

Let your light shine.

Welcome to the first Sunday of the new year. A new beginning. A chance to start out on a new path, change it up, turn over a new leaf, start a hobby, quit a bad habit, get into shape, say hello to the new possibilities and good bye to those negative nellys. We have all gone the route of the New Year's Resolutions just to have them come crashing down a few days, weeks, or months later.

But today, I want to submit to you a New Year's resolution that we can all do. It doesn't require the purchase of expensive equipment or gym memberships. You don't need special gear or clothing. You can do it anywhere and anytime. You can do it alone, with a friend, or with a large group. You already have everything that you need.

In our reading today, you are told to "Arise and shine, for your light has come." The light that it is referring to is GOD's glory. The darkness they are talking about is not the darkness of night, nor the absence of light, they are talking about Evil. The Evil that is in man's soul, that makes him do horrendous deeds, and takes him down a dark path. But that path has many off ramps to take if there is just a little bit of light to see them.

The light from a single candle is not bright when compared to the light from your average bedside lamp, however, if you gather enough candles together, you can light our sanctuary very nicely. In fact, we have done it every Christmas Eve during the Candle Light Service. It is breath taking.

Why am I telling you this? What possible connection is there between the light from a single candle and that dark path leading down, down, down, with off ramps that are unseen? Well, I am glad that you asked.

In 2015, Texas A&M Astronomers, Kevin Krisciunas and Don Carona, went about determining just how far the light from a single candle could be seen by the average, unaided, human eye. They knew how to graph and chart the brightness levels of the stars and decided that they could use that to work out a formula that could answer that very question. The brightest star in our night sky is Vega. It has the brightness magnitude of 0. The dimmest star that the average human eye can see unaided has a brightness magnitude of 6. After doing lots of calculating and figuring, they came to the conclusion that the candles flame can be seen about 1.6 miles away at night. My source is from an article in the MIT Technology Review online magazine, written by Emerging Technology from the arXiv dated July 31, 2015.

Now, getting back to our scriptures, if you believe in the LORD and honor him in your life, you have the light of Jesus in you. You are the carrier of the LORDs light. But it is not yours alone. To horde his light for yourself is to slowly fade away. No, you should let your light shine, to glorify the LORD. Your light could be the light illuminating that off ramp. Your single flame. It only takes 1.

Now, about this resolution. Our very own Chris Draxler has been organizing little get togethers for the campus students on stressful days such as finals week, or move in day, for awhile now. She calls them P.A.C.K. Planned Acts of Christian Kindness. A bottle of water here, a few candies there, a kind word, a smile, just to let the students know that somebody cares. Everyone who has ever participated in one of these outings has gone away with huge smiles and warm feelings, knowing that they had a part in making a new friend, or putting a smile on someone's face, or just making a stressful day a little less stressful.

We have several ministries that could use a little "light". The Beacon House, the Community Table, as well as the Street ministries. What I am proposing is that we make this year the brightest year we have seen since GOD said "Let there be light".

It only takes one candle to light a path, can you imagine what we could do if we were to combine our light? Combine our love of Jesus and the light that we have inside of us. This is something that we can do. It doesn't take much. In fact, you can start with a simple "good Morning" to your co-workers. Maybe offer help to someone who is struggling. Let your love of Jesus shine whenever possible, and together, we will see a brighter year.

This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine.

This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine.

This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine.

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

I've got the light of Jesus in me, you've got it too.

I've got the light of Jesus in me, you've got it too.

I've got the light of Jesus in me, you've got it too.

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Repeat the first verse.