

# polarizing

/poh-luh-rye-zing/

## SERMON DISCUSSION

### Let Your Light Shine

#### Quotable Moments:

- Difference is inevitable. Division is a choice.
- Jesus was the King who came to reverse the order of things.

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:14-16

#### Key Things You Heard:

- Are you willing to evaluate your politics through the filter of our faith instead of creating a version of faith that supports your politics?
- There are three unique dynamics that have merged to create the perfect storm of confusion in the church:
  - Everything is politicized
  - Cancel culture
  - Culture War Christianity
- Culture War Christianity sets up the church to be a tool of politicians rather than the conscience of the nation.
- Pliny the Younger wrote: *"The sum and substance of [the Christians] fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god... and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. I, therefore, postponed the investigation and hastened to consult you. For the matter seemed to me to warrant consulting you, especially because of the number involved. For many persons of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes are and will be endangered. For the contagion of this superstition has spread not only to the cities but also to the villages and farms."*
- What gives credibility to your life is that you love others as He loved you.

**Pray:** Jesus, thank you for the freedoms that we enjoy in America. I confess my sin of hiding my light rather than letting it shine. Help me to see the opportunities around me this week to let my light shine through my actions and my reactions. Help me to love others around me, even those who I may see as different from me. I commit to be FOR others, and in doing so, point them to You.  
In Jesus' name, Amen.

#### Questions for Group Discussion:

**First Minutes:** As we celebrated our nation's independence this week, what is it about living in America that you are thankful for?

- Read the excerpt from Pliny the Younger's appeal to the Emperor. What stands out to you? How would you describe the difficult situation he was placed into?
- Think over the last week of a time when you had feelings of love, or caring, or pity because you saw or heard of someone being treated unkindly. What is the difference between having feelings and taking action? Which do we see Jesus doing?
- "Read Matthew 5:14. Who is the "you" Jesus is talking to? Who is the "world"."
- Read Matthew 5:15. What is significant about the illustrations of light that Jesus used?
- Read Matthew 5:16. Why do you think Jesus equated "letting our light shine" with our good deeds, rather than our feelings or our words? What is the ultimate purpose of letting your light shine?
- Why is it often easier to hide our light rather than let it shine? What are some ways that we hide it?
- What will you do this week to disagree politically, love unconditionally, and pray for unity?

#### Moving Forward:

- Repent of any sin of disunity in your life.
- Commit to disagree politically, love unconditionally, and pray for unity.
- Read *Until Unity* by Francis Chan
- Read *Not In It To Win It* by Andy Stanley
- Re-watch and/or share the sermon with a friend. Go to [rivertown.cc](http://rivertown.cc) or the RCC App.