

# **Matthew 5:14-16**

September 30, 2018 – Rev. Rick Lyon

## **The Problem...**

### **1. The Problem is the world is a dark place.**

"Donatus, this is a cheerful world as I see it from my fair garden, under the shadows of my vines. But if I were to ascend a high mountain and look out over the wide lands, you know what I would see: brigands (bandits) on the highways, pirates on the seas, armies fighting, cities burning; in the amphitheaters men murdered to please applauding crowds; selfishness and cruelty and misery and despair under all roofs. It's a bad world, Donatus, an incredibly bad world. But I've discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who've learned a great secret. They've found a joy which is a thousand times better than any of the pleasures of our sinful life. They're despised and persecuted, but they don't care. They're masters of their souls. They've overcome the world. These people, Donatus, are the Christians — and I'm one of them." – *Cyprian to Donatus (3<sup>rd</sup> Century)*

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Science teaches us that: **Darkness is the absence of light.**

God is light and in Him there's no darkness at all. **(1 John 1:5)**

### **2. The Plan is to let your light shine.**

Jesus: "As long as I'm in the world, I'm the light of the world." **(John 9:5)**

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### **L = Love people passionately**

**Matthew 9:36** - When Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

*Zig Ziglar: A number of years ago, in a mental institution just outside Boston, a young girl known as "Little Annie" was placed in solitary confinement in the lower basement of the institution, away from all the other patients. The hospital staff called the basement "The Dungeon." This institution was one of the more enlightened ones for the treatment of the mentally disturbed. However the doctors felt that the dungeon was the only place for those who were "hopelessly" insane. In Little Annie's case, they saw no hope for her, so she was consigned to a small cage.*

*About that time, an elderly nurse in the institution was nearing retirement. She felt there was hope for everyone, so she started taking her lunch into the dungeon and eating outside Little Annie's cage. She felt perhaps she could communicate some love and hope to the little girl. In many ways, Little Annie was like an animal. On occasions, she'd violently attack the person who came into her cage. Other times, she'd completely ignore them. When the elderly nurse started visiting her, Little Annie gave no indication that she was aware of her presence.*

*One day, the elderly nurse brought some brownies to the dungeon and left them outside the cage. Little Annie gave no hint she knew they were there, but when the nurse returned the next day, the brownies were gone. From that time on, the nurse brought brownies when she made her Thursday visit. Soon, the doctors in the institution noticed a change taking place. After a period of time, they decided to move Little Annie upstairs. Finally, the day came when this "hopeless case" was told she could return home. But Little Annie didn't want to leave. The place had meant so much to her, she felt she could make a contribution if she stayed and worked with other patients. The elderly nurse had seen and brought out so much in her that Little Annie felt she could see and help develop something in others.*

*Years later, Queen Victoria of England, while pinning England's highest award on a foreigner, asked Helen Keller, "How do you account for your remarkable accomplishments in life? How do you explain the fact that even though you were blind and deaf, you were able to accomplish so much?" Without a moment's hesitation, Helen Keller said that if it hadn't been for Anne Sullivan (Little Annie, the hopeless girl that was healed and stayed to help others), Helen Keller would've remained unknown.*

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*It's not too well known, but Helen Keller was a normal, healthy baby before a mysterious disease left her almost helpless and hopeless. Anne Sullivan saw Helen Keller as one of God's very special people--treated her as she saw her--loved her--disciplined her--played, prayed, pushed and worked with her until the flickering candle that was her life became a beacon that helped light the path and lighten the burdens of people all over the world. Helen Keller influenced millions after her life was touched by "Little Annie," who in turn was loved, and encouraged by an elderly, encouraging nurse. The love and encouragement we give to others has a domino effect.*

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## **I = Intercede for them persistently**

**2 Corinthians 4:4** - The god of this age has *blinded* the minds of unbelievers, so that they *can't* see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ

Paul: I *pray* that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened... (**Eph. 1:18**)

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## **G = Go to them purposefully**

Jesus: "**Go** into all the world and proclaim the Good News to everyone." (Mark 16:15)

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**H = Help them practically**

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**T = Tell them plainly**

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- 1. The Problem is the world is a dark place.**
- 2. The Plan is to let your light shine.**
- 3. The Purpose is to glorify God.**

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