

Theanthropos—The Invincible Christ

“The God-Man”—Expositions of the Incarnation of Christ



Main point: John provides evidence for the deity of Jesus so that readers might believe it and commit their lives to Him.

In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

JOHN 1:4-5

INTRODUCTION:

A couple of months before Christmas, the wife of a mail carrier was killed in a car accident. The husband was overcome with grief and was trying to work through his sorrow, and he had stayed late at his post office, sorting through the mountain of mail that always comes through at Christmastime. His job that day was to go through the mail that had been lost and to find out where it should be re-routed.

He came across a letter that was addressed to “*Santa Claus*,” and he noticed that the address at the top of the letter was his own address. So, he opened the letter. Looking down at the bottom of the page, he saw that it was his only daughter’s signature, and he read:

“Dear Santa. My mommy died two months ago, and since then, my daddy has been crying himself to sleep every night. He says that only eternity will heal him. Would you please send a little bit of eternity to my dad this Christmas?”

Well, God not only sent us *a little bit of eternity*, but He sent us *the very heart of heaven*. The question is WHY?

- Why did the Creator desire to become a part of His creation?
- Why did God take upon Himself a human nature and walk among men?
- Why did Jesus come into this world to live and to die?
- What is the purpose of Christmas, and how can its message bring eternal life into your challenging world today?

You’ve heard it said that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” And here in verses 4-5, John sets before us four tightly constructed sentences, packed with divine truth, which frames his picture and mission of *the Lord Jesus Christ*. It’s not difficult to see the divisions. Let me set the four parts or heads before you, which will guide our thinking in this message.

1. “*In Him was life...*”—tells us that *Jesus embodies life*. In His very being is the source of life itself.
2. “*...and the life was the Light of men...*”—tells us that *Jesus reveals reality*. In Jesus, the knowledge of God is perfectly displayed.
3. “*The light shines in the darkness...*”—tells us that *Jesus exposes sin*. His coming was like an aggressive march into the enemy’s territory for the purposes of conquest and occupation.
4. “*...and the darkness did not comprehend it.*”—tells us that although men’s blindness and evil tried to snuff out the Light, it could not because Jesus is invincible—*Jesus overcomes evil*.

Transition and prayer

The truths contained here are some of the most unfathomable revelations given to finite men. They take us into a dimension of God's character that no one is capable of adequately measuring. Yet, the mere fact that they are given in John's gospel says to us that God wants us to understand something, if only a gleaning, of His glory. Such knowledge is impossible apart from divine aid. So, let us ask God if He would be so pleased as to *stoop* and condescend to us by the power of the Holy Spirit so that we are enabled to see and believe, and be struck by the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Why should you listen?

Is the Gospel of John for a particular audience? A common mistake that believers make when approaching John's gospel is to think that he writes only to persuade *unbelievers to believe*. This is clearly one of the purposes for this gospel (*John 20:31-32*), but this gospel was also written that believers might "*abide*" in the truth, and so prove to be His disciples (*John 8:31-32*). So, whether you stand in need of *faith or fuel to keep the faith*, John's gospel supplies both. Come up close and listen. We begin with the first declaration that...

EXPOSITION:

A. JESUS EMBODIES LIFE—"In Him was life..."(v.4a)

Explained: The "**Him**" refers to "*the Word which was in the beginning with God the Father,*" according to verse 1, who is God the Son. The "**Him**" is connected to the uncreated eternality of the Son, who was "*in the beginning with God,*" according to verse 2. The "**Him**" refers to Jesus Christ, who is the *originator*, the *sustainer*, and the *agent of all creation* in verse 3. Now, John says, in "*Him,*" that is, in Jesus Christ *was life*.

What does John mean that in Jesus was life? Is it *physical life*, *spiritual life*, *abundant life*, or *eternal life*? It is all the above but so much more. First, I want you to notice that this word "**life**" is an important one, for it bookends John's entire gospel. John begins by saying, "*In Him was life,*" (1:4) and he concludes the gospel in chapter 20:30-31, "*Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.*"

- In John 14:6, Jesus declared that He is the source of life: "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*"
- In John 5:40, Jesus pointed out that men are "unwilling to come to [Him] so that [they] may have life."
- In John 10:28, Jesus says of those who do come, "*I will give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.*"
- In John 10:10, Jesus says, "*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*"

In all, the word "**life**" occurs more than thirty-five times in John's gospel; it is an essential theme that John wants us to understand about Jesus.

Second, note that John wants us to understand that *if Christ created all things*, He must be *the Fountain of life* or the *life-giver*. The Greek word for "**life**" (*zoe*) here means the *inherent capacity for producing and maintain living beings*. Creature-life is found in Jesus, "*for in Him, we live and move and have our being*" (*Acts 17:25*), but spiritual life, resurrection life, and eternal life are found in Him as well.

Theologians describe this attribute of God's nature, as His *asceity* (a *se* in Latin means "from himself"). "*Asceity*" means that God is *self-existent* and *independent*. And as God, Jesus has all *life, glory, and blessedness* in and of Himself. What this means is that God has no needs and needs no helpers, defenders, or worshippers.

Some people think that God lacks glory and created us to supply it for Him. So, the reason He takes care of us, they say, is to be *rewarded with fame*. But God declared through David in the psalms,

- **Psalm 84:11**—For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
The LORD gives grace and glory;
No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

The sun needs no light; it *supplies* light. And God needs no *glory*, but He gives *undeserved favor* (grace) to the sons of men. Others say that God needs love, and therefore He created us to *love Him*. He was lonely, and He created us to keep Him company. But the Scripture refutes that idea.

- **1 John 4:10**—In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

God does not need *glory* or *love*, but neither does He need help. There are others who imagine *that we are necessary* in the world because God is unable to bring sinners to Himself, so He requires our help to carry out His work of salvation as witnesses. But listen to God's own declaration of self-sufficiency in Psalm 50.

- **Psalm 50:10-12**—For every beast of the forest is Mine,
The cattle on a thousand hills.
¹¹ I know every bird of the mountains,
And everything that moves in the field is Mine.
¹² If I were hungry I would not tell you,
For the world is Mine, and all it contains.

William Barclay tells of a little girl from the inner city who was taken on a trip into the country. She was in awe of the trees and the beautiful bluebell flowers. She asked one of the teachers, "Do you think God would mind if I picked some of His flowers?" "*The earth is the Lord's and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it*" (Ps.24:1). Why would He need our help if it is already His?

God has *no needs* and *needs no helpers*—neither *personally* or *practically*—to carry out His will. He is the strength of earthly life, the secret of effective life, and the source of eternal life.

There are great depths in this word "**life**" that John would have us to know about Jesus. Labor with me for a minute longer. If God has *no needs*, He *needs no helpers*, and He needs no defenders. If God needs defending, then He is not God, for what God would need a human defense? Clearly, if we have opportunities to speak for God before those who dishonor His name and malign His character, we ought to do so. *But even if we should fail, we must not think that God is deprived or threatened* in some way. Spurgeon said, "The Word of God is like a lion. You don't have to defend a lion. All you have to do is let the lion loose, and the lion will defend itself." The God of the Bible is the self-existent One who is the real defender of His people.

God has no needs, no helpers, nor defenders, but finally, God does not need worshippers, yet the wonder of wonders is that He *seeks worshippers* as an overture of His grace (John 4:24). Jesus said, '*But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers*' (John 4:23).

Bottom line: God gains nothing from us and is not obligated to us as creatures in any way. But you do need Him. John declares that *Jesus embodies life itself*. He is *self-sustaining, eternal, and necessary*.

- **Psalm 90:2**—Before the mountains were born
Or You gave birth to the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.
- **Acts 17:24-25**—The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;

Applied: There are many applications or “uses” of this doctrine for us today. Think about these in light of your own life.

- *Seeing that there is a God, with the power of life and death in His hands, there should be the arresting of fear in your heart if this God is against you (Ezek.22:14, Ps.50:22; Ps.90:11).* God is revealed in His Word as either the best of friends or the worst of enemies. If God is your *enemy*, what in the world can stop Him from carrying out His fierce anger on you? You ought to tremble with fear if you be without Christ.
- *Seeing that there is a God, with the power of life in Himself, this should cause us to depend upon Him in whatever situation we find ourselves in.* Because He is *all-sufficient* (Gen.17:1), He can *supply all your wants, scatter all your fears, resolve all your doubts, and conquer all your temptations*.
- *Seeing that there is a God, with the power of life in Himself, we ought to labor to gain an interest in Him.* It is of little comfort to *know* there is a God unless He is *ours*. The good news is that God offers Himself to be our God in Christ (Jer.31:33). If we believe that *God is God*, and *we need Him*, then we should always live under His eye. David said, “*I have set the Lord always before me*” (Ps.16:8). Living before the face of God will be a harness for our sin, a spur to our duty, and it will add wings to our prayer.

When John says, “*In Him was life*,” we are to conclude that apart from Him, that is Christ, there is no physical life, spiritual life, eternal life, or abundant life. It is *all in Him*. Do you see how necessary Christ is? When Paul declared that “*in Him, we live and move and have our being*,” (Acts 17:28) he was saying that what gives us *being* is not the secondary laws of nature, but the life of Christ Himself! We cannot *move, breathe, or even exist* apart from Him. *In Him is life*—my life, and your life.

B. JESUS REVEALS REALITY—“*And the life was the Light of men.*” (v.4b)

Explained: This verse contains a difficult knot that needs to be untied. What does John mean by saying that *the life of Christ was the Light of men*? Notice there is a clue supplied by the translators that loosens John’s meaning. The NASB capitalizes the “L” on **Light** to signal to us that the image of “light” is John’s way of referring to *God Himself*. This is the way light is used in both the Old and New Testaments. For example;

- **Psalm 27:1**—The LORD is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the defense of my life;
Whom shall I dread?
- **Psalm 36:9**—For with You is the fountain of life;
In Your light we see light.
- **Psalm 104:1-2**—Bless the LORD, O my soul!
O LORD my God, You are very great;
You are clothed with splendor and majesty,
²Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak,
Stretching out heaven like a *tent* curtain.
- **1 John 1:5**—This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.
- **John 8:12**—Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”
- **1 Timothy 6:14-16**—that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

So again, what does John mean when he says, "In Him was life and the life was **the Light of men.**" In what way is Christ the light of men? He cannot mean that Jesus is the salvation of all men, because in verse 5 he says that "darkness of men did not comprehend it." And in verse 10, "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him." Jesus is not *the salvation of all men* because not all men will be saved.

There are two possibilities. First, by *the Light of men*, John could mean that Jesus renders all men accountable as creatures. That is, every rational man is morally enlightened in their conscience (*Rom.2:15; 1:19-21*), and Jesus, by His very life, makes men responsible. Those who hold this view add verse 9 as a support which says, "There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man." Jesus renders every man accountable to the light given to them when they were created. There is truth in this view, but I don't believe that this is what John is saying because in order to arrive at this understanding, you have to "stretch the text" too much.

The second possibility is that this reference to Jesus as "*the Light of men*," is John's shorthand way of saying, that Jesus is *the Creator of men* (v.3). John combines the metaphors of *life* and *light* for the purpose of clarity and contrast. Just as you cannot separate *God from the Word* (vv.1-3), because they are of the same essence, you cannot separate the *life from the Light* (v.4). So, when we look at Jesus, we are staring into the face of our Creator. We have no excuse.

Applied: Stop and ponder this for a moment. John tells us that our Creator was not some distant deity who created the world and human beings then left them on their own to function and survive and to figure out who He is. He actually *came* and *dwelt* among His creatures as one of us. John wants us to be *awestruck with wonder* as we think about the incarnation of Christ. John will elaborate on this truth more fully in verse 14.

Sometimes John uses images that have a double meaning. If we translate "**life**" as *self-existence* (v.4), then what John is saying is that this *self-existent One* was the "*Light of men*"—that is to say, Jesus is not only *the source of man's physical existence*, but Jesus is also *the source of spiritual illumination*. His life gives men illumination or understanding. Understanding of what? Of three things: 1) who God is, 2) who we are, and 3) what we need. Light is a medium by which we see things. It picks up and reveals *shape* and *color*. In the dark, we cannot see how large or small something is, but turn the light on, and its measurements become clear. In the dark, we cannot see how beautiful or horrendous something is, but when the light comes, its colors (and lack thereof) are exposed to view. So it is with the coming of Christ. This is why David says, "*in His light that we see light*" (*Ps.36:9; Cf. 2 Tim.1:10*).

What does the coming of Christ reveal to us about who God is? His coming tells us that *He is the mediator of salvation and revelation*.

You can look at *creation* and even listen to your *conscience* and know about God, but you cannot *know Him personally* or have a *personal relationship with Him apart from Christ*. General revelation gives us enough light to render us *without excuse*, but not enough to grant us *saving faith*. Before the coming of Christ, the world was in darkness. The world, Paul says, "*did not know God*" (*1 Cor.1:21*). Christ came. His light shone before men; then, men had "*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ*" (*2 Cor.4:4*). Jesus is the mediator of salvation.

- **1 Timothy 2:5**—For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

He is not only *the mediator of salvation*, but He is also the mediator of revelation.

- **John 1:18**—No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

The word "**explained**" is *exegeomai*. It means that Jesus has brought the truth out in the open for all to see. He has made known, declared, expounded, and provided detailed information so as to tell finally who God is. And Jesus is God.

Applied: If it were not for the coming of Christ, we would be groping in darkness and never able to find God. Lost and unable to find the way in the pitch-black darkness of this sin-cursed world. Sadly, this is where some of you are now. You are like a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat that isn't there. You think happiness is found in

how much money you have, or in how much pleasure or prestige you can achieve. Nothing in this world brings the kind of life you need. But Christ has come, and as John says in 1 John 5:20—“we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

What does the coming of Christ reveal to us about who we are? His coming reveals that *we love darkness*.

- **John 3:19-20**—This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

The coming of Christ was a judgment on man’s unbelief. Mankind, in its fallen condition, not only is in the dark, but loves the darkness—that is, man prefers ignorance, error, and superstition to the light of truth. And the reason men love darkness is that their deeds are evil.

What does the coming of Christ reveal to us about what we need? His coming reveals that *if we are to know God, we must follow Jesus*.

- **John 8:12**—Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

Applied: Now, what is your response to that? It can be one of two things. You can secretly despise Christ and suppress the light. You can try to get rid of His presence in your life, but you will fail. You will only spiral down into deeper darkness and despair in your life. Or, you can do what God wants you to do. He wants you to acknowledge that your heart is full of unbelief and that unbelief is sin against Him. He wants you to recognize that all your good works fall short of His perfection and can never save you from punishment on Judgment Day. He wants you to believe and welcome Christ in your life as your Lord, repent of your sins, and call upon His name today. He has come to save His people from their sins.

C. **JESUS EXPOSES SIN**—“...*The Light shines in the darkness...*” (v.5a)

Explained: In the next statement, John resorts to the use of *metaphors* to communicate the saving mission of Christ. Having said that *Jesus is God incarnate*, John now describes the coming of Christ into a dark world with the vibrant image of light “**shining**” in the darkness. John changes from the *imperfect tense* to the *present tense* to teach us not only *was* the light shining in the past, but *it is still shining* today in the midst of this world’s darkness. His coming into the world was like a beam of light breaking into a dark room. It was like light piercing, penetrating, and invading the thick darkness of a fallen world and it will never cease to shine! (Cf. Rev.21:23-22:5)

The word **darkness** is a metaphor for *blindness*. Ever since our first parents, Adam and Eve, sinned in the garden of Eden, the long shadow of sin has been cast over this world, leaving us in darkness (Rom.5:12). Adam’s first sin has passed down from generation-to-generation leaving all mankind in *spiritual blindness*. Every person born into this world is born *spiritually blind* to live in a world of *spiritual darkness*. We are like a blind man living in a dark cave. It is double thick darkness, according to Scripture. The first layer of darkness is from *sin* (Rom.3:23). The second layer of darkness is from *Satan* (2 Cor.4:3-4). The first is from the *inside*, and the second is from the *outside*. Sin has cast every human being into the pitch-black night of *unbelief*. This explains the black gloom of despair and the dark cloud of ignorance about God that we see all around us.

Listen to how the Bible describes *the darkness* into which mankind has been plunged. Sinners are described as...

- **Proverbs 2:13**—From those who leave the paths of uprightness
To walk in the ways of darkness;
- **Proverbs 4:19**—The way of the wicked is like darkness;
They do not know over what they stumble.

- **Ephesians 5:8**—for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.
- **Colossians 1:13**—He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.

The Word of God presents a realistic view of this world, and it is a world that is shrouded in spiritual darkness and inhabited by men and women, as well as boys and girls that are spiritually blind.

Applied: This metaphor speaks of the *total depravity* and *radical corruption* of the human race languishing in spiritual darkness. But Jesus came as the Light of men to bring the knowledge of God to us. Rejoice today if you know God! Rejoice today if your heart has been changed by His power! Rejoice today if you have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ!

One of the ways that you discern that true salvation has come to your life is that you recognize—by the power of the Holy Spirit and through the Gospel of Christ—that you were once living in the darkness of sin and ignorance, and you did not realize it. How can you be saved until you see that you are lost? How can you call out for a Savior, unless you know that you need deliverance? You cannot. But if you are born again, you clearly understand that there was a time when you were dead in sin.

It was into this world of *spiritual darkness* that Jesus came. When Jesus started His Galilean ministry, He fulfilled the words of the prophet Isaiah who wrote,

- **Isaiah 9:2**—The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land,
The light will shine on them.

As Jesus inaugurated His public ministry, it was like *the rising of the sun racing across the horizon*. His coming *beamed forth* the truth of the knowledge of God and salvation and *shined into* that darkened land with the light of forgiveness, redemption, and hope. *Jesus alone* brings the light of salvation to this sin-cursed world. To the darkness of sin, *Jesus is the light of holiness* (Luke 5:8). To the darkness of lies and errors, *Jesus is the light of truth* (John 8:46). To the darkness of ignorance about God, *Jesus is the light of wisdom* (Col.2:2-3). To the darkness of sorrow, despair, and depression, *Jesus is the light of joy* (John 15:11). To the darkness of death, *Jesus alone is the light of life* (John 11:25).

We see His *holiness, truth, wisdom, and joy* on display throughout His ministry. It was on one such occasion when the Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery that His truth exposed man's darkness. The religious leaders were seeking to test Jesus on where He stood in relationship to the Law of Moses, so that they might accuse Him (John 8:1-6). He stooped down and with His finger began writing on the ground. What He *wrote*, we will refuse to speculate upon. What He *said* when He stood is the point of the account. He said to them, "*He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.*"

- **John 8:9-12**—When they heard it, they *began* to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of *the court*.¹⁰ Straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?"¹¹ She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more."¹² Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "*I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.*"

Jesus exposed their sin and ours. The purity of His life, the perfection of His words, the holiness of His example exposed men and exposes us today. By this, Jesus meant that He alone is the true knowledge of God that came into this world to bring people to the Father. *Jesus embodies life. Jesus reveals reality. Jesus exposes sin.*

D. **JESUS OVERCOMES EVIL**—“...*And the darkness did not comprehend it.*” (v.5b)

Explained: The keyword in the last clause is the word “**comprehend**.” It is a word with at least three meanings. Let’s see if you can figure out which one fits best. On level one, the term can be translated “to seize” or “to apprehend” *physically*. This is the thought in John 8:4, where the scribes and Pharisees claimed that they “caught or seized” the woman taken in adultery. On the second level, the word can mean “to understand” *intellectually*, and that is how the word is translated in the KJV. Number one—*physically seize*. Number two—*intellectually grasp*. But the third way this word can be translated is *completely overtaken*, or “*to overcome in pursuit.*”

The only other place where this use occurs is in John 12:35, where Jesus said,

- ³⁵ So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.

This third use takes us into the sports world of the New Testament day. When a Greco-Roman wrestler laid his hand upon an opponent, the victory was not his until he was able to “*takedown*” the challenger and pin him on the ground.

I believe that the way John uses the term is in all three ways: The darkness did not *extinguish* the light of Christ *physically*. The darkness did not *comprehend* or understand the light of Christ *intellectually* (Jn.1:10-11; 1 Cor.2:8), but the darkness of man’s sin and rejection was never able to *takedown* or *defeat* the Light of Christ—why? Because *Jesus is invincible*. John did not view the world as a stage on which two equal and opposing forces battle; He tells us that Jesus is *superior* to the forces of darkness that sought to overcome Him but could not. John anticipates the outcome of the story that he would tell of Calvary. Darkness tried to defeat Him, but it could not stop Him.

*Up from the grave He arose, with a mighty triumph o’er His foes;
He arose a victor from the dark domain, and He lives forever, with His saints to reign!*¹

Dr. S.M. Lockridge said,

“His life is matchless. His goodness is limitless. His mercy is everlasting. His love never changes. His word is enough. His grace is sufficient. His reign is righteous. His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. Well, I wish I could describe Him to you. But He’s indescribable. Yes. He’s incomprehensible. He’s invincible. He’s irresistible. I’m trying to tell you; the Heavens cannot contain Him, let alone a man explain Him. You can’t get Him out of your mind. You can’t get Him off your hands. You can’t outlive Him, and you can’t live without Him. Well. The Pharisees couldn’t stand Him, but they found out they couldn’t stop Him. Pilate couldn’t find any fault in Him. Herod couldn’t kill Him. Death couldn’t handle Him, and the grave couldn’t hold Him.”

Jesus has risen. Jesus is alive. Jesus is victorious. Jesus will return. Jesus reigns. Jesus saves. Jesus triumphs.

Is He your king today?
Is Jesus your light?

Applied: Remember the *warning* and the *command* that Jesus gives.

- **John 12:35-36**—So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. ³⁶ While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.”

The threat is that *if you don’t walk in the light*, you will be *swallowed up by the darkness*. The command is to *believe in the Light*. *Walk in the light, respond to the truth*—you are not strong enough to overcome the darkness, but He has overcome. The longer you wait, the more you will be overcome by the darkness of sin.

¹ Robert Lowry, *Christ Arose*

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray—
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach th' eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.²

CONCLUSION:

James Hamilton Jr. tells the story of a time in his life that everyone here is destined to face if you have not already, and that is the death of a parent. In this case, it was the death of his father.

"Sitting uneasily in his chair, straining for breath, he tilted his head toward his wife, nodded in the direction of my three sons, and said, "It's good for them to be here." Looking at me, he continued, gasping out the words, "We wanted to hide things like this. But it's good for these boys to see me dying. Death is real." Later that night, his wife of more than fifty years became a widow.

Knowing that life was leaving his body, he saw right through our medicated, sanitized, hedonistic culture. He could ignore death no longer, and he was convinced others shouldn't either. There was no avoiding it, so he looked it in the face and affirmed the goodness of the true story of the world. His approaching death was like a strong wind blowing away the fog of falsehood. A better understanding of the world broke through, as it had been doing since he was born again."

What we think and *how we live* is largely determined by the story of the Gospel in which we interpret our lives.

- Does your story enable you to look death in the face?
- Does your story give you a hope that goes beyond the grave?

In the throes of death, Jim's father was rejecting the false stories of the world. He refused to live his last moments informed by stories that would have people pretend that death isn't real or fear what lies beyond it.

His three boys were ages six, three, and one at the time. And his father had enough spiritual courage to say, "it is good for children to see..."—death? No, but that *the Bible's story is real*. The Gospel of Christ saves and enables all who believe to face life and death in triumph. Its narrative arc begins at creation, rises over all that *has been* and *will be*, and lands at the end of all things—with *Christ*, the One that we sing about at this time of the year and who rules over a kingdom with all who receive Him as Lord and trust Him as Savior.

You are not *invincible*. He is. Come to the *invincible, indestructible, unstoppable* Christ by faith this very moment.

² Charles Wesley, *And Can It Be?*

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible: 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation.