

Shine – The Light of God

8/8/21

John 8:12

Sunday AM

Light. It's an amazing gift. We often think of light as something that exposes the dark, yet light is so much more. In fact, did you know most types of light are invisible to the eye. We only see "**optical light**" which is only a small sample of the total electromagnetic spectrum. Stretch the red wavelength and you get infrared light, microwaves/radio waves. Shorter violet waves offer ultraviolet light, x-rays/gamma rays.

Meaning: there's more to light than meets the eye.

The same can be said of the statement in Genesis 1:3 – *and God said. "Let there be light..."*

One of the more impressive qualities of light is that it can't be bound by darkness – that is, it always wins b/c darkness is subservient to light. Take a pin-light/match in a dark space – and this tiny light always wins.

Now, this doesn't mean darkness doesn't exist or that it can be taken for granted. Try making a few decisions in the dark and see if you like consequences.

Before electricity, a tightfisted farmer was taking his hired man to task for carrying a lantern when he went calling on his girl. He said, "Why when I was courtin', I never carried one of them w/ me – I went in the dark." To which his hired man said, "And look what you got."

Today, I want to launch us into this new church/school year by starting a series entitled – **Shine**. This series runs in conjunction w/ the 5-7 yr. plan I shared w/ you on **Unleashed** Sunday a few months ago. A plan to:

- **Shine Brighter** – By addressing the ministries and facilities needs we have here b/c the light that shines the farthest shines the brightest at home.
- **Think Smaller** – By leaning into Jesus' Model of making disciples by getting more relationally intentional in/thru our LIFE Group ministries.
- **Live Bolder** – By discovering how God can use us as we live on mission where we live, work, play.
- **Build Stronger** – By partnering w/ other ministries to strengthen one another for greater global impact.
- **Share Wider** – By employing technology in new ways to make disciples of all nations.
- **Go Farther** – By re-launching our global mission efforts seeking to establish missional relationships on every continent/time zone.

It all begins w/ **shining brighter!** Shining brighter is about taking a season to reflect, refocus, and refresh ourselves – to re-ignite our passionate pursuit of God.

I can think of no better way to start than by focusing on Jesus – the author/perfector of our faith. He's not only our life, but He is our light! And no one can shine brighter unless they know the light and are walking in the light of His love.

DYK – Jesus had much to say about light/darkness? Only He spoke of it in a different way. He spoke of it in a spiritual manner referring to being able to discern good from evil, right from wrong, truth from untruth. It also spoke of light as a means to reveal His true identity as God. In fact, in John 8, we find an amazing declaration uttered by Jesus about his identity.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
John 8:12

I know I don't have to tell you... but this was a big moment! Absolutely, a holy moment of revelation. One of many crescendos is the life/ministry of Jesus.

I His ANNOUNCEMENT

I am the Light of the world...

Jesus was declaring – *I AM the I AM!* I AM the light who led you to the land of promise. I AM the light who exposes the darkness in you/around you, and I AM the light who reveals the truth of God to you. **I AM!**

When we consider the effects of light on darkness, we begin to see what Jesus meant by this statement. If light **exposes** darkness, then so too does Jesus expose the darkness of sin w/in us. And if light **changes** everything, then so too does the grace of Jesus – He is He is the guiding presence/promise of God.

To appreciate this declaration requires a base understanding of the context.

v. 1-2 – tells us that Jesus arrived early at the Temple from the Mount of Olives to minister to the multitudes. Of course, Jesus started his day having to deal w/ a trap set by the Pharisee when they threw a ½ naked woman in his path – which he handled graciously/directly.

What's often missed is that Jesus arrived the AM after the final evening of the **Feast of Tabernacle** – that is, the **festival of lights** commemorating God's provision during Israel's 40 yrs in the desert where God led the Israelites by a pillar of fire thru the wilderness.

By day, the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. Exodus 13:21-22

At the feast, huge lamps were lit and elevated 75 ft above the temple courts to illuminate the area to remind the people of God's guiding light. **The light represented the shechinah glory of God – the guiding presence of God.** The celebration also celebrated the promise of God to send a light – the anointed Messiah – who'd deliver the people from darkness/despair into the very presence/hope of Jehovah.

On certain nights of the feast, they'd light the (4) huge lamps in the temple's court of women and there would be an exuberant celebration that took place under the lights. "Men of piety and good works" danced thru the night, holding burning torches and singing songs and praises. The Levitical orchestra cut loose, and some sources attest that this went on every night of the Feast of Tabernacles, w/ the light from the temple area shedding its glow all over Jerusalem. *Bob Deffinbaugh*

So, in true God style – Jesus showed up at the very moment the lights of the feast were being extinguished to declare that He is the true light of the world.

Don't miss. They have just extinguished the lights commemorating God's presence and the hope of the Messiah's return, and yet, they had no clue that the Messiah was present in their midst.

Imagine the scene. While the charred torches are still smoking, Jesus declared, "*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*"

Point – by nature, we're all blind, groping in darkness, but in Christ (the promised Light of God), God has once again, intervened to guide our wandering hearts from the wilderness of this dark/fallen world to the promise of His salvation.

In Christ alone, God has offered a single remedy to the problem of sin to rescue/free us from the darkness w/in and around us so that we can walk in the true Light. **Jesus is that light**. He came into our world to expose the darkness and reveal the truth. He came to heal our blindness and redeem us thru His grace.

I believe in Christ like I believe in the sun. Not only b/c I see it, but b/c by it all things are seen. *CS Lewis*

But it's more than an **announcement**, it's an **assurance** – we can shine brighter b/c God has promised that He is w/ us and He is for us.

II His **ASSURANCE**

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life.

A God's Light **TRANSFORMS** Us

When a person has a genuine encounter w/ the Light of God, they can't help but be changed b/c a brush w/ the Savior – its life altering as His light exposes and disposes of the darkness in our hearts – *if anyone is in Christ the old is gone – all things have been made new!*

Other than my own life, my favorite story of salvation is found in **Acts 9** when a man who was dedicated to destroying the Christianity came face-to-face w/ grace – and the light of God's love exposed his dark soul.

*Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a **light from heaven** flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul – why do you persecute me?" Saul asked, "Who are you, Lord?" He replied, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now, get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." Acts 9:1-6*

Did you see it? While on his way to Damascus, the Light of God pierced the darkness of Paul's heart and transformed his life. How? **It happens b/c the Great I AM alone, transforms who I am.**

B God's Light **GUIDES** Us

*The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you."
Psalm 32:8*

The Light of God wants to guide our steps. He wants to be a lamp unto our feet and the light unto our path. But it requires we trust in His truth. It requires that we put Him on the throne of our lives and obey his leading – then He will direct your steps.

Trust the Lord w/ all of your heart... he will direct...

A granddad was walking in the woods w/ his grandson talking about life. The granddad asked, "Do you know where we are?" "No granddad," the boy replied. The granddad asked, "Do you know we're going? Again, the boy replied, "No granddad." The granddad said, "Well then, I guess you are lost. The boy smiled, "No granddad. I'm not lost. I am w/ you."

So long as you're w/ Jesus, you'll never be lost and you will always have meaning/purpose.

Jesus said, "*I am the light of the world.*" But He also said to His followers, "*You are the light of the world.*"

This used to confound me. If Jesus is the light of the world – how can I also be a light to the world? Finally, one day, I read an explanation the made sense to me.

Think of Jesus as the sun in the sky and of yourself as the moon. The Sun is a blazing source of light illuminating everything around it, while the moon is nothing more than a dark rock floating in our orbit – and yet it shines brightly in the overnight sky. How? It's b/c the moon reflects the brilliance of the sun.

If Jesus is the sun; we are the moon. We're nothing more than a reflection of the Son who abides/lives in us – and our calling is to reflect His light to others.

Let your light shine before others, so they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.