

Numbers Chapter 8

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[0 : 00] Good evening everyone. I'm going to start off by reading from 1 Peter chapter 2. So that's page 1218. So it's 1 Peter 2 starting in verse 2. And it's page 1218.

Like newborn babies crave pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.

Now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him the living stone rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him. You also like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Now we've been looking in the evening at the book of Numbers and there's a lot about the tabernacle and the priesthood and it's quite foreign language to us. But this passage here it brings that to the modern day in a sense and applies it to the church. And what was the tabernacle? It was the place where people came to meet with God. But now we're gathered here as the church and we're actually the tabernacle. We're a temple in a sense. It says we're being built into a spiritual house.

So we are the dwelling place of God. We have the Holy Spirit within us. And what else does it say? We're a holy priesthood. So we've come to offer up our worship to God and our praise to him.

In a sense that's how we offer. We bring our offerings to him. And also to intercede on behalf of the world. So we have a role as a priesthood and as the temple of God. That's why we're gathered now.

[2 : 12] Where two or three are gathered, God is there among us. So that's the promise. And we're going to start off by singing The Church Has One Foundation, number 370.

Yet she on earth has union with those whose rest is one, and mystic sweet communion with God the three in one.

Father, we thank you for the truth that we've just sung, that we as a church, we can have communion with you. We thank you for the truth that we are the temple of the living God. Help us to grasp that, that we have the Holy Spirit living in us.

We thank you we don't have to come to a physical temple to offer up sacrifice. We thank you that you offered the sacrifice once and for all in Jesus.

Therefore, the veil in the temple was torn in two. And we can enter into the holy place. We can we can experience you right now. We ask now, as we gather, that you'd speak to us, that you'd meet with us.

[3 : 36] You speak to us our needs. You'd show yourself to us. You'd speak to us specifically and individually to our hearts, Father. Give us ears that are open. Give us eyes that we'll see.

And we just ask that we'd hear you now. Bless Peter as he comes and speaks to us today. You'd be upon him in power, Father.

And we'd hear your word of prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We're going to carry on our series in Numbers. Numbers chapter 8 today.

So that's page... I'll get there.

Chapter 8 and beginning in verse 1. The Lord said to Moses, Speak to Aaron and say to him, When you set up the lamps, see that all seven light up the area in front of the lampstand.

[4 : 52] Aaron did so. He set up the lamps so that they faced forwards on the lampstand, just as the Lord commanded Moses. This is how the lampstand was made.

It was made of hammered gold from its base to its blossoms. The lampstand was made exactly like the pattern the Lord had shown Moses. The Lord said to Moses, Take the Levites from among all the Israelites and make them ceremonially clean.

To purify them, do this. Sprinkle the water of cleansing on them. Then make them shave their whole bodies and wash their clothes. And so they will purify themselves.

Make them take a young bull with its grain offering of the finest flour mixed with olive oil. Then you are to take a second young bull for a sin offering. Bring the Levites to the front of the tent of meeting and assemble a whole Israelite community.

You are to bring the Levites before the Lord and the Israelites are to lay their hands on them. Aaron is to present the Levites before the Lord as a wave offering from the Israelites so that they may be ready to do the work of the Lord.

[5 : 57] Then the Levites are to lay their hands on the heads of the bulls using one for a sin offering to the Lord and the other for a burnt offering to make atonement for the Levites. Make the Levites stand in front of Aaron and his sons and then present them as a wave offering to the Lord.

In this way, you are to set the Levites apart from the other Israelites and the Levites will be mine. After you have purified the Levites and presented them as a wave offering, they are to come and to do their work at the tent of meeting.

They are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to me. I have taken them as my own in place of the firstborn, the first male offering from every Israelite woman, every firstborn male in Israel, whether human or animal, is mine.

When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set them apart for myself and I have taken the Levites in place of all the firstborn sons in Israel. From among the Israelites, I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons to do the work at the tent of meeting on behalf of the Israelites and to make atonement for them so that no plague will strike the Israelites when they go near the sanctuary.

Moses, Aaron, and the whole Israelite community did with the Levites just as the Lord commanded Moses. The Levites purified themselves and washed their clothes. Then Aaron presented them as a wave offering before the Lord and made atonement for them to purify them.

[7 : 26] After that, the Levites came to do their work at the tent of meeting under the supervision of Aaron and his sons. They did with the Levites just as the Lord commanded Moses. The Lord said to Moses, this applies to the Levites.

Men 25 years old or more shall come to take part in the work at the tent of meeting but at the age of 50 they must retire from their usual duties and work no longer. They may assist the brothers in performing their duties at the tent of meeting but they themselves must not do the work.

This then is how you are to assign the responsibilities of the Levites. Leaving us helpfully in prayer and in worship.

Please would you then turn back to Numbers and Chapter 8. Numbers and Chapter 8. I'm sure you all know the page number by now.

Page 144 and Numbers 8. We're going to look at this passage together.

[8 : 39] I wonder when was the last time that you went to a DIY store to look for maybe a new light fitting for one of the rooms in your house.

If you did then you'll be dazzled and amazed by the huge selection that is before you. Usually in a great sort of DIY warehouse there's an area probably I don't know 40 or 50 square metres just given over in that warehouse to light fittings of every sort and description.

Ceiling lights, wall lights, soft lighting, pillar lighting, up lighters, down lighters, kitchen lights, bathroom lights, every conceivable pattern, number of bulbs on the fitment, colour, wattage and so on.

It's a far cry isn't it from those days which you used to go and choose either a 60 watt or a 100 watt bulb. That was it. That was the great selection that you had.

Of course all these light fittings now are about fashion and design and it's not just about giving a bit of light into a dark place. It's adding a whole new sense of feeling to your room.

[9 : 58] But in the end that's what a light is for. It's simply supplying light to a dark place, a dark space. In the tabernacle that God had given Moses instructions to construct and we've been looking at that a little bit and we know the course when we got to chapter 7 we were told that Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle.

There was one great light or a lamp really, a seven branched lamp and it really does sort of knock all the lamps and lights and fitments and chandeliers you can get nowadays, knocks them into a cocked hat because this one was made of 75 pounds of solid gold.

I don't think many of us have got light fitment like that in our house. His purpose was to provide light for the priests to serve the Lord, to carry out their duties in the holy place.

If you remember there was the inner holy of holies which only could be entered once a year by the high priest and then just outside of that was the holy place where a great deal of activity and action went on.

But it had no natural light entering into it. Remember it was a great tent of skin was the tabernacle and so the light, the lamp there was the only source of light and it was to be kept alight night and day and tended to and looked after we're told.

[11 : 34] But it seems strange and of course one of the things that has been a challenge to us as we've gone through Leviticus, sorry Numbers, is finding why are these things here? why has God placed this particular and it's only a very short section isn't it?

Just these first four verses about the lamp. We've been looking at the gifts that the people of God brought great offerings of gold and silver and other things as well and oxen and carts and so on.

We looked at the Nazarites and the tests and the cleansing of the people and so on and so forth and just here we've got this little bit about lamps and this lamp has been spoken about many times in Exodus and in Leviticus and other places as well.

We're told about how it was beaten from one piece of gold and how it was shaped and so forth and so forth. It seems to me that it's here for a reason.

It's here in the midst between this section on the gifts that God's people had brought and remember there was those 12 days one tribe would bring their gifts one day the great entourage and the next day and we didn't read the whole of that chapter but we looked at it last week and how we are to bring gifts to God who has given us all good things but also it's placed here immediately before the setting apart the consecrating of the Levites this group remember this tribe that was within the 12 tribes there was an extra tribe the Levites and they were solely given over for the Lord they were solely to serve the Lord in the temple and the tabernacle and to serve therefore God's people.

[13 : 19] Everything in God's word is written for a purpose in a right order for us. It's not sort of cut and pasted by human writers or authors it all runs in order it all has a plan it all is pointing as we know in the Old Testament all leading us and pointing us to Jesus.

That's why the Old Testament mustn't be missed out when we read the scriptures and study the scriptures they give us wonderful shadows and pictures and illustrations into the very ministry and life of the Lord Jesus and indeed to the Christian life.

We are God's people with the people of the Old Testament we are one people we shall all be gathered in one company when we are in heaven praising God and worshipping him. So surely this chapter has something to teach us as well.

And when we think about a lamp especially a seven a seven stalked lamp would you call it then we are which is made of gold points us to of course the Lord Jesus Christ seven being the number of perfection in scripture gold being that symbol of royalty and kingship in scripture and of course Jesus himself declaring I am the light of the world.

That lamp was the only source of light in the holy place. The Bible tells us of course that Jesus is the only source of spiritual light in this world.

[14 : 56] I am the light of the world. And John in his introduction in those first verses of chapter one telling us of Jesus of the word who became God in him John says chapter one verse four in him was life and that life was the light of mankind.

There's no light to be found anywhere else. There's no light to be found in those man-made religions and institutions and technologies and breakthroughs and thoughts and philosophies all of those things are darkness.

Apart from the one light the light for all people the God-given light who is Jesus Christ he is the pure one like the pure gold he is the one who is precious beyond price he is the king of light.

But I think there's also a connection here and we'll come back to that in a moment between the lampstand and these Levites these servants of God we might say. That's exactly what they were.

They were those who were set apart sanctified we might say put to one side specifically and only for the service of God. And they're to be consecrated purified made ready for this great task.

[16 : 28] I think that therefore this lamp also points us to the fact that we too are as the church of Jesus Christ are to be lights in the world by the way that we serve the Lord and live for him.

Beginning of Revelation in chapter 1 we have this amazing vision given to John where he sees and given this picture and he sees there seven gold lampstands and then he sees someone walking amongst the lampstands who he finds out and realizes it's the Lord Jesus Christ in his glory and splendor.

Those seven golden lampstands we're told are symbolic of the seven churches in Asia seven real churches. seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Each church was to be a lampstand each church was to be a light and to each one of those churches John writes a letter. But elsewhere through the whole of the New Testament we find even in the teaching of the Lord Jesus that we as believers as followers of Jesus as disciples of his are to be lights in the world as he is the light in the world.

His words of course in Matthew chapter 5 you to his disciples are the light of the world. He speaks of himself I am and you are. That's exactly what Christians are.

[17 : 50] We are to be Christ like Christ bearers. Our lives are to be lives that are lived in the model in the example in the fashion in the shape of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the very work of the Holy Spirit within us to transform and change us that we become more and more like God's son. Not that we become divine in some way but rather that we are those whose lives reflect Jesus who show Jesus to this world in which we live.

And so we find as we go through the New Testament Paul particularly keeps on stressing to the Christians of his day this vital role that they have as being lights by the way that they live in an unbelieving society.

Philippians chapter 2 you will shine among them that's the world like stars in the sky. In Ephesians 5 he reminds the believers there for you once were darkness like the rest of humanity but now you are children of light live as children of light.

On Thessalonians chapter 5 you are all children of the light children of the day. We as a church are to be a light shining in our society, our community.

[19 : 16] The world that we live in and the people that we live amongst are men and women who are in utter and complete spiritual darkness. They are ignorant of God.

They are darkened to the truths of who they are, of who Jesus is and of what their end shall be. When Paul is writing to Colossians and reminding them of the wonderful salvation, the rescue that God has brought about in their lives, he tells them that you have been rescued from the dominion of darkness.

To Corinthians, he tells them that Satan has blinded the eyes of those who do not believe. If we need proof that the world in which we live is in darkness, we just have to turn on the news, turn on the telly, open the newspaper.

There is confusion. Terrible, terrible darkness. So what has that got to do with these Levites as well?

Whose consecration immediately follows this setting up of the lamp, this direction, particularly, do you notice how God tells him that the lamps, verse three, are to face forwards.

[20 : 35] In other words, they are to shine their light in a particular direction. They're not just simply to sort of glow, but they're to shine, they're to highlight, they're to give clarity, ultimately for the Levites and the priests to do their work.

Matthew Henry in his commentary calls the Levites the living lamps of God, who as ministers were burning and shining lights.

That's what you and I are to be. Some of you are old enough to remember the little chorus, this little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine.

I can't sing it to you and I can't tell you the rest of the words because I don't know it, but I've heard of it. This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine. we are called to be lights in this dark world.

We are called to be those who serve God and serve the people by illuminating dark places. The question is how are we to do that or how can we do that?

[21 : 47] And I think that's where this passage concerning the Levites comes in. It helps us to see that they had to be prepared before they could do the work. They had to be consecrated.

They had to be purified. They had to be made ready. Things had to happen to them that they might be fit servants of God and that's what I want us to relate to.

First of all, we say there that they had to be cleansed before they could serve. Verses 6 and 7. Take the Levites from among all the Israelites and make them ceremonially clean.

And to make them ceremonially clean, they were actually physically cleansed, weren't they? Physically washed. Not only did they have their, we're told, not only were they sprinkled with the water of cleansing, verse 7, but they also had to shave their entire bodies, all their hair.

And then also all their clothes as well had to be washed. There's a picture there for us to some degree, isn't there, of baptism with water that we look for in the New Testament or the Old Testament.

[22 : 55] There was cleansing rituals they point to, the picture of baptism which pictures us being washed and cleansed of our sins and made right with God. But of course, that's just ceremonial, that's outward.

No one was ever forgiven of their sins or had their hearts cleansed by being baptized with water. We know that it points to something more real and spiritual, which is the cleansing of our hearts and our consciences with a very blood of Jesus.

In Hebrews chapter 9, Paul makes, the writer makes this comparison between the Old Testament cleansing and purifying and that which Jesus does.

And he says that these people are ceremonially clean outwardly. Then 14, how much more then will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, listen, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death so that we may serve the living God.

We need to know that cleansing in our own lives before we can serve God. We need to be men and women of holiness so that the light of Christ may be seen in us and through us.

[24 : 18] Personal holiness. forgiveness. We need to come regularly to God for forgiveness of our sins. We need to come regularly to God that we might be searched, that we might be able to bring our sin and seek his forgiveness.

forgiveness. I don't know if you ever have seen or owned a paraffin lamp or an oil lamp. And you see them in the films, don't you, and the programs, and they have that sort of glass lens over the top.

If you ever had an oil lamp or a paraffin lamp, you know that from time to time it would soot up, wouldn't it? The lens would soot up and you'd have to take it off, you'd have to wash it and clean it to put it back on.

Only if you kept it clean could you shine the light brightly. If you left it and left it and left it in the end, it would give you virtually no light at all. Dear friends, we need to take hold of this truth that if we want to be those who shine brightly in our dark generation, we have to be clean.

We can't play fast and loose with God. We can't say, yes, I'm a Christian and I love him and I trust him, but in my life there's these things that are unclean.

[25 : 38] These actions, these attitudes, this way of behaving, this way of living. Notice how he said, Paul's, the writer to the Hebrews, it may have been Paul, who says that Christ cleanses our consciences from acts that lead to death.

All sin leads to death. And our consciences convict us of that. Holy Spirit speaks to us, tells us, reminds us, shows us those things that are wrong so that we may serve the living God.

One of the greatest and most damaging ways that a Christian can live is an hypocrisy.

Speaking one thing, living something else. Isn't this exactly what the world throws at the church and at Christians again and again? The priest or whoever he is who stands up and spouts about God and about forgiveness and so on and so forth is the one who's carrying out abuse.

Or who's pilfering the treasury. Or who's fiddling the books. Or who's drunk in the streets. Men and women in our world need to see consistency in God's people.

[27 : 01] Do they see it in me? Do they see it in you? Are we shining? Are we living cleansed lives?

Now, none of us are perfect, brothers and sisters. None of us are sinless. None of us can say my life is exactly as it should be and I am utterly blameless. But it doesn't mean that we can't strive for that.

It doesn't mean that we can't be determined to seek after that. Surely we must. And why should we? Why should we be men and women of holiness? Why should we be men and women of consecration?

Why should we be cleansed and have cleansed lives to serve God? Well, because ultimately it wasn't just this outward ceremony that cleansed these Levites. Notice what they had to do.

They had to have their sin atoned for before they could serve. Verses 8 to 14. That's why they were to bring these bulls, weren't they? And the flower and olive oil.

[28 : 00] They were to bring these offerings to God, sin offerings for God. No man and woman can make themselves clean by the things that they do. That's the sad teaching of many religions.

Those many millions of Hindus who go down to the Ganges and they wash themselves ceremonially to cleanse away their sins and hoping that this foul and polluted river will somehow make them right.

They're wrong, aren't they? They're wrong. Many people think that somehow they can make themselves good enough for God. They can perform some rite or ritual, whether it be in a form of Christianity or a form of some other religion by going on pilgrimage or whatever it may be.

Somehow they can atone for their sins. They can make themselves right with God. They can make themselves holy by the way. They're charitable gifts and so forth. But the scripture is absolutely plainly clear.

Hebrews 9.22, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. forgiveness. How can we reach into our hearts and cleanse our hearts? It cannot be done.

[29 : 10] We need one who will atone for our sin and all those sacrifices in the Old Testament. All those many hundreds and thousands of bulls and lambs and goats and so on that were offered to God point us to the one and only and final sacrifice for sin, which is Jesus.

That's why they had to keep offering sacrifices for thousands of years because they never gave enough. There was never enough to deal with their hearts, to deal with their lives, and to deal with their sin until Jesus came and offered that once for all sacrifice for sin.

Hebrews 10. Verses 11 to 14. Listen here. Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties again and again.

He offers the same sacrifice which can never take away sins. But when this priest, this Jesus, had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. For those Levites to come and to serve God, they had to know that their sins had been atoned for, that the sacrifice had been given, that God had accepted it, and that before him they were forgiven.

[30 : 36] And when we know that we are forgiven, when we know and rejoice in the assurance that we are right with God, then we have confidence to tell others of this wonderful grace.

How can we tell people about their sin and their need forgiveness unless we know that our sins are forgiven too, unless we know that we are right with God, unless we know that we have been pardoned.

There's very little, is there, in the Christian life that comes close to the joy of knowing your sins are forgiven. Of knowing that you can enter into the presence of Holy God.

And know that he's not going to turn us away and reject us. Sinners though we are. But know that he has paid the price once and for all. Dear friends, we're to serve as forgiven sinners.

We're not to serve as men and women of arrogance who say, I'm better than you, look at me, I'm so good. We're to come as those who are forgiven sinners to tell unforgiven sinners where they can find forgiveness.

[31 : 50] There's one great preacher of old used to say, we are beggars telling other beggars where they can find bread. We serve out of a heart of gratitude and thankfulness.

We serve not out of being forced to. We serve not because we have to. We serve because we've experienced grace and that grace moves us and motivates us and causes us to want to live for Christ and to want to make Christ known.

The person who's never experienced the grace of God in their lives, there is no reason or desire for them to want to serve God except out of fear. And the great sadness is that men and women around about us will do good things on the whole mainly out of fear, hoping that somehow it will win an approval of a fearsome God or earn them some place in heaven.

You see here as well, not only did these people know what it was to be cleansed and forgiven, but their whole lives were to be lived as an offering to God themselves.

Isn't it interesting that verse 15, after you've purified the Levites and presented them as a way of offering, we are the offering. When we give to God, what is it that God requires of us?

[33 : 21] Joel brought something of that out at the very start of our service, that we are to bring spiritual offerings, spiritual sacrifices to God. Not sacrifices for our sins, not sacrifices and offerings to earn God's forgiveness or his pardon or his righteousness, but we are to, our lives, our whole reason for living is like that of the Levites that we might live as living sacrifices for God.

Romans chapter 12, verse 2. Yes, of course, these Levites had their families to care for and their homes to look after and their daily routines, friendships and so on and so forth, but ultimately they belong to the Lord.

Verse 16, they are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to me. Wholly. Not in part, not every now and then, not on a Sunday, wholly.

They were a wave offering. And that flows out from knowing that our sins are forgiven. Knowing that Jesus, the Son of God, has given himself for me.

I love the work of C.T. Studd and the things that he said. And on his desk he had before him this phrase, and if I get it wrong, forgive me. If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no offering or sacrifice can I make that is too great for him.

[34 : 43] It's like that. If we know and experienced and felt and delighted in and are overwhelmed with the wonder of the love of God in Christ to us, then it is only the very natural response to give ourselves wholly to God.

Say, Lord, I'm yours. Lord, I'm yours now and forever. To live for you. To live in this world. To be light to the most in darkness. To shine brightly for Jesus. We are bought at a price, dear friends.

A ransom has been paid to set you and I free from the dominion of darkness. From the clutches of the devil. From the roller coaster, as it were, which was heading downward into the very depths of judgment and hell.

We've been saved. Saved that we might live. 1 Corinthians 6, 19. You are not your own.

You were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies. Do I view my life in that way? Do I view Monday as being the Lord's day as much as Sunday?

[35 : 58] And Tuesday is the Lord's day. Wednesday is the Lord's day. And Thursday is the Lord's day. Because every day I live for the Lord. And when I'm washing up, it's for the Lord.

And when I'm hoovering, it's for the Lord. And when I'm servicing the car, it's for the Lord. And when I'm cutting the grass, it's for the Lord. And when I'm visiting the sick, it's for the Lord. And when I'm helping young people, telling them the gospel, it's for the Lord.

We see as well here, dear friends, that not only were the Levites to give them, were to be given as an offering to God, but they were to give the very best of their lives for God.

Verses 24 to 26. This applies to the Levites. Men 25 years old or more shall come to take part in the work at the tent meeting.

At the age of 50, they must retire. Yes! I'm 51! I can retire! Some of you are slightly older than 51.

[37 : 04] You can think, Oh, it's great. I can take it easy now. I've done all that work for the Lord in my life so far. Oh, it's great. Now I can sit back and put my feet up and just come along on a Sunday when I feel like it.

That's it. That's not the point. The point is this here. Firstly, These men were to give the very best of their energies while they were young to the Lord.

They were to serve him fully and wholeheartedly when their minds were the sharpest. We're to give to God the very best that we have.

The best of who we are. Not just the rag ends of our time. The scrag ends of our affections, of our service, of our love.

We're to give him the best of all. And just to put you right, if you think that when you get to 50 or 60 or 70 or 80 or 90, or even if you get to 100, that you can suddenly now turn off, then just read the rest.

[38 : 14] At the age of 50, they must retire from their usual duties, usual duties, and work no longer. They may assist their brothers in performing their duties at the tent of meeting.

In other words, it's a change of ministry, but it's still serving the Lord. So I'm sorry, there are no retirees in this church.

Okay? You're not let off. And why would we want to be? You see, again, if we are serving the Lord out of a sense of duty and coercion and because it's a burden, and well, I've just got to do it because I'm a member and so it's expected of me, and if I don't attend these meetings, and if I don't do these duties, then the elders and Peter will be around my house to tell me off, then of course we'll want to retire.

But if we see serving the Lord as the very *raison d'être*, the reason that we live, the very purpose for which God saved us, then we're never going to want to stop. Would you take away from somebody the joy of something?

Imagine for a moment, you absolutely love gardening. It's hard for me to grasp beyond my comprehension. But for some of you, it's a joy.

[39 : 30] And in your life, you've worked as a gardener and you've worked your garden, your allotment, your plots. And you get to a point where you retire and think, that's it. I'm not doing any gardening anymore.

I'm just letting my garden overgrow. I can't be bothered with it anymore. But you love it. You enjoy it. You love getting down and your hands dirty and full of mud and planting plants and pruning trees.

So you're going to do it as long as you possibly can. But the strength that you can, that's how we're to view the service of the Lord. That's how we're to view living for Christ.

It's not something that I've got to do. It's not something that I'm forced to do. It's something that I love doing. I don't want it taken away from me. I know that there comes a point in all of our lives when we have to change what we can do.

We don't have the same strength we once had or vigor we once had. But there is always, always, always things to be done. There's always a light that needs to shine in a dark place.

[40 : 31] And wherever you are, dear friend, whatever home you come from, whatever place you frequent, you're a light there in that dark place. Possibly the only light.

light. And you have to shine for Jesus. How do we do that very quickly as we change, as we bring to a close? How do we do that very simply from Scripture?

How do we shine actively? How do we live as men and women of God and serve Him? First of all, by doing good. What did Jesus say, Matthew 5, 16, after He talked about you are the light of the world, let your light shine before others that they may see your good works or your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Doing good. Loving one another. Encouraging one another. Helping one another. I mean, we can, may not be able to do all the things that others can do. But we're to do good to one another, especially as believers.

Galatians 6, let us do good to all people, but especially to those who belong to the family of believers. What did Jesus say? The world will notice that you're my disciples because of your love for one another.

[41 : 48] Then, of course, we're to shine by speaking the gospel to unbelievers, by telling them of the Lord Jesus. Yes, they're to see it in our lives. It has to be a visible illustration of the power of the gospel in transformed lives, but we must speak to them too.

We can't just take it for granted that, oh, they know what I believe. Philippians 2, verse 15, Paul, as we've already mentioned, as you shine among them like stars, as you hold out the word of life, or hold firmly the word of life, or live the word of life.

As we preach the gospel, as we speak of Christ, we say, why do you do the things you do? Why are you the person that you are? Why is it that you are caring and loving and supportive and so on? It's because Christ lives in me, and my life has purpose and meaning and reason, and it's to live for him.

Again, in that same passage, in Philippians 2, just previously that, Paul has said that word and life must go together.

If this cap fits you, you'll know it. Do everything without grumbling or arguing. Well, everything without grumbling and arguing.

[43 : 12] Everything? Yeah, everything. Finally, dear friends, above all else, we shine like Jesus when we love one another.

1 John chapter 2, anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light. have I forgiven them? Have I made amends?

Have I reconciled? Am I loving? Let's pray together. it's incredible to us, oh Lord, our God, that you have bestowed upon us such an amazing privilege that we should be the light of the world, that we should share in this incredible ministry of the Lord Jesus, of shining light into dark places.

Thank you, this is our right and proper service. This is what our lives are for. This is why you saved us. This is what you want from us, Lord, and desire from us.

Lord, we can't repay you. We don't want to try and repay you. We can't do things, as it were, to make you like us or love us. It's all of your grace.

[44 : 35] Nothing of what we've done, but, oh Lord, you want us to live for you because living for you is the absolute best. Living for you and shining for you.

Oh Lord, there's nothing that compares to that. Nothing, nothing that we can possibly do comes close to the joy and the delight and the contentment and the fulfillment. Living for you.

We pray, Lord, that as we've been challenged again by your word this evening, as we've seen once more, that your people of old were also meant to be men and women of holiness.

So we pray that you would cleanse us even now where there's besetting sins in our lives, attitudes, where we've looked at serving you and worshipping you and living for you as something hard or difficult or unpleasant even.

Please work, change, fit us for your service and for your praise. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Therefore, for I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.

[45 : 53] This is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Amen. Amen.