

December 25, 2019

“The Light” by Pastor Ed Terry

Isaiah 9: 1 – 7; Matthew 5: 14 – 16; 1st John 1: 5 – 10; **John 1: 1 – 14 (Sermon)**

In John 1:4 John identifies Jesus as *“The Light”*. Then the Apostle John expands upon that truth by telling us that Jesus is *“The True Light”* and Jesus is *“The Light Of All Mankind”*.

The image of light is a powerful description of God. You see light cannot be contained, light has no shape or form and we can not confine light in a box. The image of describing God as light is found throughout the Bible. Many times in the Old Testament the light was described as the Shikinah Glory.

The dictionary defines light as *“something that makes vision possible.”* Light is necessary for us to see. Light shows us the path so we do not stumble, light reveals danger, and light exposes what is not real. You see light makes it possible for us to see things as they really are. Even the smallest light will replace the darkness of a large room. People and animals that live in a total dark environment become blind. People who are confined in dark prisons or mines lose their sight. Light is the opposite of darkness. Light makes it possible for us to see things as they really are. Without light we are hopelessly blind; blind to our surroundings, blind to our situations and circumstances, and even blind to ourselves.

Throughout The Bible darkness is used to describe the absence of God in a person’s life and spiritual blindness is used to describe an unbelieving person or a believer with unconfessed sin in their life. Satan is referred to as *“The Prince of Darkness.”* Light always exposes and light drives out the darkness.

Since physical truths in the Bible point us to spiritual truths, this morning we need to spend the next few minutes thinking about the importance, the application, and the blessings of Jesus as *“The Light”*.

In the first part of our lesson from Isaiah we read about distress, gloom, and God’s people who were walking in darkness. Isaiah prophesied at a time when utter darkness was over Israel. The government was corrupt, the judges were corrupt, even the priests were corrupt. The people were trapped in a land of injustice. In addition Israel’s enemies were growing stronger while Israel was growing weaker. After Israel turned away from God they found themselves in a desperate hopeless condition. That is always the case when people turn away from God. We may find success and happiness in life for a little while, but everything in this world will fade away and ultimately we will face the consequences when this life is over and the next life begins. What about you; when The Lord calls you home are you 100% absolutely positive that you will spend eternity in heaven with The Light? Or will you spend eternity a dark and dreadful place of punishment? When The Lord calls you home will The Lord say to you; *“well done you good and faithful servant ... come and share your master’s happiness”* (Matthew 25: 23) or will The Lord say; *“depart from me you wicked lazy servant ... throw that worthless servant outside, into darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”?* (Matthew 25:26 & 30)

Also in our lesson from Isaiah we read about the land of Zebulun and Naphtali. Zebulun and Naphtali were 2 of the 12 Tribes of Israel. Zebulun and Naphtali are not mentioned much in The Bible and were never spoken of as playing an important role in Israel's history until Isaiah's prophecy of Israel's Messiah. So why are Zebulun and Naphtali included in this prophecy of Israel's coming Messiah. If you were to look at a map of the land given to the 12 tribes you would find that the land of Zebulun and Naphtali were the same as the land of Galilee in Jesus' day. Jesus was born in Bethlehem which is in the land of Judah. When King Herod ordered all baby boys that were two years and under to be killed God told Joseph to take the baby Jesus to Egypt. But when God told Joseph to bring Mary and Jesus back to the land of Israel, Joseph, Mary and Jesus settled Nazareth which is in the land of Galilee. And when Jesus began His ministry He resided in Capernaum in Galilee. (Matthew 4: 13 – 16) It was in Galilee that Jesus selected the majority of His 12 disciples and Jesus performed His first miracle in Galilee. Jesus spent most of His time preaching, teaching, and performing miracles in Galilee. Jesus literally brought the light of His ministry to the people who lived in the land that had once been Zebulun and Naphtali.

In Jesus' day Galilee or the land of Zebulun & Naphtali was considered a very dark land. It was not an enlightened area. It was a region where the poor and uneducated lived. Acts 4 tells us when Peter and John spoke before the Sanhedrin the Jewish religious leaders were amazed because "*they were unschooled ordinary men*" from Galilee who "*spoke with courage and power*". (Acts 4:13) When Philip told Nathaniel that he had found the Messiah, Nathaniel replied; "*Can anything good come out of Nazareth*" (John 1:46)

Jesus was always concerned about the poor, the outcast, and the oppressed. Jesus chose to live in this obscure part of Israel and ministered in Galilee to shine a very powerful and hope-filled light into a very dark part of the world. Jesus said "*I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.*" (John 12:46) And in John 8:12 Jesus said; "*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*"

John 1:9 tells us that Jesus, the true light, came into the world to be with us and to give life to all men. John realistically acknowledges the darkness in the world. But John also tells us that the darkness can be enlightened. Today we live in a dark world but we can choose to embrace *The Light* in the midst of our darkness. It was a great day in our history when a man first walked on the moon; but a far greater event took place when Jesus walked on the earth. When the electric light bulb was invented the way we live was drastically changed. Similarly when Jesus, The Light of the World came into the world millions of lives were changed and the way life was viewed and lived was also drastically changed. Literally Jesus, *The Light* turned the world upside down.

Isaiah 9:2 tells us "*The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*" Physical death can be a very dark and scary prospect. But Jesus came into this world to bring the light of His hope to a world afraid of the darkness of death. Hebrews 2:14-15 says: "*Since the children have flesh and blood, (Jesus) too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the*

power of death— that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

As Christians we are to be people of light even though there is darkness all around us. God wants us to be people who see beyond the brokenness of this world and God wants us to fully embrace the gift of His Son Jesus. God wants His people to be people of hope. Matthew 4:16 tells us that the coming of Jesus fulfilled the prophecy given in Isaiah 9:2, *“the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death; a light dawned.”*

John 1: 10 & 11 are two of the saddest verses in the Bible. Jesus was in the world that Jesus created but the world did not recognize Jesus. Jesus came to His own but His own rejected Him. The immediate context of *“His own”* is the Jewish people but the broader context is all people. The point is not what the Jews or other people do or do not do. The point is; *“have you totally embraced Jesus and all of the benefits that Jesus offers to you?” “Are you truly enjoying the abundant victorious life Jesus planned for you?” “Are you walking with Jesus every day because you have a close personal relationship with Him?”*

God’s word to us today is crystal clear. Jesus, *The Light*, has been revealed and each one of us is forced to respond in belief or in unbelief. Jesus, God’s Son, *The Light*, came into the world to show us the way, to give us life, and to be with us. Jesus *The Light* shines upon all people and divides the human race. Those people who choose to live in the darkness respond in unbelief and run from the light. On the other hand, those people who embrace *The Light* become Children of God and will enjoy all of the blessings of our creator God both now and throughout eternity. (John 1:12). So the questions are; *“have you responded to God’s invitation to experience Jesus as The Light Of The World? Are you allowing Jesus to shine brightly in your life each day and to penetrate the darkness surrounding you? Are you experiencing the victorious abundant life that Jesus offers? (John 10:10) You see we all have a choice we can enjoy walking in The Light each day or we can choose to grope around in darkness. This is a choice all of us must make each day and throughout the each day? AMEN*