

## The Light of the World

John 3:1-21

March 10, 2018

Read John 3:1-21

I wanted to begin reading at the beginning of chapter 3 just to set the stage for the verse we are going to look at this morning. This is a great story of a man named Nicodemus and I think it speaks to us because Nicodemus was a lot like us. He was a church goer, he tried to follow God the best he knew how, but he also knew that there was something in his life that was missing. So he comes to Jesus, at night, maybe he didn't want anyone to see him. He recognized that Jesus has something in his life that Nicodemus doesn't have, but he knows he needs it. Nicodemus said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know you are from God, because one could do the things you are doing unless God was with them; and Jesus replies, "Nicodemus, you will never see God's kingdom unless you are born again." By that I mean you need to be born of water and the spirit, spiritual rebirth, which comes through repentance and allowing God's spirit to come into your life. Born from the inside out and placing your trust in me. For everyone who believes in me has eternal life. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world, but so save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned." John 3:16-18

So I ask you this morning, do you believe in him? What does it mean to believe in Jesus? Do you believe he is the Son of God? Do you believe he died on the cross for your sins, declaring you not guilty? Do you believe he rose from the grave and sits at the right hand of God and some day will return to take us to heaven with him to live eternally? If you believe all of this, you are not condemned. But whoever does not believe stands condemned already you just remain condemned, because you do not believe in God's one and only son.

So, this is the verdict: Light, has come into the world, but people loved the darkness instead of the light. That's what I want to talk about this morning. "Light" on this morning when daylight saving time has robbed us of an hour of daylight. Yesterday morning I was driving out here around 6:30am for men's breakfast and you really didn't need your headlights. It was light enough in the house to get dressed and get organized. But this morning, it was back to eating my pop tart by moonlight.

Do you know where daylight saving time came from? Benjamin Franklin invented the idea in Paris, France in 1784. He reasoned that if everyone would stay in bed an extra hour each day from early March to mid-September, with 100,000 inhabitants in Paris, they would save a half pound of candle wax per household per day, totaling, 64,050,000 pounds of wax per year. Who thinks up things like this? Obviously, Ben Franklin did. Then in 1914 President Woodrow Wilson signs Daylight Savings Time into law. Then on March 11, 2018 we are plunged back into darkness every morning.

But the Good News this morning is the very first words that God spoke in scripture back in Genesis 1:3 were "Let there be light" and God carefully separated this light from the dark and there was evening and there was morning, the first day, and God's design unfolds and gets underway.

Today we know a lot about light. We know the speed at which it travels. 186,000 miles per second or 671 million miles per hour. We know it comes on when we plug it in or throw a switch. We know that light is essential to life and we could not live without it. Plants are necessary for the existence of mankind. The entire human race and all animal life are dependent on plants for survival. Plants provide all the essential amino acids and most of the vitamins necessary for health through a light process known as photosynthesis. Plants also produce the oxygen that we need to breath. Plants

must have light to grow. What is true in the physical world is true in the spiritual world. Physical life is impossible without physical light, and spiritual life is impossible without spiritual light.

Several years ago we went over to Ohio Caverns in West Liberty. We're down in the caverns and we get to a point and our guide says we are going to turn the lights off for a minute so you can experience complete darkness. They turn the lights off, and it's really dark. It doesn't take long to start feeling real uncomfortable and it's like ok, we get the point turn the lights back on.

Being in complete darkness is unnerving. It induces a sense of helplessness. Yet physical darkness is nothing compared to emotional, or relational or spiritual darkness. When you are in the dark and can't see your way through, or can't find your way out of a situation, Jesus lights a torch. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Jesus didn't say he is "a" light, one among many, but said, "I am the light". He didn't say he is a light for "some", but the light "of the world". When life is at its darkest, Jesus is at his brightest. Nicodemus came in the dark and found the light. If you are living in the darkness of a broken relationship, or depression, or a chronic illness, come to Jesus. He said those who follow me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Then Jesus makes an incredible promise that the moment you come to him, surrender to him, you will never walk in darkness again. How can that be? Because even though Jesus called himself "the light of the world" he also called us the same thing, saying to his disciples in Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world".

Of the seven things that Jesus calls himself, "I am the bread of life, I am the door, I am the good shepherd, I am the vine, I am the way, the truth and the life; out of all of those I am, I am the light of the world is the only title that he also give us. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you should also be light amidst the darkness. Your job is to let Jesus shine in you and through you so that those living in the dark will find light as well.

That's why it is not enough just to shine. Light is only useful when it encounters the darkness. The place to shine your light and show your light and share your light is not inside the church, but "outside" the church. Jesus tells us to do what he did; go find dark places and start shining. When you are in the darkness, Jesus shines his light. But if you are living in the light, Jesus calls you to shine into the darkness.

You don't have to ask people to look at you when you turn on a light in a dark room. Their heads will turn instinctively.

You play sports and you begin praying for and with your teammates, you are a light in the darkness.

You live in a neighborhood filled with unbelievers, and begin performing acts of service for others in Jesus' name. You are a light in the darkness.

You are the conspicuous Christian in your workplace, displaying virtue in an atmosphere of selfishness. You are a light in the darkness.

Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good work, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Matthew 5:16