

January 23, 2025

Dear Brethren and Friends,

My wife and I recently took our youngest son to a mine in a town called Julian close to San Diego. Julian is an old mining town from the late 1870s. We walked through the old mine through a mountainside. Everything in these tunnels was small and cramped. The whole cave system was lit up every 10 feet with electrical wires and lights. During the tour, when we had reached about half-way through the cave system (although there are 3 miles of tunnel under the mountain), the guide told us he wanted us to experience what it would be like to be a miner. No one was allowed to have matches in the caves, so they had to use a small candle inside a sardine can. When he lit the candle, he turned out the lights. The whole cave plunged into darkness and the tiny light from the candle seemed so small and yet it was what they had to work with! At this point, the guide snuffed out the candle and we were surrounded by the darkest dark imaginable. He said that if a miner's candle went out, they had to find their way back to the entrance to re-light their candle.

As we reached the end of the tour, we could see the light and feel some fresh air starting to reach us. My wife mentioned that this is probably where we get the saying, "seeing the light at the end of the tunnel."

It made me think about how we are in the darkness of this world, and how we are told that we should be the ones being the light!

Over and over in the Church's literature, we have emphasized that Christians are called to be the light of the world, reflecting God's Truth and love in their actions and words. By focusing on the divine and embodying Christ's teachings, true believers can illuminate the path for others, guiding them towards spiritual understanding and growth. This involves living a life of righteousness, compassion, and integrity, serving as a beacon of hope and guidance in a world often shrouded in darkness.

I really want to emphasize what Christ is telling us in Matthew 5:14–16 that WE are the "light of the world": "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

We do NOT have to stay in darkness. Rather, if Christ lives in us, then we ARE the light! John 8:12 tells us this plainly: "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'"

This is so powerful! Just as in the cave in the mountainside, where the small flame was the only light miners could use, even so is our flame, while maybe small and seemingly insignificant in terms of the light it puts out—it IS the light!

The Apostle Paul's analogy to his fellow worker Timothy was as follows: "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:6–7). I love this Scripture because it shows us that God's Spirit, which is our leading light, can become a brighter and brighter flame in our lives and for the lives of others! The more we seek to become like God, the more light we will exude!

As I look around at this world, it is sick and in darkness. Yet, we are told that we individually and

collectively are the lights of the world! We each individually choose how closely we want to grow this light! In this regard, let's also notice what Christ mentions to us about the light that each of us possesses.

We read in Matthew 6:22–23: “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness.” Breaking this down, we can see plainly what Christ is telling us:

- **The Eye as the Lamp of the Body:** The “eye” symbolizes our focus, perceptions, and desires—what we allow ourselves to see and seek. It reflects our inner spiritual state. A “healthy eye” (also translated here as “good”) represents clarity of purpose, a focus on God, and a heart free from sinful distractions.
- **Healthy Eyes Bring Light:** When our focus is aligned with God’s Will, our whole being is filled with spiritual light, Truth, and goodness. It is then that we can see the world clearly and live righteously.
- **Unhealthy Eyes Bring Darkness:** An “unhealthy eye” (translated as “bad” or “evil”) represents a lack of focus on God, divided loyalties, or a heart tainted by greed, sin, or selfishness. This leads to spiritual blindness and moral darkness.
- **Light Within You as Darkness:** If we believe we have “light” (spiritual insight) but it is actually darkness (false or sinful beliefs), the result is profound spiritual blindness. This is a warning about self-deception or misplaced priorities.

Christ challenges us to examine our focus and motivations. We should realize that we need to seek God with undivided attention, keeping our spiritual “eyes” healthy and aligned with His Will. By doing so, we remain filled with His light and are able to live a life that reflects His Truth and love to others. Conversely, when we allow sin, distractions, or falsehoods to take root, we fall into spiritual darkness!

Thankfully, we have Christ, the leader and head of the Church who showed us that we can accomplish this through Him and the Father! Paul shows us this in 2 Corinthians 4:6: “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (please read verses 1–5 to get even more context).

Over and over throughout the pages of the New Testament, we find Scriptures that should make us realize how powerful our light is because of the great gift of our calling!

Note Paul’s words in Colossians 1:9–14: “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

As we continue through these short Winter months and head into the Spring season, now is the time for us to reflect on the light we each have and the effectiveness of it. Let’s continue to prepare with more fervency and resilience to stand as lights for this world of darkness. We have the opportunity and the calling to do so!

In Christ’s Service,



Kalon Mitchell