

Live in the Light — Delivery Transcript

Matthew 4:12–17 (CSB) • Wes Terry • Sunday, February 1, 2026 • Straight Paths

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There's there's a story in the Gospels where Jesus is at Mary and Martha's house and when Martha gets word that Jesus has come over, she is very hurried and distracted by all the many things that she has to do to get everything situated so that Jesus could have a good time. And she was Honoring her commitment of hospitality, and she sees her sister Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus with the other disciples and comes in very frustrated and hassled. Don't know what her body language might have looked like, but it would have been well most every guy knows what it probably would have looked like.

Heavy size, Jesus, why are you not telling my sister to help me? And Jesus doesn't rebuke Mary. He actually rebukes Martha and says Martha's chosen the better portion Mary, to sit at my feet, to listen to my word, and that's not going to be taken from her. A good reminder for us this morning as we open up the Word of God. That it is a good portion, the one portion that we need. Doesn't mean the things that we have before and after Sunday morning worship. It doesn't mean those things are unimportant or pressing, that they're not pressing.

They certainly are, but there's one thing most important, and that's sitting at the feet of Jesus, hearing from his word. And so that's what we're going to do for the next couple of minutes. If you have your Bible, we're actually going to be in the book of Matthew, not John, where that story's at, or Luke. We're going to be in Matthew chapter four. And as you're turning there, one of my great privileges as a dad is every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday I get to wake my kids up from bed. Because Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday is where we go to school.

We go to Abilene Classical school and so there's a hybrid program there. We do homeschool Mondays and Fridays and they do school on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. I get up about 530. If I'm being nice, I'll give them all the way to 630. But I'm supposed to get them up about 615. And I'm a little different than Audra when it comes to waking up the kids. She's very gentle. She'll like turn the lamp on, dim it gently coax them out of their sweet dream. Hi

honey, let's get up. She doesn't talk like that obviously but I'm much more cut to the chase so I'll just go in and I'll turn the brightest light on at the very top of the lamp.

There's there's no gentle coaxing. I just shake 'em as you know as hard as I can wake up you know just violently to get their blood pumping. I'll pat them on the back to get the blood pumping and then I'll sing the happiest song I know. I will sing it in the happiest voice that I know to sing a voice that's so positive even Force Frank couldn't match it, I would just be so happy and loud that everyone just hates it. And sometimes kids will just roll right out of bed and then and then sometimes they don't.

Sometimes they take those covers and put them back over their heads. I won't tell you which ones do what because I don't want to infringe any guilty parties or protect the innocent, but some sometimes they'll just pull those covers right back over their heads. Or or they'll just say, sh stop singing dad. Stop, stop, stop. You know, I don't want to hear it. And then sometimes it's just wonderful. They get right out of bed. But when they are trying to stay asleep. They don't want the lights on. They want the lights off.

And I'm sure many of you are the same way. When it's time to go to sleep, you need a dark. Dark dark dark. I can't sleep with any lights on. I need it to be pitch black. And if I'm trying to go back to sleep, I don't want any lights on same is true with my kids, but there are other times with my children where they do want the lights on. For example, at nighttime, one of the chores is to shut the chicken coop so that the fox doesn't get in the hen house, as you say.

And it's always dark when we go to shut the chicken coop. And nobody likes to go to the chicken coop without some kind of a flashlight. Ever since we found the first big rattlesnake on our property, ever since then the kids have been really eager to look at where their feet are going and look at what's in front of their feet. And so sometimes we'll go shut the chicken coop and I won't turn the flashlight on and especially with my younger kids they'll be like, Dad, turn the light on. Turn the light on.

I'm not taking another step until you turn the light on because when you're trying to see. And you need to see, then you need to turn the light on. So you're trying to sleep, you turn the light off. If you're trying to see, you turn the light on. And I think what's true in the physical world is also true spiritually speaking, that there are times in your life where you're trying to see something, something spiritually true. Maybe you're looking for some kind of meaning, some kind of significance, some answer to one of life's big s big questions.

And there are a lot of people in our culture who are kind of wandering around in the darkness trying to see but not really able to feel their way forward because there isn't any lights on. And then there are other people for whom Jesus has sh shone a light and just like some kids wanting to not wake up in the morning they pull their covers over their head and

say turn that light off, stop being stop singing that song and trying to go back to sleep. And we're going to see that dynamic in our passage today in Matthew chapter 4.

Jesus is going to be presented as the light, the greatest light, the light that outshines any other light, and there are going to be people who respond to that light. Positively and negatively. And the same will be true for you and for me. There is not we don't really have a choice in the matter of whether Jesus is light. We instead have a choice of what we do or how we respond to that light when it shines in our life. And so Matthew chapter 4. If you're new to the book of Matthew, you need to know this is one of four different Gospels in the New Testament.

It's the first one, if you're looking for where it's at. And it was written by a Jewish tax collector named Matthew for a Jewish audience. We're not predominantly, at least most of us here are not Jewish, but if you were Jewish, you would have been very familiar with the Old Testament. Promises about a Messiah. The common language that we use is the word Christ. And so when we say Jesus Christ, what we mean is that Jesus is the Messiah who was prophesied in the Old Testament to do certain things for Israel in the future.

And so all of the first century Jewish people who were waiting for Messiah had these expectations of what he would be like and what he would do. And so Matthew's writing this gospel not only to claim Jesus is that Christ, but that as Christ he has fulfilled everything the Old Testament said. That he would do. And you've seen Matthew do this all the way from the genealogy in chapter one, proving that Jesus is the better Adam, the better Moses, the better Abraham, the better David. He's done it in these quotations that so that the scripture might be fulfilled, he calls Jesus out of Egypt.

Jesus comes through the water into the wilderness to be tested by the devil just like Israel came through the red Sea water into the wilderness to be tested. And so Matthew's painting this picture that Jesus is reliving Old Testament Israel's story, except everywhere Israel failed, Jesus has been faithful to stand. And so Jesus is the greater Abraham, the greater David. The greater Israel and as such he is bringing in a new and greater covenant as he fulfills all the other covenants that God gave to the Old Testament. To his people in the old testament.

So all that has been passed, every standard has been met, every test has been passed, the temptation is over, and right after the temptation of Jesus, we pick it up in verse 12 of Matthew chapter 4. When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. That's a region in Palestine, up kind of north. So he's coming from the south up to the north of Galilee, and then it says in verse 13 that he left Nazareth, and then he went to live in Capernaum by the sea. In the region of Zebulun and Naphtali.

Lots of geographical markers I'm going to talk about in a minute. But all of this, Matthew says, was to fulfill. Well was spoken through the prophet Isaiah. In other words, this is Jesus as Messiah fulfilling Old Testament prophecy. Then he quotes Isaiah 9. Verses 1-3, land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, along the road and by the sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who live in darkness have seen a great light, and those living in the land of the shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.

From then on, Jesus began to preach, repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near. So a really interesting passage with tons of geographical markers and temporal markers that it's easy to just kind of read and let them go right over your head. But I don't want us to do that because these markers are all really, really important. The big idea, if you had to have it summarized in a sentence, is essentially that Jesus is the light. Jesus is the light that was prophesied about in the Old Testament, and the light that Jesus shines outshines any other.

The light that Jesus shines outshines every other competitor or any other light in this world. And all of that is kind of tucked beneath the opening lines of this passage. It says that when Jesus heard that John the Baptist had been arrested. What you may not pick up on is the amount of time that spans between the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. And this statement in verse 12, there's about a 12-month time period between those two verses. And your Bible doesn't have a little footnote that says twelve years later or twelve months later, like SpongeBob SquarePants.

There's there's none of that in your in your New Testament. But that's exactly what happens. And though Matthew doesn't give it to us, the gospel of John does. In fact, John's Gospel is one of the most famous gospels that talks about Jesus as the light. Every candlelight service that we have at Broadview It's traditional to read John chapter 1, verse 14, that in Jesus was life, and that life was the light of men. And that the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. In other words, Jesus is the light that shines brighter than any other light.

What happens between John's record of Jesus as the light and between that passage all the way up to John chapter 4, verse 47 or so? All of that is sandwiched between the temptation of Jesus and the beginning of his public ministry in Matthew chapter 4. Now, I don't have time to go through those four chapters in John's Gospel, but I'll summarize it for you. Essentially, John's Gospel goes on to talk about John the Baptist. John the Baptist recognizes that Jesus is the Christ. When Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit descends like a dove, the voice comes from heaven, says, this is my son, whom I love, with him I'm well pleased.

And from that point forward, John the Baptist begins to tell people Jesus is the Christ. He is the one for whom I was to prepare the way. Jesus is the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world. And you see John say that over and over again, so much so that later in

John's Gospel, some of John the Baptist, some of his own disciples begin to leave John and follow Jesus. One of them was a man named Matt Andrew, who was the brother of a very famous disciple named Simon Peter.

So Simon Peter's brother, Andrew, was one of the first to recognize. As a disciple of John the Baptist, Jesus is different. Jesus is greater than John. Jesus has come to shine a light that is brighter than John, and so I'm going to follow Jesus and stop following John. And then after Andrew, you have another guy do the same. His name is Philip. And then after Philip, Jesus calls Nathaniel and he begins building his team of disciples. Now we're going to see Jesus pick the 12 in next week's passage. Suffice it to say that Jesus is gaining traction down in Judea while John the Baptist is doing his ministry alongside.

And so Jesus and John are doing ministry together for we don't know how many months, somewhere around 12 months, 8 months, 10 months. And there's one point where they meet together. In John chapter 4 at a place called Aenon next to next to Salim. It's down here. So you see these two towns, Salim and Aenon, and then you have the Jordan River right here. And in John chapter 3, it says after this, Jesus and his disciples went to the Judean countryside where he spent time with them and be and to and baptized.

Then John was also baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water there, and John had not yet been thrown into prison. So we know this is between the temptation of Jesus and his going away to Galilee because Jesus goes to Galilee because John got arrested. So somewhere between those two poles, John and Jesus are together at this at this geographical location down here. And while they're doing ministry alongside of each other, a dispute rises up about ceremonial washings. And one of John's disciples comes to John the Baptist and says, Hey, John.

More people are going to Jesus than are coming to you to be baptized. And you would imagine John might get a little jealous or say, you know, ah, well, come up with some excuse. But instead, John's response is a blueprint for humility. His response is essentially the one who has the bride is the groom. In other words, Jesus is gaining of greater traction is because Jesus is greater than me. My ministry was to shine a light on him as the greater light. The groom's friend, who stands by and listens for the groom, rejoices greatly at the groom's voice.

So this joy of mine is complete. Famous line, he must increase, but I must decrease. John the Baptist is recognizing Jesus is a light that outshines any other. And it would be foolish for me to try to intervene with that light or to try to like be greater than that light because my ministry was to shine a light on him as the greater light. And after that John gets arrested. It's just really wild. You would think John does everything right. So God lets him get thrown into prison. But that's exactly what happens.

Sometime after Jesus and John baptized next to each other and John says it's all about Jesus, Herod Antipas chooses to arrest John the Baptist. If you go to the next slide, we get insight on why John was arrested in Luke's gospel in Luke chapter 3. You may just want to put these on your notes out by the side if you want to study this later. But John got in trouble with Herod Antipas because he was rebuking Herod for his incestuous adultery. This was before Jerry Springer was cool, so John was publicly shaming Herod Antipas.

For divorcing his wife on unbiblical grounds and then marrying his brother's wife. In an act of adultery. And it was it was gross, it was immoral, it was clearly a violation of God's design in the Old Testament. And so John the Baptist is publicly talking about this. Now we don't know how the news got from John's sermons to Herod's ears. My guess is that the religious leaders acted like a little birdie and went and told Herod, You have you heard what John is saying about you? Because we know the religious leaders did not like John the Baptist, they did not like the movement.

That he was leading and the traction that it was gaining. They were worried that John the Baptist was getting too much attention, and so they found a convenient way to silence his voice. And so Herod silences John because of what he had been saying about Herodias, that's his brother's wife, and the evil things that he had done. And Herod added this. To everything else, and he locked John up in prison. Well, all of that heat that had been placed on John the Baptist, that same heat is now getting put on Jesus.

Because Jesus is baptizing more people than John the Baptist. Jesus is becoming more popular than John the Baptist. And Jesus is gaining way more disciples than John the Baptist. And when Jesus hears that the Pharisees are aware that he's becoming greater than John, it says in John 4, verses 1-3, that he also decided, I'm going to leave Judea and go up to Galilee. So Matthew says it was after John got arrested. John says it was when Jesus realized that the Pharisees knew he was making more disciples than John. All of it just goes to show you one central truth that when Jesus shines his light, it will be opposed by worldly powers.

And if you're going to be a Christian and you're going to want to shine the light of Jesus, you need to realize it will invite hostility from the world. It John was arrested for defending biblical marriage, if you want to think about it in those terms. And if you want to defend biblical marriage in our culture, you will likewise be opposed. There will be people who have interests they want to preserve. Who do not like the light of God shining on their deeds of darkness. The light doesn't just warm people up.

Sometimes the light exposes things that people want to keep hidden. And if you're going to be a light in the world for the Lord Jesus Christ, sometimes that light is going to invite opposition. And you shouldn't be surprised. You shouldn't get angry or upset. You shouldn't go, poor pitiful me. How could I how could God let this happen? God let John the Baptist get

arrested and John our the Lord is not wanting you to be surprised when you receive a little pushback for shining the light of Jesus that the world will always oppose.

The world always opposes the light that Jesus shines. And that's why Jesus decides to go to Galilee. Which leads to the second thing that's interesting about this passage. It says that he when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. This word withdrew suggests kind of a retreat or a getting out of dodge. That's a terrible translation the reason it's a bad translation is because Galilee is under the governorship of the same Herod Antipas that just arrested John the Baptist. So this idea that Jesus is getting out of dodge because he doesn't want to get any more heat placed on him, that's not why Jesus comes into Galilee, because Galilee was the very place where Herod Antipas had the reins.

So he's not withdrawing into Galilee because he's afraid of Herod. He's going into Galilee for a wholly different reason. And if you were a Jewish Messiah, the decision to come to Galilee would have been odd. If you were the king of the Jews and you were going to fulfill the promises of the Old Testament, that you would establish a kingdom forevermore. And liberate the oppressors of God's people, you would think as that kind of Messiah, you would choose Jerusalem as your location. You would choose the Holy City and you'd mount up in the temple, Herod's temple, and you would create a political movement with physical force and financial capital.

And you would mount an offensive that would overthrow the Roman government. That was the common thinking for most Jewish people in that day for that figure, for the Christ. But Jesus does not do that. He doesn't go to Jerusalem. He doesn't stay south. He withdraws into Galilee, which is the exact opposite direction. Galilee was not the center of the religious establishment. Galilee was the what we say, it's the Las Vegas. It's the New York city of the Bible Belt. It's as far away from the Bible Belt as you could possibly imagine, and that's the very don that's the very destination Jesus chooses to establish home base, which is another reminder about the light of Jesus, and this has always been this way.

The light of Jesus, when it shines, will overturn your expectations. You will often begin to kind of assume, well, Jesus must act this way. Jesus, if he's going to do something, he's going to do it like this and not that. But what you see in the New Testament over and over again is sometimes when Jesus shines his light, it overturns your expectations. It will violently reject and do the opposite of what you thought he should do. And when that happens, you've got to keep yourself from resisting it. Or from checking out or opposing the thing that Jesus is trying to do in your life, because that's exactly what his hometown was guilty of doing.

You notice it says that he withdrew into Galilee, but he left Nazareth. Again, Matthew just phrased he compresses all of this, but it's actually an extended series of events. We don't have it in Matthew's Gospel, but if you go to the Gospel of Luke actually explains what happens with Jesus in Nazareth. Jesus goes to Nazareth, which was, by the way, his

hometown, the place where he grew up, everybody knew his name, everybody knew Mary, everybody knew Joseph, the carpenter's son. And in that way they were very familiar with Jesus and his claims, or at least the claims of his mother, that he was a very special child that God had sent him to save the people of Israel from their sins.

All of that was kind of present in the city of Nazareth, but now news had begun to spread that Jesus was unique. Jesus had a bunch of disciples. Jesus was baptizing people, although he wasn't baptizing his disciples. Jesus was doing miracles. He turned water into wine. That'll spread. News will spread real fast. He had healed people, the Samaritan woman, he told her everything she'd ever done. News was spreading by the time he gets to Nazareth, people are wondering, what's he going to do now? We're his hometown, we're his family.

Surely he's going to do something awesome here. And when he shows up in the Nazareth, if you turn to Luke chapter 4, you can read about it. I'm not going to read the whole thing. But essentially he goes into the synagogue of Nazareth and he reads from the scroll of Isaiah. And when he reads from Isaiah's scroll, he essentially conveys the idea, I am the servant of the Lord that Isaiah's talking about. I've come to proclaim freedom to the captive. I've come to preach good news to the poor. I've come to open the eyes of the blind.

I've come to do miracles and bring the kingdom of God essentially. And the people hear this Sermon of Jesus and they're like, Yes and amen. Let's go. Do a miracle, do a miracle, do a miracle. And Jesus, perceiving their intentions that were not noble, they were just wanting a show of force, decides not to do a miracle. And rebukes them for their arrogance. And says, even Isaiah and Elisha, or even Elisha and Elisha. Practice restraint when they did their miracles because miracles are not a zoo miracles are not a circus for you to be entertained.

They are a means to a greater end. They are a sign to show the truth about God, not to fix your selfish ambitions or satisfy your essential appetites. And so when Jesus refuses to do the miracle, everybody gets really mad. It says the people were enraged and they got up. And they drove Jesus out of town and they brought him to the edge of the hill that their town was built on. And then intending to hurl Jesus over the cliff He passed right through the crowd and he went on his way.

I don't know if anybody's ever watched the Chosen. Some people hate it. I think it's pretty great. If you remember this scene in the chosen, he just he just walks right through them His hometown. People who knew him better than anybody else. As soon as the light of Jesus didn't do what they thought it should do, I said, I don't want this guy. I don't want this Jesus, not me. And that's exactly the same danger that familiarity can do to you. Especially if you grew up in church or you're very familiar with the things of God.

You can become so complacent and familiar with what you think God is like or should do. That as soon as he goes a different direction, you cancel the terms of the relationship. God, if

you're not going to do it this way, then I don't want to worship you if you're not going to lead me this direction, then I'm not going to follow you. And it's exactly what Nazareth was guilty of. They opposed the light of Jesus. Because they were offended by what it represented. So it overturns the expectations, it creates opposition from the world, and it offends familiar faces.

It did for them, it will for you. The last thing I think that's interesting about the light the light of Jesus is right here in verse 13. It says that he went to live in Capernaum by the sea in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. Now you may not be able to see the TV from here, but You can see on the big screen, Zebulun right beneath Sepphoris, and then Naphtali up in the upper right-hand corner. Those were designations given to the 12 tribes of Israel. Zebulun and Naphtali were part of those twelve tribes.

And in Joshua, the 12 tribes are all given land allotments. And the land allotments given to Zebulun and Naphtali were essentially where Galilee was positioned. So not only does Jesus go into Galilee, he chooses two locations that were well known by Old Testament Jewish people. And then he chooses a city called Capernaum, which is way over here in the corner on the edge of the sea of Galilee. If you were to compare Capernaum to Jesus' hometown of Nazareth, there's a lot of differences that you would think why didn't Jesus stay?

Why didn't Jesus stay in Nazareth? Less people, more friendly, more Jewish, more likely to help him in his movement. Instead, he goes to Capernaum, which was very densely populated, very less of a small fewer amount of Jewish people, and a greater number of Gentiles. More spiritually dark, more prone to opposition, and yet that's exactly where Jesus decides not to visit, but to live. In other words, he relocates from Nazareth, his hometown, to Capernaum by the sea. Why did he do it? Because Capernaum was strategic. It was not the holiest place.

It was not the it was it was there were a lot of reasons not to choose Capernaum, but the one reason to choose Capernaum is because of its strategic location all of these lines, these red lines, these blue lines, those are trade routes in the ancient world. And so much trade would come off of this Mediterranean coastline. It's sit there in Ptolemais, if you look at the upper my right hand corner, that red line would go down and to the sea of Galilee and then from the sea of Galilee it would go up into Capernaum.

Capernaum became a hub of commerce and trade. It was a place where if you wanted a business, you would plant your business there. Fishing, farming, agriculture of all different sorts. Flourished in Capernaum in ways it wouldn't flourish anywhere else. And Jesus chooses that town as home base for his movement because that town was the most strategic place for spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth. It might have had a lot of Gentile people. It might have been a place of great darkness. But if you have the light and you want

to show it to the greatest amount of people, then you got to put your light in a place where people are going to see it.

And that's why Jesus chose Capernaum of all different places. And as a result, his movement did spread to the entire region. Peter relocates there. Peter's mom, Andrew, they all create home base right there in Capernaum. When we went to Israel, we visited Capernaum, it was one of the coolest sites in the entire trip sitting there on the sea of Galilee, kind of smell the water, incredible view. They had a house that they claim was Peter's house. They built a synagogue on they built a I'm sorry, not a synagogue. They built a church on top of it.

And I don't know if it was Peter's house, they're probably lying, but it's great advertising. And it created a cool moment for me, you know, kind of sitting there. The place where Jesus walked, the same synagogue in which he taught, was originally a location of great spiritual darkness. You notice the designations of Zebulun and Naphtali. I said those were important. The reason is because in the Old Testament book of Joshua, when those tribal allotments are given, God tells the tribes, be sure you drive out the people of that land. Drive out the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Ammonites, drive them out because if you don't, you're going to fall away from grace.

You're going to worship idols, you're going to become like those pagan people. You won't continue to be distinct and worship me. You're dangerously you'll put yourself in a dangerous position of spiritual compromise if you don't drive out these people. Well some people drove out the people and other people didn't. Two tribes that were notorious for not driving out the people were Zebulun and Naphtali didn't push out the people. Instead they kept them, sometimes using them for labor and trade and financial reasons, financial considerations. The other thing that made Naphtali and Zebulun so Challenging is that when people decided to invade Israel and overtake them as a people, they would start here in Naphtali and Zebulun and capture there first.

Because of those trade routes, because of all of that structure that had been the scaffolding that was in place. They were the first of all the peoples to get oppressed and conquered by foreign nations. And that's why Jesus chooses Zebulun and Naphtali as the home base for his light that is going to shine to every nation. This quotation, I said, is a quotation of Isaiah chapter 9. If you go read Isaiah 9 in its original context, all of this comes very vivid. The context mentioned in verse 1 and 2 is the context of invading armies.

He says that the gloom of the distressed land, Naphtali and Zebulun, that gloom will not be like that of the former times. What former times is he talking about? He's talking about the former times when Assyria and Babylon would come down these trade routes and take over Zebulun and Naphtali. These are these are invasion routes of Tiglath-Pileser, an Assyrian king, in different time periods where he would capture them. Those former times the Lord humbled the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, but in the future God is promising to bring

honor to the way of the sea, honor to the land east of the Jordan, and to Galilee of the nations.

And then you see our quotation. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light, a light has dawned on those living in the land of darkness. You've enlarged the nation, you've increased its joy. The people have rejoiced before you as they rejoice at harvest time, and as they rejoice when the when dividing the spoils. In other words, Jesus chose the place that was most oppressed, that was most spiritually dark, that was the least likely candidate. For spiritual transformation and advancement. And he says, this is the place that I'm going to plant my flag and start my ministry.

And if that doesn't communicate what the kingdom of Jesus is really about, I don't know a better way that he could make the statement that the kingdom of Jesus is not for the polished and the pretty and the people who have their lives together and have memorized a bunch of Bible verses. The kingdom of Jesus is for the outcast, it's for the outsiders, for the alienated, it's for the person who feels oppressed by their past failures and mistakes. The ministry that Jesus came to bring is a ministry to those people because those people are usually the first to recognize their need for grace.

They're usually quick to realize I cannot save myself, and every attempt I've tried before has only made me a slave, a bondage and a slave to sin and death. All of that would have been evident in Zebulun and Naphtali, and that's why Jesus chooses them as the home base for his ministry. So when Jesus shines his light, yeah, it creates a lot of opposition. It will disrupt your expectations. It will maybe even offend you. But the reason you should let the light of Jesus shine in your life is because the light of Jesus will take past depression and break its chains.

Jesus will take Your identity as an outsider, as an outcast who's unworthy and unwelcome in pleasant company and he will say, you're welcome here in my kingdom of the lowly, because the ground is level at the foot of the cross. This isn't a place for perfect people. There's only one perfect person in the kingdom of Jesus, and that's the king. Every other person is a sinner in need of salvation by grace. And when you let the light of Jesus shine in your life in that way, it doesn't matter what your past oppression, it doesn't matter the shape of your past oppression, and it doesn't matter how much of an outcast you may be.

The last thing that Jesus says, not only are the outsiders welcomed and oppression broken, he says the dark shadow of death is overcome. The shadow of death would have really meant something if you were living in Zebulun and Naphtali. Because they literally died. Through those invading armies. But Jesus is really saying something even bigger than that. Jesus is saying, my light is coming, not just to fix your life. Not just to make it better in this domain and that domain. Jesus is not saying he's like chicken soup for the soul.

Have a little bit and it'll make your life a little better. He's saying I come to fix a problem you cannot fix. I've come to fix the problem of slavery to sin and death. The wages of sin, the Bible says, is death. The fear of death is why so many people do the crazy things that we do. The fear of death, the fear that maybe my life won't matter, the fear that this world is all that there is, and it drives you to do all sorts of evil, that fear can only be conquered by the light of Jesus Christ.

And Jesus comes to shine us light to swallow up that fear of death. And he chose the place most familiar with darkness and bondage and oppression. To show that his light is greater than any other light and that only his light can liberate you from that problem the reality is all of us are going to die one day. We're going to stand before God in judgment and give an account for the life that we lived. We're going to give an account for our past mistakes, for the failure to live up even to our own expectations, much less the expectations of a holy God.

Who has a perfect standard that is to be met. And what will we say when we stand before that holy God in judgment? The only proper answer isn't anything with I. The only proper answer is he. Because he paid the price because he shined the light in my darkness because he swallowed up sin and death through his own death and his resurrection. That is why Jesus places his light in a place like Capernaum. So how do you receive that light? Well Jesus has a very simple message. If you look in verse 13, there's two things you got to do.

Repent and believe the gospel. From then on, Jesus began to preach, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. I opened up this message with the idea of waking up my kids. The only way you really wake up is if you choose to open your eyes, right? Unless and until you open your eyes, you won't live in the light of Jesus. We talked a couple weeks ago about what repentance really means. So many people think repentance is feeling bad. It's feeling guilty. It's kind of sorrow and remorse over what you've done.

That's a effect of repentance, but that's not what repentance is. Deep down repentance is just a change of your perspective. It's changing the way that you think. And in that way the idea of living in the light and repentance are very closely linked. Because when someone turns the light on in your life, you're able to see. And you're able to go, oh wow, that shouldn't belong there. Oh wow, I look really ugly in this outfit. Oh, oh wow, this is very unbecoming of a of what God's design requires. And because the lights are on and you can see, you begin to reorder and reorient your life.

That's what repentance is. It's turning away from sin and it's turning to the king. And that's how salvation works for you and me. If you want to live in the light of Jesus, you must repent and believe. Repentance is changing your mind to agree with God about the facts. That this is the way things are, that his designs are good, and faith is trusting God enough to do what he says. And in your notes, it's ordering your life around the king. It's saying, I'm not going to live this way anymore.

I'm going to choose to live this way instead. Because Jesus is the light, and with his light I can finally see. So I'm no longer going to live in the darkness like I used to live. I'm going to choose to live in the light because that's where the kingdom is. In the kingdom of God there's joy and peace and righteousness, there's power, there's resurrection, there's there's hope, there's a future. But the thing about a kingdom is it has a king at the top, and kings are people you don't negotiate with.

You don't if Jesus is king, you don't go to Jesus and say, I'd like you to have 50% strength of brightness in my life. And then on Wednesdays dial it down to 30% because I got to go to this location. And Sunday, 80% Jesus shining, but let's turn it back down on Monday. That's not the way you negotiate with the king. With a king, you either do or don't do what he says. He's either Lord or he's not Lord. You either submit to him or you don't. And that's the way salvation works in the Christian life.

You either recognize he's the king. Open your eyes and order your life around him, or you reject him as a king and choose to go your own way instead Jesus began his ministry with a very simple message, repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It's more at hand today than it was even back then. Because Jesus is this much closer to coming back and establishing his earthly kingdom. And all of those expectations that those Old Testament saints had will come to fruition and be realized at that time.

Now is the time for you to repent and believe. Before it's too late and the king comes back in judgment. It's the time for you to open your eyes and to order your life around king Jesus. So as we enter into a time of response, I want to challenge you to do just that. I'm going to ask you to bow your heads and close your eyes and to just think about this text and this passage. Think about what your response is when the light of Jesus begins to shine. Whether you are characterized by opposition and offense, or instead more characterized by humility and faith.

It's not surprising that you would want to resist the light of Jesus. We live in the darkness and we love to cling to that darkness. But this morning the Holy Spirit may be giving you a unique invitation. To turn away from the darkness and to receive the light of Jesus. So if you sense that's something the Lord wants to do in your heart this morning, I'm going to give you an opportunity right there where you're seated. To give your life to Christ. You enter into the kingdom by repenting and believing.

Repentance is changing your mind. And so if you're able to say that Jesus is Lord, that's something you can say because of the Spirit's work in your heart and life. And so would you in your own words, it's no magic way to say it, but would you just say to God, Lord, I confess that I'm a sinner and that my sins have separated me from you? I see now that you love me and that you sent Jesus to die in my place for my sin because of your great love for me.

And so I repent. I repent of my sin. I repent of my self-reliance. And I put my faith in Jesus to be my Savior and my Lord. I believe he died for my sin. I believe he was raised on the third day. And I believe he is the light around which I can build everything. In my life. It's not the words that save you, but the faith. That God sees and responds to, we're saved by grace through faith, not of works. So nobody can boast. And so if you'd call out to the Lord this morning with a prayer like that, I believe he'll hear you and respond.

And take you out of the domain of darkness and bring you into the kingdom of his marvelous light, the light of his sun, which swallows up the darkest shadow. For those that of you this morning, you would say I'm a Christian, but I've been living in the dark, even though Jesus has been shining the light. I've been choosing to pull the covers up over my head. I've been choosing to live life in my own designs and way. And this morning the Lord Jesus would call you to open your eyes. To live in the light.

And stop clinging to the darkness because the light is so much better. There's a better future. There's better plans that He has for you if you'll humbly submit and choose to walk in them. So Father, as we respond, as we enter into this time, I pray that you would give us wisdom, discernment to know what obedience looks like, what submission and surrender looks like so that we can walk in the faith of freedom of living in the light. We thank you, Jesus, that your light is greater than any darkness that we cling to or feel entrapped or enslaved by.

And we pray that your light would swallow up that dark shadow. As only you can, we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen