



JOHN: The Unstoppable Messiah: Jesus, The Purposeful

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John 12:27-36

Good evening, Doxa family. Please stand for the reading of God's word. Today we'll be reading John 12:27-36. "Jesus spoke, now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say, Father saved me from this hour, but for this purpose, I have come to this hour. Father glorify your name. Then a voice from heaven...I have glorified it and I will glorify it again. The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said an angel has spoken to him. Jesus answered, this voice has come from your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all people to myself. He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So the crowd answered him. We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the son of man must be lifted up? Who is this son of man? So Jesus said to them, the light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you the light lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light believe in the light that you may become sons of light. This is the word of the Lord. Please be seated.

Amen. Thank you, Rusty. Well, good evening church. My name is Ken. I'm a part of our team. One of the pastors and elders here at Doxa. If I don't know you, I'd love to meet you afterwards. I'll stick around and be out in the lobby. Come introduce yourself. It is really good to be together tonight because we get to continue on walking through John's gospel together. And as you just heard, we're going to be in John chapter 12, starting in verse 27 tonight. So go ahead and open your Bible or pull up that app on your phone and let's turn there together.

Now how many people, you may have missed this if you walked in a little bit late, but we talked about the Olympics in our passing of the peace question...how many people said curling was your favorite sport? Thank you, Brian from Canada. Really? Is that it? No one else chose curling? I was expecting way more curlers in the house tonight. Okay. All right. Well, here's the deal. I love the Olympics. I love the summer Olympics. I love the winter Olympics. Because of COVID and summer Olympics getting delayed, this year was like the golden year for Olympics because it was just Olympics all year long. What I love about it though, is I love seeing these athletes, right? So you think about some of the athletes, if you've watched any of it, that have been spending years of their life, right? I mean, since they were kids preparing for this day, thousands and thousands of hours committed, disciplined, sacrificing so much to make it to this spot and then you watch them get to these moments. Sometimes it's really tragic because it all falls apart.

But the moments that it all comes together, it's incredible, isn't it, to see all the sacrifice they've made pay off and them get to reach this, like for them the pinnacle of their sport-of curling. Incredible thing to see. Now Olympic athletes don't take shortcuts, do they? Right? They see pain before them. They see a difficult road. If they're going to get to where they want to get, which is to stand on a podium, then they're not going to take shortcuts. And they know that they're going to have to take the long road and that it's going to be hard and that there's going to be a lot of sacrifice and there's going to be pain involved.

But frankly humans, like for all of us, if any of us in this room say we want pain, we're lying. None of us choose pain willingly or want it. There has to be some purpose or some goal that's much greater that allows us to be willing to go through pain. We avoid pain, don't we? None of us want pain in our life, it's part of being human.

And for my own story and my own life-and I know probably most of you don't know my story-but a lot of my life was spent avoiding pain or avoiding suffering in my life. And this all became really clear to me just a few years ago. In 2018, it was about a year before Beth and I and the family moved here... we were still out in Columbus, Ohio. We actually were going through a church planting assessment with a network, a church planting network that was basically helping us think through if we were ready to go and plant a church. And we, at that time were actually thinking about planting a church somewhere in Columbus, which is where we lived back in Ohio. And we had gone through this assessment and towards the end of it, you know, we're telling our story, they're trying to get to know us, see if we're ready, assess our character and competency and all those, you know, key things, but a big part of it was them just trying to get to know our story and see if we were ready for this, because church planting is really, really hard.

And at the end of the assessment, they recommended that we do move forward, but they had some concerns they wanted to share with us. And here's one of the concerns that they told us about. And here's how they worded it. This is what they wrote to us. The assessment team is concerned about the lack of suffering that Ken and Beth have experienced so far in their life,

since suffering further develops grit and depth in the hard seasons of ministry, as well as the ability to relate in a personal way with others in seasons of suffering and brokenness. Now they were rightly concerned about that. Church planting is really hard. And then ministering to people that are walking through really hard things is really hard, especially if you haven't walked through hard things yourself. And as they heard our story and got to know us, and we tried to help them know what our life had been like, they didn't see a lot of pain that we walked through or suffering that we'd gone through. And it wasn't like, hey, you can't plant, but it was like, this could be a challenge for you because this is going to be really hard.

The reality was though we had faced a lot of suffering in our lives. We just didn't see it. We'd gone through a lot of hard things that we just didn't realize. And as we told our story to this group of assessors and we weren't trying to lie, I mean, we were trying to be as honest as we could about our story, we told a story that was a pretty smooth story of life. Sure, there'd been some difficulties, but we didn't dwell on those that much. Yeah, there'd been some hard things, but we tried not to focus too much on those. We just tried to see here's how God has showed up and provided for us and led us through all of life to this point and we're excited about the future. So let us go plant a church. It's going to be great, but we really didn't acknowledge or see the hard things that we actually had walked through.

You see in my life I've always tried to avoid or to minimize the suffering in my story. And for me, it was really hard honestly, to even think about memories in my life. If I could think of even the beginning of a memory that was hard, I couldn't continue on. I'd just push it to the side of my mind, push it, push it to the back, to the back of my mind and move on towards something else. I couldn't think about those hard things. And I did this without even realizing it, because honestly, I didn't know what to do with the dark parts of my story. I didn't know what to do with the suffering in my story. I didn't know how to face the pain. Even though I'd faced very real suffering and even trauma as I've later come to see, at the time I didn't know what to do with it. So, I told my story, I minimized it. I said, it wasn't a big deal. I moved past it. I tried to see that it wasn't really that hard at all.

Now I'm not trying to share this to say that I've suffered more than you. I don't know everyone's story, but I know that all of us have suffered in some way because all of us live east of Eden. All of us live in a broken world. All of us have experienced dark things in our life and maybe are right now yet just like I did, we often then find ways to move past the hard things, because they're too hard to think about. We minimize them maybe. We say it wasn't that bad. God ended up showing up. God provided. It was fine. Look what God did. We moved past it. Or maybe we just avoid it. We distract ourselves from having to think about it. We never face the reality of how dark it is. And what we do is then we create our own version of Eden, pretending everything's okay because frankly, that's the only way we know how to survive. And sometimes we have to do this. You know, sometimes even, especially as kids, we have to do this. We can't dwell in that darkness because it will destroy us. And so we have to create this other narrative just to survive. We know that if we face the darkness in our stories, in our lives, we might be swallowed whole by it.

Let me just ask you tonight, I mean, what do you do when you face darkness in your life? And maybe you're facing something right now, when you face something hard, what do you do? Can you be honest about it? Do you minimize it? Do you try to ignore it? Do you distract yourself from it? And I know that a lot of the times we create strategies to avoid having to think about this. You know those sun lamps that we get, like maybe you have one and set it in your office or in your bedroom, and you sit in front of it in the middle of January when it's like cloudy 24/7 and you're just trying to get a little bit of sunlight even if it's fake sunlight, right? You know what I'm talking about? All right, we create emotional and spiritual versions of that.

We avoid being alone because if we're alone with our thoughts, the darkness creeps in. So we always need to be with someone. We stay busy. We just stay busy, moving from one thing to the next, so that we don't have to face the darkness in our life. We distract ourselves with news, with Netflix, with YouTube. We even self-medicate. And I don't want you to hear me wrong. There are places for strategies like these, right? There are places for strategies like community, which is important to helping us face hard times.

There's places take a break from the darkness and just take a trip to Arizona for goodness sake. There's a place for things like that, to deal with the suffering and darkness we have. And absolutely there's a place for medication in our life administered by a professional that can help us and walk with us. There's absolutely places for all of these things. But while these strategies have a place, they can't take away the darkness. And we all know that. And eventually whether willingly or not, we will have to face it.

Now about eight minutes in, this morning, or this evening rather, you might be thinking, Ken, why are you such a Debbie-Downer, no offense to any Debbies in the room tonight. I don't mean to be a downer about this at all. But I know that we all know this and feel it. I don't have to say this. We all know this. We all feel this. And in the passage we come to today, and this is why I'm bringing it up because this is where God's word has brought us, Jesus is about to face the darkest moment of his life. Jesus, in our passage today is about to face the most difficult thing that he has ever faced. How will he face this darkness? Will he be overwhelmed by it? Will he try to avoid it? Will he look for a shortcut around it? How is he going to face this darkness?

The first thing I want us to see is this, that Jesus, our example, faces the darkness. First of all, I want us to see how he faces the darkness that he's about to walk into and how he encounters it so that we can learn from him as we face the difficulty in our own life. Jesus, our example faces the darkness. Read with me again in verses 27 and 28, "Jesus says now is my soul troubled and what shall I say, Father, save me from this hour. But for this purpose, I've come to this hour. Father glorify your name." And the first thing we see here is that Jesus is completely honest about his emotions. He's completely honest. He says, now my soul is troubled.

The Message, Eugene Peterson's translation says, "right now I'm shaken." Frederick Bruner, a commentator, says that "now is my soul troubled," that phrase Jesus said, is simply a Greek way of saying I'm afraid. I'm terrified. Don Carson says this word is a strong word that signifies

revulsion, horror, anxiety, and agitation. It's the idea that he is completely unsettled. He's terrified by what he sees ahead of him. And Jesus doesn't face the darkness that he sees ahead of him with resignation, with a stiff upper lip. He doesn't face it and just say, well, gotta go through that. He faces it with complete honesty and he feels all that you would expect to feel in that moment. He knows just how dark it's going to be. And he looks that darkness in the eyes and he cries out in horror. He's unsettled. He's shaken by it. Jesus, the perfect man, the God-man who knew no sin, felt fear in this moment. He's afraid as he faces this darkness. He feels real emotion, perhaps fear, sadness, loneliness.

The amazing thing is that he doesn't try to stuff these emotions or move past them. He doesn't try to ignore them. He brings them honestly before his father. You know, I think often we think we're better off if we can just like get past the feelings we're experiencing and just move on and maybe solve the problem, right? That's how I function when I encounter difficulty or crisis. And sometimes you do have to set those things aside in a crisis moment and just get something done. But so often we stuff those things, never to think about those feelings because maybe we think, or we lie to ourselves saying that's not going to accomplish anything. Me feeling those things won't get anything done. It won't solve any problem. Why do I need to stop and feel that feeling? And it's amazing that Jesus here stops to feel this emotion. And he's completely honest about it before his father saying father, I am shaken. My soul is troubled.

We often think that it's better just to move past them. But if we do this, all that will happen, right, if you stuff your feelings and emotions, if you're not honest about them in the moment, these feelings then settle into your body and into your bones. They turn toxic. They begin to own us. They begin to control us. They bury deep inside us and eventually they lead to bitterness, resentment, rage, and apathy. So we see Jesus first of all, be completely honest about what he's feeling.

The second thing we see is that Jesus moves towards his father. So he sees the darkness ahead. He's completely honest about what he's feeling. And then he moves towards his father and he says, "what shall I say?" And then he says, "Father save me from this hour." Your translation may have "Father saved me from this hour?", like a question. It's not a question. There isn't punctuation in the original language. It's probably best read as a cry for help. This is a prayer that Jesus prays in the moment as he's feeling agitated and unsettled, he cries out to his father and moves towards him, saying father, please save me.

Now the hour that he wants saved from we'll learn more about in a little bit what he's referring to, but it's something he's referred to throughout John. Remember in John chapter two at the wedding feast at Cana where he tells his mother that his hour had not yet come. And then later in John chapter seven, he says the same thing, and then in chapter eight. Then we get to chapter 12, the chapter we're in now and we saw this just a few weeks ago when the Greeks come to find him, he says, now my hour has come. And he'll continue to say that on in chapters 13 through 17 that he realized that now the hour has come and he's about to face this hour. And he is crying out for his father to save him from it.

We have a father, friends, who's not annoyed when we cry out for help. I mean, how many of you, if there are parents in the room, right...I know this is probably a hundred percent of you when your kids were younger...they wake you up in the middle of the night, scared, afraid. They ask for help. They cry out. Of course you go in and you want to meet their need, right? Like, unless you're a terrible parent, which is probably none of you, you go in, you want to help them. You want to meet their need. You settle them back down. You go back to sleep. They cry out again. Go back in the room, do the same thing over. The third time or the fourth time you're no longer concerned about what they're feeling anymore, are you? You're just annoyed. Why don't they get it? Like, why are they still afraid? There's nothing to be afraid of. Why can't they fall back asleep? And you've moved from like desire to meet their need, to just being annoyed with them and frustrated with them. At least that's me. Is anyone else with me on that? Okay. Sorry, kids. I love you and I'm happy to come in and meet your need. But we all feel that.

We have a father though, who has no struggle with that. He is not annoyed to come and meet our need when we cry out to him. He's tuned to our voice. He's eager to hear our cry for help. And he hears us every single time. And he's not annoyed that once again, Ken is asking for help. Once again, day after day, he's asking for help. Why can't Ken get his stuff together? Why can't Ken just figure things out? Why does he need more help? He's not annoyed by us. He's eager to hear us the Psalms say. His ear is inclined towards us. And isn't that amazing that the father's ears are inclined towards you, ready to hear you. So, when you face darkness, are you honest about what you're feeling and the emotion you're feeling, and then do you cry out to the father for help over and over and over again because he's ready to hear you. He wants to help you.

The third thing we see Jesus do here is not only cry for help, but then he entrusts himself to his father. Jesus entrust himself to the father. Verse 27 says, "but for this purpose, I've come to this hour. Father glorify your name." And it's important to see that Jesus doesn't just start here. Right? Sometimes we think this is where Jesus starts, that as he's approaching the darkness, he knows how hard it's going to be, and he just like girds himself up and says, all right, not my will, but yours be done, Father, let's go. He doesn't start there, does he? He feels fear. He's honest with his father about it. He then cries out for help, save me from this hour, Father, help me. And then after he's felt his feelings and expressed his need to the father, he then entrusts himself to the father's will.

And it's only after you've felt your feelings and experienced your need and cried out to him that you can actually entrust yourself to God. If you skip the first two steps, you're not actually entrusting your need to him at all. So Jesus entrusts himself to the father. He's honest about the darkness. He feels all that he's going to feel. He asks for help, but then he says, Father, I trust you, and I want your will to be done. This is John's Gethsemane moment. Right? Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we see this story in Gethsemane where Jesus is pouring out tears to the point where he's bleeding. He's bleeding, he's crying so hard, feeling the suffering that he's about to endure. Here in John, this is where this similar moment is happening and Jesus cries out, and yet he trusts the will of his father because he knows that his father loves him deeply and knows what's best for him. And he knows that his father's purpose is ultimately the purpose that he

wants to pursue and accomplish-that he came not to keep his life, but to give his life as a ransom for many. So he entrusts himself to the father.

And then we see the father affirms him. This voice comes from heaven in the moment and says, I have glorified it and I will glorify it again. I've glorified my name in the incarnation when you were born, throughout your life, and I will glorify it again through what's about to happen. In other words, the father affirms him. He affirms his identity. He affirms all that he's been feeling and experiencing, and he affirms that his purposes will be accomplished. And so Jesus now knowing that his father is with him, that he's not alone, that his father cares for him and that his father is committed to accomplishing all of the purposes that he's promised to accomplish, Jesus now is able to turn his eyes toward the darkness and walk forward.

Will we follow Jesus' example then? I don't know what darkness you face. I guarantee it wasn't the darkness that Jesus faced. I don't say that to minimize your suffering, but I say it because Jesus experienced suffering like none of us will ever experience. So we learn from him and how he faced the darkness. Will we be honest about what we're feeling before the father and not just stuff our emotions and try to move on. Will we then cry out to God for help again and again and again. And will we then entrust our lives and ourselves to the father, knowing that he loves us deeply. He will accomplish his purposes in us and through us if we just trust him. Will we do that? That's how we are called to face suffering and darkness the way Jesus did.

But in this passage we hear Jesus say something about the voice that comes. The voice comes from heaven. Everyone's confused. Some people think it like thundered, which I don't know how they would confuse that. Some people think an angel spoke. Jesus says you're all wrong. None of you get it. The father has spoken. The voice has come not for my sake, but for yours. Jesus is revealing something about this moment. Because this isn't just about us following Jesus' example, right? The goal of this passage is not to teach us to face darkness, the way Jesus faces darkness. And if you just face your suffering the way Jesus did, then you too can endure it the way he did. That's not the point of this passage. The point of this passage is that there is a darkness that you cannot face on your own. There's a darkness that will overtake you, Jesus says. There's a darkness that will destroy us, that we cannot endure, that we can follow Jesus' example perfectly and feel the feelings that we need to feel and cry out for help, and then we can entrust ourselves to the father-we could do it all perfectly-but we cannot face this darkness alone. We need a God who will save us from it.

The point of this passage tonight, Friends, is that Jesus willingly and purposefully enters into our darkness for us. He enters into this darkness so that we don't have to, and he defeats it in our place. Jesus, as John says in chapter one, the light of the world, willingly and purposely enters the darkness, but he would not be destroyed by it. Because of this he then invites us to walk as sons and daughters of light.

See, we don't just need an example of how to face suffering, as great as an example as this is, we need a savior. We need one who will enter the darkness for us because we can't. We will be

overtaken, Jesus says. We will be destroyed. So Jesus, our savior enters and defeats the darkness. Read with me verses 31 to 33. It says... Jesus now turns, right, he's wrestled through all of this with his father, and now he turns, resolutely and says, "now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I'm lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself. And he said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die." You see the darkness Jesus has in mind here is not a generic darkness. This isn't just like the idea of darkness that Jesus wants to rescue from it. He has a very specific darkness in mind. It's the darkness that lies at the root of all other difficulties that we encounter. You can think of whatever's going on in our life or in your life right now, whatever hard thing you're walking through, all of it comes down to this specific darkness. It's the darkness of sin, the darkness of our enemy, Satan, and the darkness of death itself. And Jesus himself enters into that. First of all, the darkness of sin, he says in verse 31, "now is the judgment of the world." Now is the judgment of this world. And remember everything Jesus is saying right now is meant to help us understand what he's about to go do as he walks towards the Passion Week and ultimately towards his death on the cross.

And so the judgment of the world was happening through all that he's about to do. Now the judgment would not have been a surprise to anyone hearing him, right? Judgment was something that they, as the Jewish people, they were expecting, that the prophets and the Old Testament had spoken of a day when a righteous God would come and judge an unrighteous people and they could not wait for the day when God would come by sending his Messiah to judge the unrighteous, Roman oppressors, who lorded it over them. But Jesus knew ultimately no one would escape this judgment, not even the Jews, that no one would escape God's judgment because as David writes in Psalm 14, God looks down from heaven to see if anyone seeks after him and yet they've all turned aside, David says. There's no one who does good, not even one. Jesus knew that this judgment to come would destroy the entire world, that no one could withstand it, that we all deserve because of our rebellion, we all deserve the wrath of God pour out on us.

And so this judgment is coming, but we weren't destroyed. Why is that? It's because Jesus saying that this judgment is happening now, knew that it was going to happen on himself. He knew that he, as he walks towards his death on the cross, that he would receive on himself the judgment of his own father, the judgment that we deserve as the ones who've rebelled against him, that he who did not deserve any of it would take it on himself so that we would not be destroyed, that he who knew no sin would become sin on our behalf so that we could be called the righteous ones of God.

The judgment of the world would come, but we would not be destroyed because Jesus would take it on himself. And I know that some of you right now are facing a particular kind of darkness that is tied to either your own sin or the sin of someone else against you. And the way that you can face that darkness in a different way, the good news is that Jesus has taken the guilt that your sin or someone else's sin, that he's taken that on himself. And he has covered that. He has carried that weight for you so that you do not have to, so that you're freed from the guilt and the power of sin over you. You're freed from that darkness. The second darkness

he talks about is the darkness of Satan. It Says, "now will the ruler of this world be cast out." Satan, the prince of darkness has been given this temporary time to try to exercise some kind of power, limited, but still very powerful over this world. And Jesus coming, as the king says, I have come now to cast out this ruler, literally to exercise this ruler. He will have no authority anymore. Jesus, through what he's about to do again, through his death on the cross where Satan will think that he's winning the day, where Satan thinks that finally he's destroyed the Messiah, that he has the upper hand, and it's through that, that Jesus defeats him once and for all. The decisive battle is won.

Now some of us tonight are maybe facing a particular darkness very much tied to the work either directly or maybe indirectly of the evil one. And we don't acknowledge that. In our modern Western enlightened culture, we don't like to think about spiritual reality sometimes, right? But we know the reality is there's a spiritual world around us that is very much real, that's just as real as the chair that you're sitting on. And there is an evil one who scripture says, is seeking to steal, kill, and destroy, seeking like a lion to devour you. And some of the darkness you're facing is a direct result or maybe an indirect result of his work in this world or in your life. And here's the good news for you tonight. Because Jesus chose to enter the darkness, because he faced the darkness in your place and he cast out the ruler of the world, that the ruler of the world, the prince of darkness has no authority over your life any longer, that you are now a son or a daughter of light, Jesus says, you're a part of his kingdom. And he holds you in his hands and he protects you. And you have nothing to fear.

The third type of darkness that we see in this passage that Jesus enters is the darkness of death itself. Jesus says in verse 32, "when I'm lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself." And he said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die Jesus now-and he hasn't spoken clearly yet about what kind of darkness he's actually talking about-he now gives a preview of what he's talking about. He says, he's going to be lifted up and they don't even get it. They think he's talking probably about lifted up like ascending, going up to heaven. They don't understand. And they won't understand until later on. That's why John includes this comment that he's speaking about the kind of death he's going to die. They don't get it, but he does. He knows exactly what he's walking towards that he will willingly go to death itself, that he will allow death's grip to come around him, that he will allow his body to die, to be buried, that he will go into the depths of the earth, but he will not stay there, that he will there proclaim victory over death itself and rise again, three days later and death will no longer hold him or anyone who is in his family.

And some of you are facing a darkness brought by the curse of death. And maybe it's that you're experiencing pain and maybe a physical pain, maybe it's in your body. Maybe it's sickness, maybe it's that you've experienced the death of people close to you, friends and family that you love. Maybe it's you see the curse of death in the world, around you, that you see a pandemic that's covered the world and affected all of us in different ways, that you see the curse even upon the ground itself, to where we labor and we toil, and the work we do is often in vain, or it feels like it's in vain because of the curse of death on this world. All of us face a darkness that's affected by the curse of death. And yet the good

news is that Jesus faced death and he destroyed it, that he entered the darkness of death, and he says he promised to draw from every corner of the globe, a people to himself, freed from the grip of death and that would live with him forever. Jesus here is saying something incredible-not that we need to like, face the darkness alone and here's how to do it, here's some pro tips for how to face the darkness-but he's saying to us, Friends, I will enter the darkness in your place. I will enter the darkness of sin and the guilt that you've incurred. I will enter the darkness of Satan and destroy the evil one. I will go into death itself and gain victory over it so that you will no longer have to live in darkness but can be called into the kingdom of light. And so he closes this passage with this invitation, this beautiful invitation into the light. Verse 35, Jesus says to them, "the light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you. The one who walks in darkness doesn't know where he is going. While you have the light believe in the light that you may become. Sons of light.

Guys, if all of this is true, then there's only one way to respond. It's not to face the darkness alone anymore. It's not to ignore it, to minimize it, to avoid it, to try to just shortcut around it. It's instead to put our hope in Jesus, who's gone before us and to walk in the light as sons and daughters of light. He says the way we do this is by believing in him. It's really that simple. It's really simple. I'm not saying it's easy, but it's really that simple. As we believe in him, we put our hope in him, we entrust ourselves to the one who enters the darkness for us. Some of you maybe are facing the darkness alone to this day because you've never put your trust in the one who goes before you and entered the darkness in your place. And let me just say that you will continue to feel stuck in darkness and you can do everything you can do to try to avoid it or ignore it or minimize it, but one day you will have to face it, and he is inviting you tonight into the light if you'll only put your trust in him.

Many of you do believe and you have believed, but Jesus tonight is inviting you again to trust in him, day by day, to entrust yourself to the one who goes before you, that you don't face the darkness alone. As we face darkness, our main weapon, Friends, is trust in Jesus who has entered the darkness for us and overcome it. And how do we wield this weapon? He says, we walk in the light. And two really just practical ways that we do this, that we walk in the light daily, is through scripture and through prayer. Nothing revolutionary, Friends. You're not going to hear that here. This is something we talk about often through scripture and through prayer, right? The Psalms say that God's word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, that we walk in the light through immersing ourselves in the light of scripture and through prayer, through communing with God. God is not this impersonal force out there, not this bright light that we can't know. God is a personal father. And he says that he wants his face to shine upon us. Isn't that a beautiful picture? That as you look to God in prayer, and you commune with him, that his face is shining on you.

That's how you walk in the light, Friends. The result of this is that you become sons of light. Sons and daughters of light. This is a glorious promise. When we believe in Jesus and we entrust ourselves to him, the light of the world who entered the darkness in our place, we become sons and daughters of light. And then we go out into our workplaces, in our neighborhoods, in our

families, in our homes, and we shine brightly as lights in the midst of a dark world. You know, we can be as Christians, more honest about the darkness of our world than anyone else. We should be able to be more honest about how dark this world really is, because we don't need to avoid it or minimize it or try not to think about it. We can face it. We can look at it and yet be filled with authentic, incredible hope because we know that the light has overcome the darkness. And as you go out into your neighborhoods and as you go out to the relationships that God has given you, and you're honest about the pain in your life and the suffering in your life and the darkness in your life, you don't try to minimize it or joke about it, you're honest about it, but at the same time, you're not destroyed by it, but you're filled with hope because the light of the world has gotten before you-that looks incredibly different and appealing to those who are stuck and lost in darkness and facing it alone. So may we go out as a church filled with hope as the sons and daughters of light in the midst of an incredibly dark and hurting and lonely world. Amen. All right, let me pray for us.

Father, I'm thankful for your promises to us, that we don't have to be alone, that we don't face the darkness alone, that you're with us, that you care, that you're a father who's in tune with our voice, that you hear our cries for help, and you don't just listen, but you've done something, that you sent your only son to come and to enter the darkness in our place and to overcome it and to bring us into the light. I pray father that tonight that this good news would just be really, really tangible to those that need to hear this, that it would hit home, that it would settle into their hearts, that they would receive it and hear this and believe it and trust it tonight. We pray for your work, for you to help us walk as sons and daughters of light in the midst of a dark world. We ask all of this in your son's name. Amen.