



Share the light



A theme interpretation and scriptural exegesis for the 2024 One Great Hour of Sharing

*“Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous [Parent] in heaven.”
~Matthew 5:14-16, The Message*

***This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine...
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine...¹***

If Jesus had a playlist of music, surely this familiar hymn would be among the Top Five; at least, Matthew’s Jesus would rank it high.

Matthew opens the Gospel by placing Jesus squarely within the story of God’s ongoing relationship to and intention for humanity—people called into God’s own household, as sons and daughters, grounded in loving connection to each other and creation. God invites all of humanity into God’s house, regardless of nationality, tribal affiliation, social status, or gender.

As the fulfillment of Israel’s hopes and purposes, Jesus calls men and women to follow him—and they do. He names them disciples—and they are. He outlines their responsibilities—and they respond. Their lives are transformed and they begin living from the inside out—less for themselves and more for others.

Jesus teaches that faith calls for action—as a response to the God who loves them unconditionally. They are now co-creators with God to bring peace, harmony, unity, compassion, care, love—*shalom*—right now.

Discipleship is like the kaleidoscope—an optical tube containing loose bits of colored material between two plates and two mirrors; when turned, the bits of material are reflected in an endless variety of patterns.²

¹ *Lift Every Voice and Sing II: An African American Hymnal* (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 1993), #221.

² www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kaleidoscope

Cozy Baker, kaleidoscope enthusiast and founder of the Brewster Society³, says:

*To me kaleidoscopes are divine inspiration; they resonate to the music in my soul and the imagery is exactly what my heart yearns to see. I view the kaleidoscope's image as a warm embrace - one more colorful expression of God's love toward all creation.*⁴

Sharing our light, as the diverse and colorful expression of God's love here on earth, leads to making blankets, staffing food pantries, cooking meals, building houses and schools, signing petitions for worthy causes, and protesting injustices.

We also share the light through our contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)—supporting sisters and brothers after natural disasters; providing care and safety in places where war rages and poverty prevails; sharing techniques for sustainable agriculture, energy efficiency, and clean water; and advocating for the dignity of those who are marginalized.

Each of our playlists should include the hymn, "This Little Light of Mine." A simple song with a simple message—let your light shine, share in the kaleidoscope of care and love. Your light is on a light stand, for all to see—shine and share.

On any given day, in any given place, in the midst of any given situation, light is shining because we are there through our gifts to OGHS.

Your contributions make a difference. Your dollars count. Give generously. Share the light.

Give an offering to One Great Hour of Sharing today at www.brethren.org/giveoffering.

³ *Named for the inventor of the kaleidoscope, David Brewster*

⁴ Cozy Baker, News Scope, spring, 2004; Cozy Baker - Brewster Kaleidoscope Society (brewstersociety.com)