

Light of the World - Part 2

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 January 2023

Preacher: Kevin Smith, Senior Pastor

[0 : 00] I want to thank the praise team once again for leading us in song and for our dear sister Rachel sharing her testimony.

A testimony I believe can be multiplied in our church. Many of you have testimonies of God's grace and certainly want to have you share them as God gives us an opportunity.

Thank you. Thank you. So we praise God that yet he is yet at work at New City Fellowship.

Who knew? I knew. And many of you know. So praise God for his grace. We return to John chapter 8 and we continue to look at this very powerful passage of Jesus declaring himself to be the light of the world.

So we'll take another stab at it today and next week and see if we can mine it for all that it's worth because it is the word of God.

[1 : 18] I love the Bible. I don't know about you but I love the Bible. I love the word of God. It continues to blow me away.

The genius of God put to print. Wow. Father as we come to your great word. Father as we come to your great word we are struck by its depth.

By its piercing rays. It knows us because you know us. It's your word. It is you speaking in these pages.

You know us. You know us better than we know ourselves. We think we know us. But you show us the truth. Oh Lord give us ears to hear.

Give us grace. To not sit in judgment of your word but to sit under your word. Lord we pray we have its work now. That you by your spirit would speak to us through it.

[2 : 23] That we would have ears to hear. That we would have hearts to want what you show us here of Jesus your son. Oh Lord Jesus.

Be everything to us. Be the light of the world to us. Show us how we can follow you in light.

Speak for your servants are listening. And Lord if any of us in this room or online have not come to see your light yet.

Let today be the day. Let today be the day for somebody. That their eyes are open. As you opened our eyes. We weren't born with eyes open. You opened our eyes.

May you open someone's eyes today. Shine light in their soul. Use your unworthy servant now to proclaim your word clear and true. For Jesus.

[3 : 18] For Jesus oh father. For Jesus. Amen. John chapter 8. Once again beginning in verse 12. Again Jesus spoke to them saying.

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness. But will have the light of life. So the Pharisee said to him.

You are bearing witness about yourself. Your testimony is not true. Jesus answered. Even if I do bear witness about myself. My testimony is true. For I know where I come from and where I'm going.

But you do not know where I come from. Or where I'm going. You judge according to the flesh. I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge. My judgment is true.

For it is not I alone who judge. But I and the father who sent me. In your law it is written. That the testimony of two people is true. I am the one who bears witness about myself.

[4 : 17] And the father who sent me. Bears witness about me. They said to him therefore. Where is your father? Jesus answered. You know neither me nor my father.

If you knew me. You would know my father also. These words he spoke in the treasury. As he taught in the temple. But no one arrested him. Because his hour.

Had not yet come. That is the word of the Lord. Please be seated. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
[5 : 22] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. at some. Amen. Amen. Amen.
but not today.

The fact that we are celebrating the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is also proof that the world is a dark place. Next month, even our nation and our church will celebrate African American History Month is again proof of this.

We're noticing in those two holidays or two times, we're noticing that racism is sin. Our nation was birthed in it and so it remains in our DNA even though there have been great improvements, praise God.

It may not be the worst sin, maybe, but the damage racism has done is catastrophic and it still exists. Brothers and sisters, sin doesn't go away.

You understand that, right? Sin doesn't go away. Sin is attached to humanity like a starving man at a buffet. I don't know of any nation that has managed to eradicate it, do you?

[6 : 38] Let me know. If you find a nation that has eradicated sin, I'm going. I'm leaving here. I'm heading there. How many sins can you name that just go away?

Can you name one? They just go away if you don't mention them or seek to deal with them through the gospel.

They just go away. Poof. So why are we surprised that racism still exists in this nation? Why are we surprised? I hate to say it, that we have to have Sanctity of Life Sunday.

By the way, those are both pro-life issues. Both of those are pro-life issues. If we understand what pro-life really means biblically.

Jesus shines his light on our corruption. And like roaches, we all want to run away from his light. But if we stay in the light, not run, stay.

[7 : 46] He will help you. He will help us to find victory over the darkness that lurks in all of us. Whatever our present darkness happens to be, the light of the world is more powerful.

But will you walk in the light? That is the question. Will you walk in the light?

Last time we focused on Jesus as the I Am, the God of the burning bush with Moses, remember? And then we began looking at what it means for him to be the light of the world. He exposes the world's darkness.

Remember the context. The living water of the gospel gives us life and sustains us. But the light of the gospel equips us to live in this spiritually dark world for Jesus.

We need the living water and we need the light of the world. And Jesus is both. We're all driving on various roads in this dark world. The problem is most people don't have headlights.

[8 : 52] And they're heading for a bend in the road and there's a 20 car pileup around the bend and it's about to be 21. Light reveals reality.

Light reveals what is true and biblically what is pure and what is good. So this morning, let's begin. Light walking with Jesus in his light has the power to continually transform us.

He says you will have the, if you follow him, you will have the light of life. The light of life. That's because there's transformation happening as we walk with Jesus.

He doesn't just guide us with his light. He remakes us with his light. One of the things about Bible study, keep in mind, if you have an author, see what other, see in his other writings, what you can learn about what you're looking at right there.

John wrote several books of the New Testament. The Gospel of John. But then if we turn to 1 John, 1 John expounds on many of the themes here in the Gospel of John.

[10 : 17] So let's do that real quick. Can I encourage you? I know we put the verses on the screen, but I'm old school. Bring a Bible. We got Bibles in the pews.

You can use them if you want. But bring a Bible. I know you can have it on your phone. You can have it on your Kindle. You can have it. But I want to encourage you to bring a Bible. I'm not putting all the verses on the screen. Some of them aren't going to be there like this one.

So if you have a Bible, turn to 1 John chapter 1, verses you all know. 1 John chapter 1, verses 5 through 10. We're going to stay in 1 John for a little bit, I think. So just stay right there.

1 John 1 and 2, actually. But 1 John, John's going to help us understand what it means that the light of Jesus transforms us. Now watch this. 1 John chapter 1, beginning at verse 5.

He said, This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

[11 : 15] If we say we have fellowship with him, he's the light, while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his son, cleanses us from all sin.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, oh, the grace of God, to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. What is John speaking here?

He shows us something, that Christ's light is the light of God. God's very nature, he says, is light. That is truth and purity.

[12 : 21] There is no darkness in him at all. He is absolutely and totally pure. One passage says that he's of such pure eyes that he can't even look upon sin. You see, that's the nature of God.

As a Christian, you have been bought into a relationship with God through Christ, which John calls fellowship. You and God now are doing life together, child of God.

You and God are doing life together. Isn't that a beautiful thought? You are not alone. Now, now, now, now listen. The light also, remember in the Old Testament especially, when we talk about the light, we talk about God's Shekinah glory, Shekinah glory.

That light, that blinding light. Walking, that light that lights up everything. If you get a picture of that, just think about that. It just lights up everything.

That's God. Walking with Jesus in that light by trusting in his word and work for you keeps you in a closed relationship with God.

[13 : 29] And in that close relationship, John is saying there is an ongoing cleansing of sin. You're being transformed.

There's an ongoing cleansing. Not just a one-time cleansing. That is true. And your sins are forgiven. And you are now set with God for life and into eternity.

But now he is telling us what Jesus, he's building on what Jesus said, that as we walk with him, because he knows we're messed up and we still fall, there is this ongoing cleansing.

It's beautiful. Because we need it. We experience the warmth and purity of his love and presence as well as guidance in all of our ways.

But then he says, but if you're walking in darkness and you claim to be a Christian, that is walking in darkness means living a lifestyle contrary to God's word, yet claiming to know Jesus, the light of the world.

[14 : 40] John says you're lying. That's Kevin Smith. So don't get mad at me. He's so harsh. He's so mean. I'm just reading the book. It's right there in front of you.

He says you're a liar. He says you can't live a life that's contrary to Christ. He didn't say you don't sin. He's talking about a lifestyle of living contrary to the light.

It's a habitual thing. Because none of us are perfectly righteous. None of us. He's not saying we must have perfectly righteous lives in order to walk in the light.

It's not saying that. Again, I want to be a fifth size. He's talking about a habitual lifestyle of darkness. Yet show up at church on Sunday and say, change me, oh God.

Make me ever new. He's saying you don't mean it. He's saying you're not really meaning it. You can mean it. It can happen. He can.

[15 : 46] You can mean him. He wants to do something. But until that happens, he says, no.

You're still walking in darkness. But here's the beautiful thing. When we get off the path, the child of God gets off the path and steps into the darkness for a minute.

I love it that what happens here is that the light convicts us. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just. That's conviction. You have conviction.

You have to be, something has to happen inside of you that says, oh no. I'm in the wrong place. Jesus' path is this way.

But I made a wrong turn. And if you are a child of God, that's the spirit of God telling you you're in the wrong place, son. Daughter, you're off the path. You've gone off the reservation. You were convicted. Let's us know we've made a wrong turn. And then corrects. I love the fact that God doesn't just convict.

[16:58] He doesn't make you feel the guilt of what you're doing is wrong. He corrects. He leads us back onto the path.

The right path. So that we can once again continue walking with Jesus toward the eternal city. As John Bunyan called heaven.

His light is continually making us new. Look at chapter 2. Remember, I'm going to stand first down. Go to chapter 2. He bears this out again.

My little children. I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin. He really is concerned that we stay on the path. Watch this.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. You've got a lawyer in the courtroom who will continually stand in your place.

[17:57] If you get off the path, he won't kick you off the family. He, speaking of Jesus, big Bible word is the propitiation for our sins.

In other words, he is the atoning. He is the sacrifice that I call the lightning rod. Propitiation has the idea that God's judgment fell on him away from us.

Sometimes it's the idea of atonement is attached to that. He says he is the propitiation for our sins. And not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this, we know that we've come to know him if we keep his commandments.

Habitually keep. Whoever says I know him but does not keep his commandments is a liar. And the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word in him truly, watch this, the love of God is perfected. By this, we know that we are in him, connected to Jesus, spiritually joined to Jesus. Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same manner in which he walk.

[19:09] Whoever abides in Christ, whoever remains, whoever is walking in the light, that is, begins to look like Jesus. Now, I know that's a scary thought.

If you're me, you're feeling, look me? And the answer is, yes. You begin to bear the family resemblance.

If you're a child of God, your elder brother and you should look a little bit like your father. You should look a little bit like your father. That's because he's working in you to transform you.

Listen, if you got saved five years ago, you should be able to say, man, things have changed. You've been saved for 20 years. You should be able to say, hmm, things have changed.

Not that you're perfect. God forbid, if you ever think you're perfect, come talk to me. I'll help you out. But there's a difference. Light makes a difference.

[20:17] Always makes a difference in a dark place. Whenever light shines, that dark place is transformed. And you are the dark place where the light has shown.

Something's happening in you. God's at work in you. And put us all together in a church, and the light gets brighter. God's at work.

And John says, we are perfected in love. Isn't that a Christmas series?

Love becomes who we are. We begin to display a love that the light has brought into our hearts.

We begin to display that love towards others. John goes on in 1 John. Actually, this last verse here. Verse is, verse 7 of chapter 2.

[21:21] Beloved, I'm writing to you a new commandment, but not a new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you've heard.

At the same time, it is a new commandment that I'm writing to you, which is true in him, Jesus, and in you. Because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness, and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

That hate is a strong word, isn't it? Hate. Do you really?

[22:26] I'm sure some of us are going, I don't hate anybody. I'm sure someone's saying that right now to themselves. I don't hate anybody. Hmm. But do you love them?

See, love is, remember we saw this? Love is action. It's not just saying, I love you. It's how you play that out in your relationship that demonstrates if you love them.

And it's easy to not love people who've hurt you. People who've gotten on your last nerve. People who've done you wrong.

You know, you believe they've done you wrong. It's easy not to love them in action. I think John would call that hate. Right. Right. If you're planning to get someone back, if you're hoping that someone will get theirs, you're probably on the wrong side of the love-hate relationship.

Let the light shine in your heart. Let the love of Jesus overwhelm you with his love. A love that sees you as you are.

[23 : 37] Remember, he's light. So he sees down, Greg, into the nitty-gritty crannies of your soul. He sees everything that your wife don't see. He sees it and he loves you.

That's the thing that blows me away. He sees it. All of it, Greg. Every single thing. The stuff you don't even want to talk about. The stuff you don't even know about.

But it's there. He sees it because he's light. But it's loving light. It's sacrificial light. It's a light that's transforming you so that you can then love others.

Now, let's keep on going. I'm getting bogged down here. Paul also picks up on this theme of the light of Christ in us. Here it is.

Point two. Christ's light takes up residence in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. You see this in Ephesians. I think that's on the screen. Ephesians 5. Ephesians 5.

[24 : 39] I'm just trying to flesh out what John is saying in the gospel. Okay? So we're still talking about this walking with Christ in light.

Having the light of life. Now, Ephesians 5, verse 6. If I can see it. I've got to get him some new glasses. Here we go. Let no one deceive you with empty words.

For because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not become partners with them. For at one time, watch, listen to this wording.

You were darkness. But now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. For the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true.

That's what light bears. The light in you wants to do what is good, right, and true. And he said, and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Light in you wants to know what pleases God.

[25 : 41] Not just pleases yourself. What pleases God? Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible. For anything that becomes visible is light.

Therefore, it says, awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. The context of that passage deals with the call to imitate God's love as his children through Christ.

That's how that chapter, if you go back up, how it begins. And he warns us there should be no hint of sexual immorality or impurity or covetousness.

He warns us. But I love the fact that he does something here that's really powerful. He says to the believer, to you who are walking in the light with Christ, he says, you were darkness.

[26 : 51] But now you are light in the Lord. You see, it's not our surroundings that's the biggest problem. It's what's in us.

I know it's so easy to say it's my surroundings. And your surroundings have an effect. That is true. Bad company corrupts good manners.

The Bible says that. Yes, your surroundings have an effect. But the real issue, the biggest issue, is inside of you.

You were darkness. Wow. R.C. Sproul describes darkness. He says, a heart of darkness is a heart that lives in a state of corruption.

The darkness is the place where unspeakable sins are carried out, concealed from public display. You were darkness. Corrupt.

[27 : 51] In other words, God said, go right. And you said, what's right? God said, up. You said, no way. God said, love me.

You said, no, I love me. He says, love your neighbor. You said, no, no. Only if my neighbor can do something for me. That's our innate self-centered corruption.

But he's done something so that now he can say of you that you're no longer darkness. You are light in the Lord.

You are light. Wow. You are light. That is Jesus, the light of the world, is gradually replacing the darkness in you with his light, with himself.

His light is gradually taking over your nature. It will never be complete in this life. But when Jesus comes and you behold him, like John says in 1 John 3, you will see him as he is and be fully transformed into the picture of his light.

[29 : 02] But it's already started. He's doing. You are joined to him so that his life of light has infected you.

It's a good infection. You know, we get worried when we get a physical infection because if it spreads, we're told that could be really bad.

You know, so we want to deal with that infection really quick. Jesus is a benign or good infection. He wants to spread in you.

He wants to take over. He wants to get in every part of you. He wants to saturate you with his reality, his purity, and his presence transforming you so that your life begins to expose darkness. We're going to come back to that next week to talk on the flip side of that, but keep that in mind. He says in Ephesians that that light in you should expose darkness.

[30 : 10] Don't become partners with darkness, he says. You were darkness because you're not darkness anymore, so don't be partners with darkness. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

That's a deep word. Expose the darkness. Darkness. Actually, today, darkness is being applauded publicly as progress.

But he says, it's something about you, Grace. When you go to work and you begin to serve as a nurse caring for your patients, your life can and should expose darkness around you.

Moral darkness, he's talking. Ethical darkness. Even religious darkness. Our lives are meant to be an expose of what's wrong in the world, but also what's right in Jesus.

You see, we're not just negative. You're all doomed. We're not Jonah. Jonah, the one message prophet, the one note prophet. You're all going to die.

[31 : 27] 30 days and none of us dead. There was no good news in that man's message. That's not us. Yes. Yes. There is. The gospel is bad news before it's good news.

And so there is an expose going on. When we are involved, you, your life, the way you live it. Sometimes, sometimes, sometimes, without saying a word, your life should expose by your actions, how you care.

How do you do your job? How do you? I mean, I just, sometimes Christians are the nicest people that ever get fired. Because instead of exposing the darkness, we're going along to get along.

Is that you at work? Is that how you work? Are you, you know, looking, you know? I used to have punch out cards. I don't think still do anymore. Or I just, you know, I remember co-workers when I worked in the x-ray file room back at Lanknar Hospital.

People would disappear 30 minutes before our shift ended. Disappear. And magically show up at the clock. At 3 o'clock. And go out the door.

[32 : 41] Or, or even better, have someone else punch them out while they disappear two hours ahead of time. Is that you? How do you do your work? How do you, how do you, how do you care for people in your family?

How do you, how, how, what kind of student are you? Is there integrity? You cheating? I'm trying to be practical here, right?

You don't just, you know. Tax time is coming. Oh, never mind. No, no, forget that. I didn't mention that. Let me move on. You know you didn't give that much money to New City Fellowship.

Anyway. Suppose. Sometimes, sometimes to expose the darkness we have to speak. In humble, gentle, yet a confronting way to the unrighteousness we see.

Sometimes we have to speak. Peter puts it this way. First Peter 3, 15 and 16. In your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for reason for the hope that is in you.

[33 : 51] This last phrase is what gets me. Yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience. Sometimes our lives expose darkness, but brothers and sisters, it has to be with gentleness and respect, with a good conscience.

You know, I'm sure I've done it too. We can, we get so wrapped up in trying to tell people they're wrong, that man, we sound like we're downright evil.

You know, we, we, we can't tell who's righteous and who's not. Gentleness and respect. Well, time is ahead of me, more past than I thought.

I'm going to end it here, but I want to remind you of something. Some years ago, elders, will you come down front so we can get ready to serve communion? I remember some years ago, I was hiking.

In Philadelphia, we were meeting some guys, young guys, young guy, and he was my mentor and whatnot. And we were running, hiking in this wonderful, beautiful park in Philadelphia.

[35 : 07] And it started getting dark as we were running. And it got dark. I mean, we saw the sun going down. And then we realized, oh man, we better make it to the parking lot to get to the car.

Because we're going to get, it's going to get dark up in this place. Well, the darkness fell. We had to keep going. We got turned around, but we found our way to the parking lot. Because we saw a light in the distance.

You see a little bit of light from the parking lot. And we said, follow that. That's got to be it. So we took off towards it. And we get to the parking lot. And there was a sign hanging over the trail we just came through.

A sign. It said horse trail. You do the math. We're running in the dark on a horse trail.

When you run in the dark, you never know what you're going to step in. Jesus has come to be light in us.

[36 : 13] Not just guiding us. Transforming us. Daily transforming us. So that we begin to look more and more like him. And as we do, our lives will show people.

By exposing the darkness, we show people there's a better way. There's another way of living. Not that we ourselves are perfect. But we show them that there's someone who is perfect.

And he's the light of the world. And they get drawn to Jesus. But if we're walking in the dark. Off the trail. Off the path.

How will they see the light? How will they see the light? If your attitude is horrible at work. You're always mean and nasty. How are you going to see the light?

Jesus wants to do a work in all of us. And he won't stop. Until he's done. You're walking in the light of life.

[37 : 18] Enjoy the walk. With Jesus. Father. Help us. We need light. We need Jesus.

And as we come to this table. We recognize that this table tells us. That the world is a dark place. It is so dark. So dark. That it took the light. Of Jesus.

To come and be snuffed out. To deal with it. Wow. Lord. We're that bad off. But thank you that because of light.

We have so much life. And hope. So father. Father. Please help us. As we come to this table. To take in the light. That is Jesus.

Spiritually. And. And taking in his light. Lord. As it is. Lord. May we be transformed. More and more. In faith. To live the life.

[38 : 15] You've called us to. May darkness be exposed. But may light. Light. Be seen. So that all who see it.

May come to Jesus. Use us for that end. Do that work in us now. In Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.