

“The Light of the World”
John 1:4-5
(Preached at Trinity, March 23, 2016)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. I’ve been stressing the amazing richness of the Gospel of John. There is no greater passage in all of Scripture that declares more clearly the doctrine of the Trinity. Jesus Christ, the eternal Word, was eternally with God, eternally God. For all of the infinite eons of eternity there was harmony and fellowship between the three persons of the Godhead—three persons yet one God.
2. In these opening verses John declares of Christ:
 - He is eternal – “In the beginning was the Word”
 - He is a person distinct from the Father – “The Word was with God”
 - He is God – “the Word was God”
 - He is Creator – “All things came into being through Him”
 - He is the source of all spiritual life – “In Him was life”
3. Last time as we came to **Verse 4** we again found John’s words rich in meaning.
 - A. First of all, in the full context of **Verses 1-3** we find the deity of Christ displayed. In Him He has His own being. Theologically, we refer to this as Aseity or self-existence.
 - B. Our attention is also drawn to our own life. He possesses life. He gives life.
John 1:4 NAS - "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."
 - C. This is particularly meaningful as we consider the fallen state of man. We are all suffering under the curse of death.
 - a. When Adam sinned death became a constant shadow over him, and as all other human beings, he eventually died. But Christ provides the promise of eternal life through the resurrection.
 - b. A much more serious death plagues us—spiritual death resulting in a terrible alienation from God and a love affair with sin. We are hopelessly under God’s judgment and condemnation. But through Christ the Holy Spirit brings regeneration—spiritual life.
4. Now as we come to the second half of **Verse 4** John further describes the life-giving work of Christ. Not only is He life, He is also the light that shines forth in the darkness of this fallen world.
John 1:4 NAU - "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men."
5. John maintains several themes as he brings us this Gospel. One of these is the theme of darkness and light. We have to read this verse while maintaining the context of the fall of Adam.
 - A. Jesus is life because we dwell in death.
 - B. Jesus is the light because we dwell in darkness. And John tell us in Chapter 3 that fallen man would really have it no other way.

John 3:19-20 NAU - "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."

6. Metaphorically, there are two distinct and separate realms on the earth –
- A. One is characterized by darkness and ruled by Satan who continues to blind the unbelieving with lies and deceit.
2 Corinthians 4:3-4 NAU - "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."
- B. The other is characterized by light and is ruled by Christ whose very nature is light.
1 John 1:5-7 NAU - "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. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin."
- C. These two realms of darkness and light are completely incompatible with each other.
1. God demonstrated this at creation
Genesis 1:1-4 NAU - "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.
 This great separation will always be present. Darkness is the absence of light. Light will always dispel darkness.
 2. Paul described this incompatibility
2 Corinthians 6:14 NAU - " Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?"
 3. Hell will be the ultimate expression of darkness—the ultimate separation
Matthew 22:13 NAU - "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

- I. All of humanity is born into a world of darkness
- A. We are all plagued by spiritual and moral blindness
1. A blind person is unable to process light
 - a. Light can be all around them and yet they cannot perceive it. They live in a world of darkness.
 - b. This is a perfect analogy of our spiritual condition. We are in a world of darkness and completely unaware of the existence of anything else.
 2. All of lost humanity are spiritually blind. This speaks of our ignorance. We are void of the capacity to think spiritually. This was Paul's meaning in **Eph. 4:17-18** - "that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ being darkened in their understanding"
 3. This is the chief labor of Satan—to deceive and blind men from the truth. **John 8:44 NAU** - "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."
 - a. He deludes the mind and biases our judgment
 - b. He makes evil seem good and good seem evil
 - c. The lost man is not in his right mind. His mind has a great covering over it, a great cloud of darkness that keeps him from understanding the ways of God. It results in foolish thinking. We can see it in the terrible moral confusion of our day.
- B. This spiritual darkness leaves the lost man unable to comprehend spiritual things.
1. Why is it that so few believe in a nation so saturated with the gospel - because they are darkness
 2. That is why the preaching of the gospel so boring to the lost man? He is making a tremendous proclamation about himself
 3. The deceitfulness of sin leaves the lost man unable to see the corruption
 - a. It causes us to live in sin and not be sensible to it
 - b. That is why a man can be filled with envy, or hatred, or lust and have his understanding darkened to approve of it
 - c. The more he lives in covetousness and the desire for riches the more he sees himself excused in doing so. He sees more and more things as necessities that he cannot do without
- C. Most dangerous of all, this darkness leaves the lost man blind to his peril
1. Blind to the reality of a holy God who is the righteous Judge
Who rules with all power and authority
 2. Blind to the fact that they deserve hell
 3. Blind to the fact that they are already objects of His Divine wrath
 4. Blind to the fact that the only reason they are not in hell at this very moment is due to the longsuffering of God - they have no control over it!

- II. Deliverance from this darkness is at the heart of Christ's redemptive work in the Gospel.
- John 1:4 NAU** - "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men."
- Isaiah 42:6-7 NAU** - "I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, ⁷ To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison."
- Acts 26:18 NAU** - "open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."
- Isaiah 9:2 NAS** - "The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them."
- John 8:12 NAS** - "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."
- A. This demands the supernatural transformation of the Gospel
1. The problem is even with the infinite brightness of the light of Christ men still cannot see it. They are blind.
John 1:5 NAU - "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."
 2. Only God can bring the great transformation upon man
2 Corinthians 4:6 NAU - "For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."
 3. God calls us out of the darkness and into the light
1 Peter 2:9 NAS - "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"
Colossians 1:13 NAS - "He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,"
 4. This is a powerful work of God's grace.
*Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night:
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light:
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.*
- B. The light of Christ is a transforming light
1. Light dispels the darkness –
Romans 13:12 NAS - "The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."
 2. This is the transforming work of the Gospel
Ephesians 5:8 NAS - "for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light"

Conclusion:

1. This passage reminds us of this miraculous transforming work of God. It also reminds us of the weighty responsibility that is attached to this gift. Jesus has shined forth in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it – BUT YOU HAVE!
 - A. Jesus commands us to let this light shine forth. We are to reflect the light of Christ. This has an impact in how we live before men.
Matthew 5:14-16 NAU - "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵ nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."
 - B. It has great moral implication for us. Paul reminds us of the contrast between what we were and what we have become.
Ephesians 5:5-11 NAU - " For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not be partakers with them; ⁸ for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰ trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them"
2. My great desire as one of your pastors is that you become spiritually minded. To have your minds continually illuminated.
 - A. This is the result of God's transforming grace but it happens as the result of the Holy Spirit in you whom Christ has sent forth as your Teacher.
John 14:26 NAU - "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."
 You must be filled with the Spirit. He is the Holy Spirit.
 - B. This happens as your mind is continually bathed with the Word of God.
Romans 12:2 NAU - "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."
2 Timothy 3:15 NAU - "and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."