

groups.

— Notes | May 17th, 2026

Church Unbranded: A City of Light

Today, our Student Ministry brought Wednesdays to Sunday as we continued the Church Unbranded series. Many think church is just for perfect people who look put together on the outside. But in Matthew 5:14–16, Jesus describes His church as a “city of light” shining into a dark world. This light is the new life that comes when we are transformed by Jesus and filled with the Holy Spirit. However, a dark world cannot be changed by isolated individuals. Our individual lights must come together as a city to make a real change. Because of the light we have received, we are called to focus outwardly and take on a greater role in the church. Together, we shine so that our families, workplaces, schools, and communities can clearly see the hope Jesus brings.

Key Scripture | Matthew 5:14-16

14. “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. **15.** Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. **16.** In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” **Matthew 5:14-16**

Related Scriptures

— John 8:12, 1 John 1:5

Icebreaker:

Q: It was great to see our Student Ministry in action today. What was your experience with church like when you were a teenager?

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Key Thoughts and Reflections:

I. Jesus is the SOURCE of our Light

Q: What does it look like for Jesus to be your source of life and light?

Q: In what ways have you personally experienced Jesus bringing light or life into an area of darkness?

Q: Why do you think Jesus used the imagery of light and darkness to describe the world and His people?

II. We reflect God's Light

Q: Why do you think people are often hesitant to visibly live out their faith?

Q: What things hold you back from visibly living out your faith?

Q: How can someone reflect the light of Jesus at school, work, or in friendships without coming across as fake or forced?

III. The Church shines light via Community

Q: When have you experienced meaningful support or encouragement from Christian community?

Q: What are the biggest barriers that keep you from opening up and connecting deeply in church?

Q: Why do you think isolation makes it easier to stay in darkness?

Get Practical

As Christians, we are called to reflect the light of Jesus. When we do this collectively as a Church, the impact is huge! When we are in community with one another, our light becomes greater. We talked about how one way we can make an impact together is through serving. Have you taken time recently to reflect on what God's purpose for your life is? It's a big question. Take some time to pray and ask God about the ways you can live out His plan and purpose for your life; through your relationships, what you give your time and money to, where you are carrying the light of the gospel, or how you are connected to God's plan for our church.

If you haven't found a place to serve yet, consider joining Growth track at 12Stone. It is a 3-week experience that will help you to discover your unique, God-given design. God has created us to be a beautifully diverse church! What is your place in the body of Christ? Growth Track is a great place to explore that.

If you're already serving, thank you! Take a few minutes to pray for all the different teams across 12Stone that are making a difference and helping the city on a hill to shine brightly so others will come to know Jesus!