

# Let Life Shine

Let life shine, a simple phrase and a powerful statement. God has prepared a unique life and calling for each person under Heaven. That life begins at conception and ends at natural death. As the Bible says in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." These plans include sharing this hope that is in us, encouraging others, being a light.

A few years ago, I had the honor of meeting Merle Caldwell, a WWII Veteran and powerful Christian. He often used the stories of his experiences in the war to share his faith in God. He didn't limit his reach to only word of mouth, however. He also wrote and published a book titled, "What I Learned About God in My First 99 Years" where he reflects on the many times that he could see God working in his life. After the war, Merle went into the ministry until he retired in 1995. But for Merle, retiring didn't mean he just sat back and did nothing. Retiring only changed his mission field to include ministering to people in Oregon, Canada, Indonesia, and Japan. During his time in the ministry, and in retirement he continued to use his experiences as a platform to shine his light and share his faith with many others. Merle passed from this life on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021, after living a light-filled 101 years, and through his story, is still inspiring many believers to this day. He now can truly say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7) Merle Caldwell's last words sum up his life as he said, "I wish people could see how much God loves us. We can't fathom it." From land to land, and sea to sea, Merle shone God's light for all to see.

The Bible states the truth in a way that no mere man could. In John 8:12, Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." No man knows these truths more than Paul did. Despite the many dangers that Paul faced throughout his travels, he continued to shine the light of Jesus with every opportunity God provided. In Ephesians 2:10, Paul adds, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." If this is true, then what right do people have to terminate the life of an unborn child without having any idea of the plans that God has for him? We must be the light that shines this truth for others to see.

With the above examples, I have truly learned that each life is a gift from God intended to shine His light throughout creation. From conception to natural death, only God knows what each person will become or accomplish. From Paul's Book of Corinthians in A.D. 55/56 to Merle Caldwell's "What I Learned About God in My First 99 Years" God has made it clear to me that indeed, we must let life shine!