

SM 121315 – *Christmas Lights* (revised from a message preached on 122814 – “*Why Did He Come*”

Text – John 1:1 - 13

Congregational Reading – John 1:6 - 9

Introduction

Review the text:

Notice vs. 4 – 5

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (John 1:4-5)

Illustrate – When I see all of the Christmas lights on display this time of year, I am reminded that Jesus Christ came to this earth as a bright and shining light that burned through the darkness around Him.

Notice vs. 1 – 9 – John the Baptist was a reflector of Christ Light. He was not the source of light, but merely a reflector, like the moon reflects the light of the sun.

Today not only can we reflect the light of Christ outwardly as John did, but God can also generate light from within us through His Holy Spirit who lives inside of believers.

Supporting Verses

Read John 12:42 – 48

This passage of scripture references the week immediately preceding Christ's crucifixion.

Notice v. 46

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." (John 12:46)

Read 3:1 - 21

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12)

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (John 9:5)

One of the reasons Jesus said that He came to the earth was to shine a bright light onto a very dark and sinful world.

Transition

This morning we will examine three changes that take place when light is introduced into this world.

I Light Provides Contrast – light is the opposite of darkness. Darkness is often symbolic in the Bible for sinfulness or worldliness.

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20)

Lost people are referred to as walking in darkness.

"The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble." (Proverbs 4:19)

Illustrate – Two Guys trail and being chased by bullies

The world is a very dark place:

*"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."
(Ephesians 6:12)*

Christians are supposed to be children of the Light:

"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness." (1 Thessalonians 5:5)

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:" (1 Peter 2:9)

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:" (1 John 1:5-6)

Read Ephesians 5:1 – 14

There are so many examples in Scripture of men and women who were bright and shining lights in a world that was cloaked in pitch black darkness:

Daniel – refused to eat the king's meat and drink the king's wine; and later, he refused to obey the law forbidding him to bow down and pray to God.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's image. These men provided a sharp contrast to the darkness around them. They shined brightly and through their light they brought glory to God.

II Light Produces Clarity

Illustrate – The desk in our bedroom does not have a lamp on it. The nearest light is about 8 feet away. Sometimes when I am working at the desk and reading something that has small print, I can't make out the words. I have to pull out my phone and turn on the flashlight to provide clarity.

God's light brings clarity to a very confusing world. The world will guide you in a multiplicity of directions, but God's pathway is narrow and strait, and very well lit.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:13-14)

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12)

God's Way and God's Word provide clarity and they help us make sense of this world.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105)

III Light Provokes Confrontation

"But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." (Acts 26:16-18)

The clarity of God's Word and the stark contrast between God's way and the ways of the world confronts people and forces a choice. They can either chose to follow the light or stay in the darkness.

Jesus came and shined a bright light into this world. His Word was very clear. His Way was very different (it contrasted) from the ways of man. He confronted people with a choice.

Conclusion

And that is exactly the same thing that we are to do today.

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)

A We are to shine the light of God's Word

Learn the Word

Live the Word

Share the Word

B We are to reflect God's light in our lives

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;" (Philippians 2:12-15)

C We are to be generators of God's light through the indwelling Holy Spirit of God.

When God's Holy Spirit is in control of our lives, the light of God's "...love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, [and] temperance..." will shine to those around us. (Galatians 5:22-23)

And, the darker your world gets, the brighter your light should appear.

Illustrate – the little battery operated lights in the windows. You can hardly tell that they are on during the day, but at night they become very bright.

When your life becomes dark through problems – shine God's light.

When your world becomes dark through persecution shine God's light.

Did you ever consider that the trials that God allows to come your way are really opportunities that He has presented us to shine His light.

Conclusion

Jesus is light. He came to be a light. He still shines today through obedient and yielded Christians.

Shine God's light. Some will be attracted to it, and, unfortunately, some will be repulsed by it. That is their choice; but it is our duty and privilege to continue what Jesus came to do – Be a Light.