

Luke 8:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

Analysis

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. Jesus transitions from soil parables to lamp imagery. The Greek *luchnos* (λύχνος) refers to a small oil lamp, the primary light source in first-century homes. The absurdity is obvious: no one lights a lamp to hide it under a **vessel** (*skeuos*, σκεῦος, container) or **bed** (*klinē*, κλίνη, couch)—that defeats the lamp's purpose and creates fire hazard.

Instead, **setteth it on a candlestick** (*epitithēsin epi luchnia, ἐπιτίθησιν ἐπὶ λυχνία*)—a lampstand elevating the light for maximum visibility, **that they which enter in may see the light** (*hina hoi eisporeuomenoi blepōsin to phōs, ἵνα οἱ εἰσπορευόμενοι βλέπωσιν τὸ φῶς*). Light exists to illuminate. The application to disciples is clear: those who receive God's word (the good soil, v. 15) become light-bearers responsible for illuminating others. Faith is not private spirituality but public witness. Christ's light in believers must shine visibly, benefiting all who encounter them.

Historical Context

First-century Palestinian homes were typically small, single-room structures with few windows, making artificial light essential after sunset. Oil lamps—small clay vessels with wick and olive oil—provided modest illumination. A lampstand (often a

simple niche in the wall or small stand) maximized the lamp's effectiveness. The cultural context makes Jesus's point unmistakable: light exists to dispel darkness, not be hidden. In biblical symbolism, light represents truth, revelation, righteousness, and God's presence (Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 60:1-3; John 1:4-9, 8:12). Jesus called Himself 'the light of the world' (John 8:12) and commanded disciples: 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven' (Matthew 5:14-16). This verse challenges disciples to live openly obedient lives that testify to Christ's transforming power.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What might 'covering the light' look like practically—ways we hide our faith rather than letting it shine?
2. How does the purpose clause 'that they which enter in may see the light' define the Christian's responsibility to others?
3. In what ways can believers ensure their lives illuminate Christ rather than drawing attention to themselves?

Interlinear Text

Οὐδεὶς	δὲ	λύχνον	ἄψας	καλύπτει	αὐτὸν
No man G3762	G1161	a candle G3088	when he hath lighted G681	covereth G2572	it G846
σκεύει	ἢ	ὑποκάτω	κλίνης	τίθησιν	ἀλλ' ἐπὶ
with a vessel G4632	or G2228	it under G5270	a bed G2825	putteth G5087	but it on G235 G1909
λυχνίας	ἐπιτίθησιν,	ἵνα	οἱ	εἰσπορευόμενοι	βλέπωσιν
a candlestick G3087	setteth G2007	that G2443	G3588	they which enter in G1531	may see G991
τὸ	φῶς				
G3588	the light G5457				

Additional Cross-References

Luke 11:33 (Light): No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

Acts 26:18 (Light): To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Revelation 11:4 (Parallel theme): These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.