

11/3/24; Steve McCausland (visiting EFCA area leader) Matt. 5:14-16 and Jeremiah 29:7.

Main Idea: “Seek the welfare of the city God put you in. In its welfare, you will find yours.” Did you see that as the main idea?

Sermon Summary: God’s glory and intimate involvement shouts in His creation. We see it in everyday things like apples—if we have eyes to see it. We, God’s church, should also be telling of the glory of God. We are a city on a mountain. We are the light of the world—in Chicago. We are not to stay hidden—but rather be very visible. God intended it this way. If we want the welfare of Chicago, then Chicago will be our welfare. God is at work here. He desires to use us—to use you. Will we shine his light?

Sermon Outline:

- We are to be like apples. People should be able to “reverse engineer” us and see how the true and living God beautifully regenerated us in Christ.
- Matt. 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
 - Israel was to spread God’s commands to the world—being a high city and light. But they kept it to themselves.
 - Isa. 65:5; “Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you. These practices are smoke in my nostrils.”
 - Christians are to be the opposite—not hidden--cities on mountaintops and lights not under a basket. Others are to see our good works and give glory to our Father. As image bearers, we are to be mirrors reflecting God’s light.
- Jeremiah 29:7; But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.
 - Miraculously God converted King Nebuchadnezzar. He can do that with anyone (Daniel 4).
- Evangelical Free Church—free from state control and the corrupting influence of false Lutheranism---Scandinavian revival
 - E Free Church: 3 eggs of churches thriving in Chicago

Discussion Questions (select several to discuss):

1. Few of us have thought about how an apple reflects God’s glory. Ps. 19:1 and Rom. 1:20 say the heavens are telling the glory of God.
 - a. Is there anything (besides an apple and the heavens) that makes you think of how glorious God is?
2. Do you think of yourself as God’s image bearer? What does that look like in your life?

3. In Jeremiah 29:7, note that it is God who sent Israel to Babylon in exile.
 - a. Do you feel “out of step” with friends, colleagues, associates? How?
 - b. God wants us to pray for the welfare of Chicago (or your suburb). Do you?
 - c. What does it mean that in Chicago’s welfare, we will find out welfare?

4. In 1 Cor. 11:1 Paul says, “Be imitators of me as I am of Christ”. In other words, let your godly light shine brightly. Would you be comfortable saying to someone “follow me as I follow Christ”? Explain.

5. What does it mean for a Christ follower to be a city on a mountaintop or a light on a stand for all to see?
 - a. Describe what living this way means. Do you fear living this way? Why?
 - b. What are some practical ways you can—or actually have—lived your faith out this way?
 - c. Have you ever been a “fool” for Christ? (See Acts 5:41 or 2 Cor. 12:10)

6. Steve gave us examples of 3 EFCA churches that have unique ministries. Did any in particular impact you?

7. Food appears to be a fairly common method to help in reaching out to the lost. Why is this?
 - a. Do you practice hospitality? Can you think of any folks you could reach out to with a shared meal?