

# Time to Shine

Matthew 5:14-16

## Launch

The COVID-19 virus has a spectrum of reactions, from “Why all the fuss?” to “We’re all gonna die!” Where do you fall on this spectrum?

*(Alternate Launch question: Do you know where I can still find toilet paper?)*

## Explore

### Read the passage

Scripture often uses the metaphor of light. What is the purpose/function of light? What does light actually represent in this passage?

What does it mean to put a lamp under a basket? Why would a person hide their light?

According to verse 16, what is the ultimate goal of letting our light shine?

## Apply

Who is a person you know who has been a good model of being light in the darkness? What about this person stands out?

Many of us are guilty of hiding our light under a basket. How has this been true of you in the past?

*Read and discuss the story of the next page.* What lessons does this story teach for today? Is there anything you disagree with? Are confused by? Want to learn more about?

What is one practical way you will shine the light of Jesus in this dark time?

## Pray

Pray that we serve the vulnerable, speak with faith, and pray with power during this season of uncertainty.

In the middle of the 3rd Century there was a pandemic that swept across the Mediterranean world. At the height of what became known as the Plague of Cyprian, 5000 people died every day in the city of Rome. And in Alexandria, Egypt, two-thirds of the population was completely wiped out.

The Roman Empire was not ready to handle this epidemic. Scientists knew of no treatment other than to avoid all contact with diseased people. Doctors, priests, and nobles fled infected areas in droves.

But you know who didn't? The church. This small group of Christians wanted to express God's love by serving people with deeds of compassion. So even before the plagues, the local church in Rome supplied food for 1500 poor people every day. In Antioch, Syria, the number was 3000.

At the height of the Plague, when nearly everyone else fled, the early Christians risked their lives by doing simple deeds like washing the sick, offering water and food, and consoling the dying.

The believers not only took care of their own, but also reached out to their neighbors. At the risk of their own lives, they saved an immense number of people: the basic medical care they offered greatly reduced mortality rates and the food and water they provided allowed the sick who were too weak to care for themselves to recover.

In the midst of chaos, and in an era when serving others was seen as demeaning, Christians served people anyway. And the Roman Empire took notice. "Look how they love," was heard on the streets.

Author Charles Moore says, "Instead of retreating from the onslaught of pain and death, the church has the chance to demonstrate that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Instead of fear, which makes it difficult to look beyond the precautionary, followers of Christ can show the world that it is in giving our lives away that we find life."