**Daily Prayer & Encouragement – 1st December**

**Be Yourself and Shine!**

It was 1893 in Chicago. The big news was the World’s Fair had opened: a grand exposition to showcase innovation, creativity and diversity such as street lights and the first Ferris Wheel. It was a wonder of the age. Here, among thousands of visitors was a chance encounter between Frank Haven Hall and Helen Keller. Mr Hall was the inventor of a machine that could type in Braille. Helen Keller in 1893 was a teenager but she went on to become an author, political activist and lecturer. She was America’s first deaf-blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree. When Helen was introduced to Hall as the man who had invented her typewriter, she put her arms around his neck and hugged and kissed him. Forever afterwards, when Hall told the story of how he met Helen Keller, tears would fill his eyes.

Few of us may be a Frank Hall or a Helen Keller, but we are all unique; God has gifted us individually, he has a plan and a purpose for us. Whatever your gifts, they are God given and we have the freedom to use them! Great joy and satisfaction await’s us when we use them and who knows what God can do with them as we serve others. Why hold back? Be encouraged by the

Message version of **Matthew 5:14-26** to be yourself and shine!

“Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

***Prayer: Father God, thank you for all your good gifts. By your Spirit, help us to discover and use our talents and to shine better each day!***

*Gary Tyler*

