

Light of the World - Part 3

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[0 : 00] One of the nicest things you can have someone say to you is I'm praying for you.

They may not even mean it, but it sure is nice to hear. But if they mean it, that's no greater joy to know that people are praying for you, holding you up, lifting up your name to the Father.

Gives me joy every week to know that and I know it's true for you. Somebody is praying for you. More, somebody has been praying for you for a long time.

His name is Jesus. He sits at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. Jesus is praying for you.

Hallelujah. Turn now once again to John chapter 8. Don't mean to weary you in this passage.

[1 : 23] I find the Bible to be the deepest book I've ever seen in my life. And I find that it yields its treasures when we dig for them. So I don't believe in fast food spirituality.

So forgive me. I hope you can. If I linger in the passage a little bit longer, just to keep seeing what Jesus is saying.

That's what I'm doing. I hope you can see that. I hope you can. I hope you can. Father, as we come to your word, Lord, we are amazed at the depth, at the glory of Jesus.

We, Lord, we, there's so much we don't know. Even about things we think we know. Jesus is the light of the world. That sounds easy. Yet, Lord, there's so much there that your word says about that.

Help us to hear it. Help me to be clear in showing it. Forgive me, Lord, where I have failed to be as clear as needed. Help me, Lord.

[2 : 30] Help me not to weary your people, but help me not to rush your truth. So, Father, bless our time now. Open your word to our hearts and lives.

And may Jesus be seen. May we be transformed. And may he be glorified. In Jesus' name. Amen. John chapter 8. Beginning at 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 Pharisees 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 came from and where I'm going. But you do not know where I came from or where I am going.

[3 : 37] In other words, you don't know me. 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 is written that the testimony of two people is true. I am the one who bears witness about myself, 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.

So, In 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. Thank you once again, praise team. Beautiful, beautiful as always. And special welcome to our dear sister, Who my wife and Cara and Pastor Billy Had the chance to serve with in Miami In our church at Pine Lace, Lori Santiago, our dear sister.

[4 : 48] On passing through, Wish she was sticking around, But she's passing through. I'm so grateful to God for you. Amen. When I was thinking about this passage this week, I was reminded of the Olympics.

And you know how the Olympics kind of, Kind of leads up to the Olympics. Runners are chosen from, Not every country, But various countries.

They're chosen to bear the Olympic torch Running through a particular city Or cities in their country. They run through the streets, Carrying that torch, Saying there's a signal that the Olympics Are coming.

Are here. We as followers of Christ Have been called to bear Christ's light To the world, To our families, To our communities, To our countries, Wherever you are, If you are a follower of Jesus, You have been called to bear His light.

But ours is different. For one, We carry the light within us. We don't carry it in our hand, per se. The light's within us. Which means it's more secure, But at the same time, It's also more trying.

[6 : 15] At times, that light in us, It's painful. It's painful. But it's no less real, And true, And glorious, And powerful, Because it is The light of Christ.

Question, How are you willing to live That His light Is seen in you? How are you willing to live? Jesus, Remember where we are In the passage, We are dealing with this section, That verse, That first verse really, Where He says, Whoever follows me Will not walk in darkness, But will have the light of life.

And we've been looking at that carefully, And last time we looked at it, We talked about how His light exposes us, Us, Ourselves, But then we begin to look at What Paul says in Ephesians 5.11, That The light in us, As children of light, Will expose the darkness.

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.

[7 : 42] So he's saying, Once again, That as we begin to look at this, That when Christ shines in you, As a child of God, As a child of the light, That light will expose The corruption around you.

Wherever you are, Wherever you are spending time, And getting involved, And doing life, Any darkness around you, Any darkness around you, Any darkness around you, Any darkness around you, Any darkness around you, Any darkness around you, Any darkness around you, Any darkness around you, Begins to be exposed, Or as he says, Become visible, And what he means, To become visible, As darkness.

You see, It all looks good, Until Jesus shows up. Everything looks fine, Everything goes, Your opinion, My opinion, Your ethics, My ethics, Your view, Right, Your right, My right, It's my truth, Your truth.

It all looks good, Right? Until the light of Jesus Shows up and shines, And now, Anything that's not true, Anything that's truly not right, That goes against the word of God, Begins to be exposed As darkness.

Not as enlightening, As we thought, Not as okay, It's not okay anymore, See?

[9 : 11] No, You can't say that, Well no, You can't do that, Before God. My wife was, Some years ago, Here in Chattanooga, My wife was, At a store, Shopping with her dear sister, In the Lord, And that sister happened to be white.

That's important to the story. And as they were checking out, At the counter, The cashier asked, Our dear sister, For her ID.

Well this lady had been shopping there For some time, And she never asked for her ID, But she asked for it then. And so, The lady, Kind of, Our sister was like, Okay, Gives her, And then Sandy shows hers, And they go outside.

And, She's wondering, What was that all about? And Sandy says, She asked for your ID, Because she was going to ask for mine.

And, And she said, She's going to ask for mine, Because I'm black. And the dear sister was like, Oh no, Come on. No, Nah, I can't believe that.

[10 : 26] I know these people, I've been shopping here for you. I know these people. And so, They left. But the light began to shine in her conscience. And this dear sister, See, We all want to write off stuff like that.

We want to write off, Again, Since this is Martin Luther King, And Black History Month coming up, I can talk about this, Right? I say, This is New City. I can talk about this anytime. I know. Forgive me. I forgot where I was.

And, And, And, And that's what happened. People want to deny that racism, Racial prejudice, Racial discrimination, Still exists. And we don't want to, We want to, When we mention it, People get nervous.

And, Everybody feels uncomfortable. And we should feel uncomfortable, Because it's sin. Amen. But sin doesn't go away. We have to deal with it. So anyway, This dear sister, It bothered her. I guess she blew it off. But then, A couple days later, She decided to go back to the store. Because, See, Light began to shine. She goes back to the store, And speaks to her manager there, And says, You know, And tells her what happened.

[11 : 30] Now here's where it gets, Here's where it becomes clear. The manager says to her, Oh, Oh, She, Her? She's just old fashioned.

That's the new way to describe racism, In Chattanooga. Old fashioned. Old fashioned. We got all kinds of buzzwords, But see, When the light shines, It becomes visible.

Sandy pointed out something, By the grace of God, Because she knew. But this is never, Tell a minority person, They don't know what they're talking about, When it comes to racism. Be careful with that.

Now don't get me wrong, Racial discrimination affects everybody. Every ethnic group, Can be racially prejudiced, And racially discriminatory. Because it's a sin, It's in our hearts.

We all got issues, That we need to deal with, Sometimes before Jesus. Amen. Come on y'all, That means I should get a big amen. It's true. America has a particular history, Yes.

[12 : 37] But so does Africa, And so does Asia. And we all have particular histories, Where we need to deal with stuff, And denying it, We'll never deal with it.

You let the darkness alone. But our lives, Should expose it. And sometimes exposure, Means advocacy.

That dear sister went back, She didn't say, She didn't blow Sandy off, And just leave it for one. Or just say, Or she didn't just say, Oh you're right, How horrible either.

Brother, She went back, And spoke to someone, And said, This ain't right. How many times do we, Fail, To expose the darkness, Whatever it might be.

Because we just keep, We just put our head down, And keep moving. Jesus said, I'm still talking about light, I'm going from the passage, And I'm showing you how this passage, Is fleshed out in other places, In the scriptures.

[13 : 49] Like in Matthew 5. In Matthew 5, Jesus talks about this issue of light, And who we are as light. In Matthew 5, This won't be, Is it on the screen? Oh yeah, Cool.

I'm more efficient than I thought. Good grief. All right. Matthew 5, 14. Jesus says, You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Nor do people light a lamp, And put it under a basket, But on a stand. And it gives light to all the house. In the same way, You now, Let your light shine before others, So that they may see your good works, What is the light?

Your good works, In Jesus' name, And give glory to your Father, Who is in heaven. And that's powerful.

That's what he, That's what Jesus is saying about himself. That's what Paul is saying what happens. And Jesus, And we're back to Jesus again, And he's holding up everything we just said.

[14 : 58] The good works that we do, In the name of Jesus, Testify to the world around us, That his light and life are real.

And some of them will turn, And begin to give God glory, For your light, For the light of Christ, That is in you, They will give God glory, Because that light will shine on them, And reveal the secrets of their hearts, And lives, And they will see the light of the world, And fall before him.

Hallelujah. Prejudice, Racial prejudice, Sin, It's evil, It has hurt and harmed, So many people in this nation's history, And still does today.

And we, Who call ourselves a cross-cultural church, We are called in particular, To dispel that type of darkness, That's not the only darkness, Maybe not even the most important darkness, We expel, But that should be expelled, And exposed, Through our lives, Through our love, Through our ministry together, Through our serving together, So let me stay on this topic, Let's get some, Some applicational thoughts, If you would, If you would.

Are you making cross-cultural relationships, With people who don't need you? Did you hear what I said?

[16 : 47] Are you making cross-cultural relationships, That goes for all of us, I'm talking to everybody in this room, With people who don't need you? You see, Too often, We are great with making friendships, Or whatever we call it, With people who need us, Who need our helping hand,

As it were, But the real issue is, Can you make friendships, With people who don't need you?
 Now it's a real friendship, You don't have to wonder, Am I being paternalistic? You don't have to wonder, If I'm just, No, no, no, Now I know, Because now, We see, We're in the same economic, And educational land, I don't need you, You don't need me, Per se, Can we be friends?
 Can you love me? Can you respect my culture? Can I respect yours? See, That's, I'm just applying, Okay, To this situation, So, Stay with me, Don't get mad, Don't leave yet, Please, We have businesses here at the church, Like Hope for the Inner City, Our dear brother, Anthony Watkins, Is right here, He leads it, He would love some, Help over at Hope, So more volunteers, As they do the ministry, Of caring for the poor, Now listen, Keep in mind, That in this city, There is a particular face, Of the poor, But poor comes in, All ethnic groups, So, Were you, Are you willing to volunteer, To help care for the poor, And shine some, The light of Christ's love there, Many of you, I don't know, I don't know if it's many, A lot of you probably, Have moved into gentrifying communities, Because of the nature of that reality,
 There are probably people on your block, Or in your community, Who are in need, Why are they in need? Because their rent, Because when you move in, Their rent doubled, Not your fault, It's called gentrification, And now they're in deep, Hardship, Trying to make ends meet, Do you know people, In your neighborhood, Hey, Have you reached out to, You know, Sometimes people, You know, Leave a bag of groceries, On the step, Or on the porch, And maybe somebody needs a car fix, Maybe you're able to help with that, Maybe there's some work in their house, With their permission, Because you respect their, Them as image bearers, Image of God bearers, So you don't want to dismiss them, You ask permission, Hey, Maybe I can help with this, Because I have some skills and ability, Just some ways, That we fight against the darkness, In our communities, The darkness of racial injustice,
 And unrest, Maybe the darkness of poverty, In our communities, Maybe you have a community association, Go to some of those meetings, Find out what needs exist, In your community, And bring up situations, Where these, These, Some, They will overlook, Those who have need, Because the majority, Is there, Build more parts, More school, More of this, More of that, But, But there are people, Who can't even participate, In that, Will you advocate, For such, Because see, Our city, Is only thinking, One thing, Tax dollars, Money, Building more condos, So we can get more folk, Like us, To move in, And I don't mean us, By me, They're not thinking,
 [20 : 41] How can we care, For those in our city, Who are being shut out, Of the American dream, Maybe that's a way, You can, Just some thoughts, Some, The light shines, In the darkness, And the darkness, Doesn't always like it, That's what happens here, In John, Our Lord Jesus, Remember what happens, He's, First of all, He shines light, With the woman, Caught in adultery, He shines light, And exposes, The, By asking one simple question, Remember what he asked, He who is without, The stone, Let him cast the first stone, Wasn't even, It wasn't even a question, But it was a question, It was a statement, That really was a question, That penetrated their hearts, That's good, That's good, To think about y'all, You ain't got to rant, And rave, Sometimes just ask, A penetrating question, And people get exposed,
 He exposes their darkness, And what happens, When Jesus exposed them, What did they do, This is, This is, This is what happens, Sometimes people will just, In conviction, Just walk away, Sometimes when they're convicted, They want to fight, That's what happens to Jesus, When, In the passage, After, After the, The Pharisees walk away, And he's, Then he comes back, And he's talking about being the light of the world, Now they want to fight, Now, Now, Now there's a problem, You see, Jesus, Jesus was okay, Just being a preacher, But now, He's gone too far, He started exposing our darkness, Our self-righteousness, Our evil now, And our, Our willingness to use people, To even get at him, That woman was being used, Jesus exposes this, And now beginning, And now, The Pharisees begin to bounce back,
 And fight back, In verse 13, They attack Jesus in two ways, Two ways, One, They attack Jesus using the law, They, They thought they could get religious, They were religious, Don't get me wrong, But now they're trying to get deep, And they start trying to use the law, Against the law giver, They're trying to use the law, Against the law maker, They're trying to use the law, Against the living God, Who's come among them, That's how crazy we can get, We can, We think, Someone once said, Your arms are too short, To box with God, These guys didn't get that memo, Now they want to box with Jesus over this, And so they start, So they say, Okay, Listen, You're bearing witness about yourself, The Bible says, Old Testament in their case, You need two, Two people to bear witness,

And Jesus says, Are you kidding me?

Just so you know, I'll do it, I'll go your direction, I'm bearing witness about me, And my father bears witness about me, And if you read the gospel of John, How does the father bear witness about Jesus?

The works he did, Power coming forth from him, Healings, And especially in John, All kinds of, All manner of healings, And the power of his preaching, And then we, In other places, You'll see the miracles, Jesus walks on water, And God is, The father backed up Jesus to the hilt, Even to the point of raising him from the dead, Jesus, You want to use the law against me?

[24 : 22] Bring it! And so he shoots down that, He shoots down their understanding of the scripture, Because people who think they can twist scripture, To attack anybody, Anybody, Sure they don't understand the scripture at all, That's why it's important, That you rightly understand the scriptures, It's so important, And key, That you know the Bible, I will not apologize, For taking time, To teach you the scriptures, Because if you don't know them, You would have been tripped up on there, You would, When we don't know the scriptures, Brothers and sisters, You know what happens?

We can't, We have no discernment, We cannot distinguish, Distinguish good from evil in the culture, And if you are a parent, And don't know, Then your children will not know, You've got to know, Ignorance is not bliss, As a Christian, It's dangerous, So do you know the scriptures?

But they did one more thing, One more attack against Jesus, We call it ad hominem, We, They went after him, Personally, They couldn't get him up on the scriptures, So then they try to insult him, And they go after him, In verse 19, Jesus talks about the father, Remember?

And they said to him, Catch this, Where is your father? That's how you need to take that statement, It's not, They're not just saying, You keep talking about father, What father are you talking about?

No, It was worse than that, Where is your father? Because they all knew the story, Jesus was believed to be a child, An illegitimate child, Mary showing up pregnant, Talking about the spirit of God, You know, Has put a baby in my womb, Didn't fly, It didn't fly, Y'all, They didn't, They didn't put up a crush, And start saying, Praise the Lord, There was, No, Jesus was known, As an illegitimate man, An illegitimate child, And Mary, It was said, And still said today, In scholarly circles, That she got pregnant, Because a Roman soldier raped her, They went after him, Because parentage, Is important in that culture, And by saying he's illegitimate,

[27 : 02] They are trying to, Hinder his influence, They're insulting him, Because who wants to be associated, In their culture, With someone like that, Like it's the baby's fault, Child's fault, Ain't the child's fault, Mom and dad ain't married, That's mom and dad's issue, But they held it, Against him, So they went after him, Personally, Can't beat him, Insult him, Scandalize him, Slander him, Gossip about him, You can't beat him, In the word, Go after him that way, They did it with Jesus, Here's the thing, Brothers and sisters, The Bible says, They'll come after you too, You know, Back to Matthew 5, And you'll, You recognize here, That just before the light passage, Jesus says, In Matthew 5, 11 and 12,

Blessed are you, When others revile you, And persecute you, And utter all kinds of evil, Against you falsely, On my account, Rejoice and be glad, For your reward is great in heaven, For so they persecute the prophets, Who were before you, Listen, If you, When the light, If you, When you allow the light of Christ, To shine through you, Some folk gonna get mad, I'm gonna use a King James phrase, Gird up your loins, In other words, Get ready, Get ready, Get ready, Accept, Know it's coming, Some, At some point, Some will say, Praise God, And oh, What a joy, Praise God, I see, Some will just say, I don't care, I don't know, I don't want to know, I don't want to know, And then some will come back swinging, But the light still shines,

You see, That's why the passage about us being light comes after that, Because the temptation is, When the light, When the, When you, When your life exposes the darkness around you, And, And the, And the darkness strikes back, The temptation is to hide the light, Notice, Jesus never said your light went out, His light does not go out, If you are his, His light is in you, And will never go out, However, You can hide it, I don't want to get involved, I don't want to know, I don't say, I don't want to say anything, I don't want to, You can hide the light, Jesus talks about hiding the light, And what happens when you hide the light, It doesn't go out, It just becomes insufficient, It can't give light to the room, It can't do the job it was meant to do, How many believers in this city,

Maybe even in this church, Hiding the light of Christ, Instead of humbly, And kindly, With respect, Exposing the darkness, We just don't want to say anything, Just don't want to get involved, It's

costly, I'm not going to tell you, I'm not going to lie to you, You take some shots, You get sucker punched, Didn't see that one coming, But it's worth it, Is, I can stand here and tell you, It's worth it, You be misunderstood, Mischaracterized, Remember Jesus said, Reviled, I read the passage, In Matthew 5,

Insulted, Reviled, Whatever, Criticized, Cacused, Whatever it is, All of the above, And you have to admit, Sometimes you mess, You do mess up, You got to admit, Hey, I screwed up sometimes, I got to do it with my own sin, I can't just blow everything off, But some of it's just unfair, I know what you're saying, It's just unfair, Unright, Unrighteous, Ungodly, But don't hide the light, I have to ask myself, You got to ask yourself this question, Is Jesus worth it?

[31 : 40] Is he worth the aggravation? Are you more afraid of what people say, Than you are of missing an opportunity, To allow the light of Jesus, To shine through you, And touch people's lives, Who, What are you more afraid of?

People are missing the opportunity, For Jesus to be glorified, Let the light shine, You don't have to defend the light, Just let it loose, No one asks, You ain't got to defend Jesus, Apologetics is helpful, Having a defense, Making a defense for the gospel, It's not being defensive, It's making a defense for the gospel, And making a defense is good, Amen, But Jesus doesn't need you to defend him, He's the light of the world, He's going to shine, Let him shine, Fear not, Fear not, The Lord is with you, Father, As we come to the end of this message,

O Lord, Will you cause your light to shine in us, Forgive us, Lord, Where we have failed, Where we have, Just, Love the praises of men, And women more than we, Love your praise, Forgive us for our fear, Help us, Lord, Deliver us from the evil, And evil one, May the light of Christ shine in us individually, And as this church corporately, That the darkness might be exposed, And people might be brought out of darkness, Into your marvelous light, In Jesus' name, Amen.