

HOME GROUPS

leader's guide

topic: city on a hill

scripture: matthew 5:14-16

points for review

- Jesus tells the disciples that they are the light of the world, and then likens them to a city on a hill.
- Jesus explains that lamps aren't made for hiding, but for putting on a table in order to give light to the entire building.
- He goes on to state that we are spiritual lamps for the world, and that we should let ourselves shine before others, so that they may see Jesus clearly.
- Cities are comprised of two major characteristics: density & diversity. The church should be as dense and as diverse as any city.
- How can a city be hidden? In a sense, it is hidden if it is ignored. Cities are noteworthy for one thing and one thing only: culture. If a city has no notable culture, it will be ignored. We should be known and seen for our God-centered culture.

questions for discussion

- Why do you think Jesus immediately correlates being lights in the world with being cities on a hill?
Cities are indeed lights in the world, particularly for 1st century Palestine, where there was no electricity. In cities, there were lamps being burned, and so they would've stuck out to travelers along the road looking for civilization. In the same way, spiritual travelers are simply looking for a place where they can rest and drink: the Gospel. We are to be cities of light proclaiming "There's civilization here! Come, rest, drink."
- What do you think about the contradiction between Jesus saying "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14) and "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12)?

We are only lights because He is. Just as in the heavenly city of the Kingdom of God the light of Jesus' face shines through the gemstones, the walls, and the streets (Revelation 22:5,23), so it should be in the earthly cities of the Kingdom of God, the local churches. We should be living as magnifying glasses, so as the light of Jesus shines through us, people may see it and be in awe of how beautiful He is.

- How does the Gospel apply to our conversation about being lights and cities?

Before we are seen as righteous before God, we are at best glasses of murky water. Nothing shines through us clearly. But after clinging to the cross & resurrection for our salvation, we are clean before Him, and He shines through us despite our struggles. In the same way that we are able to love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19), so we can shine to others because He shined in us.

- What role do you think God has for you in building a city (Harmony Church) within a city (Greenville, NC)? What do you need in order to fulfill that role?
This differs according to group and person. Be sure that if there are any tangible expressions of what people need to be equipped (roles, education on particular subjects, etc), that the respective people are informed so that that person can be equipped to do the work of ministry that God has called them to.

- What is culture?

Simply, culture is what people create and do when gathered in community.

- What does a God-centered culture in Greenville look like?

Here, brainstorm what it would look like if people came to Jesus in great numbers. Be specific as possible! You're casting a vision for yourself, your group, and Harmony Church at large. If people get a glimpse of what a Jesus-centered city looks like, they'll be more apt to assist in building it!

pray for one another & dismiss to fellowship