sign pale by comparison. The second proverb is a comment on the recipients of the light. Where in Luke 11:33 the lamp is a metaphor for Jesus, who shines on those who accept him, here it becomes a metaphor

for one's reaction to Jesus. How one responds to Jesus and his ministry determines one's ultimate spiritual condition. Those who react to Jesus' works and words as those in 11:15 do will remain in darkness. In contrast the third proverb points out that accepting Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, illuminates one's understanding and thus the whole of life.

Comments

11:33 In a place where it will be hidden. This is a lengthy but correct way of translating the Greek term *kryptēn*.

Or under a bowl. There is a textual problem here. Two important papyri (P⁴⁵, P⁷⁵) lack this expression. The meaning of the proverb, however, is not greatly affected. Its inclusion simply adds a second example of hiding a lamp.

Those who come in. The same expression appears in 8:16, and a similar one in 18:24, to describe entrance into God's kingdom.

May see the light. This analogy likens Jesus' preaching to the provision of light in order that people might see how to become part of God's kingdom. See comments on 8:16.

11:34 Your eye. This refers to one's spiritual vision or openness to God's word, i.e., Jesus' teaching.

Of your body. This encompasses the whole person (cf. Rom 12:1; Eph 5:28; Phil 1:20).

When your eyes are good. "Good" means *morally healthy*.

When they are bad. "Bad" is literally *evil* or *wicked*. The same word is used in "wicked generation" (11:29).

Your body also is full of darkness. Even as the whole person becomes filled with light upon acceptance of Jesus and his teaching, so does darkness fall upon those who reject him.

11:35 This oxymoron or paradox is intensified by the imperative "see to it." Make sure that what directs your thoughts/life is in fact the true light.

11:36 Although the general sense of this verse is clear, the exact meaning is not. It may mean, "If you are truly receptive to Christ (v. 36a) and there is no hardness of heart in you toward him and his message (v. 36b), then you will truly shine with the light of Christ and his gospel (v. 36c); just like when a shining light illuminates you with its rays, so will Christ illumine you" (v. 36d).

The Lukan Message

Jesus and his words were light to Theophilus and the other readers of this Gospel, and Luke taught that they must respond with "good eyes," i.e., with true faith and obedience. It was their responsibility to rid themselves of any possible obstruction and to receive the word with a noble and good heart. Only thus could they persevere and produce fruit (8:15). Then their light, a reflection of the light of their Lord, would shine out to others. Compare how Matt 5:15–16 makes this thought clearer and more explicit.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Lk 11:33-36). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.