



Be the light



A theme interpretation and scriptural exegesis for the 2025 One Great Hour of Sharing

“You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.” ~Matthew 5:14, The Message

The fifth chapter of Matthew’s Gospel opens with the Sermon on the Mount and Beatitudes. At first glance, Jesus’ words are shocking—people who are burdened in mind, body, and spirit are actually blessed!

Despite their situation or condition, they are already winning...or maybe, it is because of their pain that blessings come. The anxiety, fear, grief, confusion, hunger, discouragement, and despair they experience actually put them closer to God. Jesus does not glorify pain; rather, he teaches that such suffering puts them first in God’s heart. God is there to help and heal—as a gift, no conditions, and no strings. They are part of God’s family, God’s Reign, and God’s Kingdom. God’s Kingdom is more than a place or future destination—it is a relationship with a loving and just God.

Jesus does not sugar-coat the reality of most people during his day. He declares that their suffering is not the end of the story. God sees them and hears their cries; God moves to alleviate their pain, in the short run and the long run. God’s Reign of love and healing is already happening—bringing life out of death, joy out of sorrow, hope out of despair.

Jesus cautions that the response to God’s blessing is not one of passivity. He makes clear that God’s children are blessed and are to be a blessing to and for others; those who receive, are to give back.

God’s Reign is not a spectator sport; the faithful do not have the option to sit back and watch events unfold. They are invited and challenged to be something and to do something. Followers of Jesus are transformed—from the inside out—as they receive the gifts of God’s grace and are called to gift others with love, compassion, and generosity.

Jesus’ entire ministry is active—teaching, preaching, healing, connecting. Jesus sets the standard for “Kingdom-living”—where love, unity, and harmony are the benchmarks for community life. Jesus invites us all to be active—doing what we can to embody compassion; to stand up for equity and fairness; to care for those in need without seeking reward or notoriety. Jesus teaches his disciples—and us—that God’s Reign is a present reality and a future hope.

For Jesus, God’s Reign is about forming communities of diverse people, living as siblings, caring for each other and the created order; communities of justice and love where all are fed, sheltered, healed, and safe. Jesus declares that God’s Reign is happening right now, even as we wait for its fulfillment.

Jesus invites his listeners—and us—to live fully into the gift and grace God offers—be the gift that keeps on giving; be the light that keeps on shining. Many of the ordinary people listening to, and eavesdropping on, Jesus’ conversation with his disciples that day understand and dedicate themselves to the challenge.

Jesus assures us that we are what God intends—open-hearted, generous, compassionate—it’s already in us. By fully living into our identity as children of God, we spread God-colors throughout the world...bearing light and hope and love to a desperate and dying world.

Have you ever watched suncatchers? Suncatchers are ornaments made of glass, crystal, or some translucent material. Usually hung in a window or outdoors, suncatchers spin to reflect and filter light, casting color in the area surrounding them—hues of blue and red and green and purple and yellow: a limitless array of colors and patterns that symbolize warmth, love, compassion, generosity, hospitality. Suncatchers bear and spread color—just as our good deeds bear light and send color into the world.

Be light—in your home, church, and community. Tutor students after school; make a casserole for a bereaved family; gather signatures for petitions that highlight important issues; pick up trash around your neighborhood; make blankets for the unsheltered—let the need beckon you to action.

Be light—in the world by making a generous contribution to One Great Hour of Sharing. Your gift supports those who are doing ministry throughout the United States and across the globe—bringing hope, expertise, compassion, and love to places we may never visit and people we may never meet. Your giving to OGHS provides funding and hands-on assistance and promotes collaboration with local and international partners.

Be the light! For the sake of sisters and brothers who have renewed hope because you care enough to shine.

Be the light! So that women and men around the world can find their way and know that there is a path forward.

Be the light! Sharing God-colors with all you encounter!

Give generously to One Great Hour of Sharing! Follow in the footsteps of The Light of the World! Shine brightly!

Learn more about this year’s One Great Hour of Sharing (suggested date: March 16) and find worship resources at www.brethren.org/oghs. Give an offering today at www.brethren.org/giveoffering.