

I Am the Light of the World

John 8:12; 9:1-7; Ephesians 5:1-13 || Pastor Shawn Gendall || 05 July 2020

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: What is the darkest physical space you have ever been in? How did it feel to see light again?

Worship: Psalm 27 (“The LORD is my light...”) *Read aloud 3 times, reflect and listen for God’s invitation to you.*

Sermon Summary for John 8:12; 9:1-7; Ephesians 5:1-13

God is light, and Jesus is the light of the world. But there are times when we feel overcome by darkness, and our eyes will strain for light. For many, 2020 has been just that. The good news is that we are never alone in this. The Bible shows a world full of light and shadow, dazzling brilliance and deep darkness. God – though hidden, huge and elusive – is light inescapable, and we see His graciousness, care, and overwhelming love revealed in Christ.

What is the light of Jesus? This story likely takes place during the Feast of Tabernacles while Jesus was in Jerusalem. Meaning Christ presented Himself as “the light of the world” during a festival where great candles bathed the city in light. The setting of the statement was therefore a statement itself. Jesus’s words would have reminded His listeners of what Isaiah said regarding the Messiah (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, 51:4). Jesus is saying, “I am the fulfillment of the ancient prophecy: the light for a people walking in deep darkness. As the fires of the temple light this city, so it is that My light will go forth from here – My saving light of grace, peace, forgiveness and justice.

What does it mean to walk in the light of Jesus? (John 9:1-7; Eph 5:1-13) In Ephesians 5, Paul instructs the church, “*At one time 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), and try to discern what is pleasing to the LORD.*” Paul then explains how we might do this: To walk in the light is to be LOVED, so we walk in love (v1-2). To walk in love means to walk in the way of Jesus – to imitate Him. We do this as beloved children, living into our Gospel identity. So we walk in the light when we walk in love, when we give of ourselves sacrificially for the good of others, living for them. To walk in light is to be THANKFUL, so we speak with purity and contentment (v3-4) and live with hearts of gratitude. To walk in light is to be WISE, so we think with discernment of what is good, right, and true (v6-10). As Christ followers, we are light, so walk as children of the light – and the fruit in our lives will be good and right and true.

Discussion Questions *(It’s better to wrestle deeply with a few good questions than to gloss over many.)*

- How have you found comfort and light in the darker moments of your life?
 - What does it look like to “walk in darkness”? What does it look like to “have the light of life”?
 - Have you experienced “walking in the light of Jesus”? What has that looked and felt like?
 - Shawn said: “As adults we become afraid of the light, building places to hide from it: walls for safety, masks for pride, grudges for control, shame for sin.” How has this been true for you? What are healthy alternatives?
 - Fleming Rutledge wrote, “God hides Himself in the midst of revealing Himself, which (paradoxically) is a testimony to His reality. Presence-in-absence.” What do you think he means? How would you restate this?
 - Read Ephesians 5:1-13 together. How do we encourage and support each other to “walk as children of light”?
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Prayer: As Shawn said in his sermon: “When our eyes are straining for light this week, may we remember that Jesus is our light. I pray that we would learn to see by His light, to walk in it, to ask Him to hold back that darkness, to find courage in this. I pray, too, that we would marvel at His light, and fall ever more deeply in love with Him.”

Engage & Experience: Living with hearts of gratitude is integral to walking in the light of Jesus. Spend a few minutes each day this week keeping a gratitude journal, asking: *What am I grateful for today? What am I grateful for in my life?* Take time to notice, reflect, and appreciate. Share and celebrate with your CG at your next meeting, “giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col 1:12).