

LAMENT OF THE WEARY / LIGHT SO SHINE (ISOLATION KILLS)

The song is based on Matthew 5:14-16 and is about exiting self-imposed isolation and a reclusive existence imprisoned by fear of outside contact and distrust of people, in favor of living courageously as a light to the world in service to Jesus my King. It's a story about one man's daily struggle with fear, anxiety, and extreme agoraphobia. The sound of the opening door is my personal watershed: Jesus stands at the door which leads to eternal light and life, and I've chosen to walk through it and shine in His royal service as a warrior, discarding fear for faith. The metaphors here are simple and scriptural: "Can't hide in a bushel" and "Can't live in a bubble" refer to remaining in isolation or a reclusive lifestyle and thereby cutting oneself off from any opportunity to be a light, an example, an encourager to others who are hurting. Hence, preemptively "isolation kills" not only these opportunities but also one's own soul since spiritual growth and social interaction in this world are required as disciples of Christ. If we are not shining as lights or interacting with others about Jesus in this broken world of darkness, we are contributing to the advancing of darkness.

*"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket [bushel, KJV], but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven**" (Matthew 5:14-16).*

*"The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us **cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light**" (Romans 13:12).*

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Introductory Synopsis: Setting the Context

Once upon a time, I hated people in general and avoided most contact. However, I used to blame others for what turned out to be my own deficiencies. I didn't like the presence of people because I was a fearful and insecure person myself. (I struggle daily with multiple fears, but the difference today is that I recognize it and let it teach me dependence on Jesus.) Plus, I've always had a general distrust of people, so I felt justified in my loathing and aloofness toward others. Also, I'm always fearful of saying the wrong thing, or looking stupid in front of anyone, let alone a crowd. So, I would react by deflecting blame (people can't be trusted and are judgmental), closing myself off from social contact (no chance of getting hurt), and limiting my interactions to only essential transactions (shopping, paying a vendor).

As a disciple of Jesus, I've learned that's unacceptable attitudes and behavior. I'm not only saved from sin but also a redeemed warrior enlisted into real spiritual warfare to be waged against the flesh, the world, and the devil—on a DAILY basis. *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and **take up his cross daily and follow me**" (Luke 9:23).* I'm part of a team, the organic "Body of Christ." No plays off because the enemy of souls is 24/7 and 365. I must die daily to self and live for my King who has called me to be "a good soldier and to fight the good fight of faith," enduring till the end (either my death or His return, whichever comes first is my "end"). I can't fight as I'm called to do *in the world* while remaining indoors and isolating from contact. Isolation is disobedience to the call of God. Jesus in me can do all things God calls me to do. To isolate is to act otherwise.

The main idea here: Jesus calls us to shine as lights in this darkened world over which Satan presides. God calls us to discard fearful attitudes and follow Jesus' example, who "went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people" (Matthew 4:23). Jesus is the Light of life.