

The Light of the World

I Am

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I'm going to ask you this morning if you would join me in taking your Bible or your smartphone or your iPad or whatever you may have the Scriptures upon, and turn with me to the New Testament book of John. John's Gospel, chapter 8. I'll begin reading at verse 12 and I'll read all the way through the end of verse 30. Just follow along as I read aloud the word of God.

12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." 13 So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true." 14 Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. 16 Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. 17 In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. 18 I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me." 19 They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." 20 These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come. 21 So he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." 22 So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" 23 He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." 25 So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. 26 I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." 27 They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. 28 So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am

he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. 29 And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him." 30 As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

This is God's word.

Father, we thank you for the precious, living, true word that you have sent, that you have spoken through your Son, and that he spoke to his apostles and they wrote it down and it has been preserved. We pray, Holy Spirit, that you would illuminate, that light would shine upon these words, upon our hearts, to help to understand, to help us to be thrilled and delighted with Jesus who is the light of the world, and may many believe in him. We pray this in his name. Amen.

Well, it was late one afternoon during the winter season, you know how it is when it gets dark early; it's in December and it's like 5 o'clock and it starts getting dark. A man entered into the dentist office insisting on seeing the dentist. He was demanding. He said, "I have an emergency. I need to see the dentist." And the receptionist told the man, "You know, we're just about to close but I'll go and see if the dentist has some time maybe to see you." And so she went to the dentist and he agreed, he said, "You know, I'll see the man." And so he walks up to the man and he said, "I understand that you have an emergency. How can I help you, sir?" The man said, "I'm a moth." The dentist was startled and he said, "You're a moth? What in the world do you mean you're a moth? You don't need to see me, a dentist, you need to see a psychiatrist. I'm a dentist, I mean, why did you come into my office?" To which he responded, "Your light was on."

Yeah, I know that's corny. I know, but blame it on Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer. That's his favorite joke, he said. I heard an interview recently and that's his favorite joke of all.

Let me say something serious at the beginning, though, very seriously speaking: if you begin hearing this message today as an unbeliever, if you begin hearing this message as an unbeliever, you may become a believer by the end of it. Really. I mean, it's that true. Really. You start this message as an unbeliever, you could become a believer, be drawn to the light by the end of it, and I say that on the authority of verse 30. Did you hear it? "As he was saying these things, many believed in him." Wow. Friends, it is still true today in 2016, faith comes by hearing, hearing the words of Jesus Christ.

I have great hope when I read verse 30 that as we proclaim the truth of Jesus, as we encourage people, "Read the Gospel of John. Have you read it before? Read the Gospel of John." I have great encouragement believing that still today faith in Jesus comes by hearing the words of Jesus and because verse 24, did you hear verse 24? "For unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." You see, if we will hear, believe, embrace, trust the words of Jesus, the effect will be we will pass from death unto life, but if we don't, if we don't believe in Jesus, we will die in our sins. I mean, that's how simple this is. So if you begin hearing this as an unbeliever, you could become a believer by the end

of this message. You really could because, not because of me, because of the words of Jesus. But secondly, if you begin hearing this message as a believer, and many of you are, I trust that you're going to be affirmed in your faith, you're going to be edified in the faith, and you're going to be better equipped to share the Gospel with those who are in darkness.

Now, we began last Sunday morning by looking at the "I am's" of Jesus. Last week we looked at the first "I am, I am the bread of life." Today we are looking at, "I am the light of the world." I am the light of the world. Remember what we're doing, we're going through these "I am's" of Jesus in the Gospel of John up through Easter Sunday and one of the side issues we are doing, we are reading the Gospel of John ourselves to get reacquainted, falling in love with Jesus over again, and we are encouraging those around us who God gives us that opportunity to step into their life, into their world, and we're encouraging them and saying, "Hey, have you ever read the Gospel of John before? You've got to read the Gospel of John." And we're trusting that the Spirit of God is going to do a great work in their lives.

So today we're looking at, "I am the light of the world." Now, again, we read verses 12 through 30. There is a lot going on here so it helps me to kind of break it down in this fashion. The first thing we're going to do is look at a question and that is this: in what way is Jesus the light of the world? I think that is a logical question. Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." Jesus, in what way are you the light of the world? Because he makes this statement, did you notice, he makes this statement and then he doesn't even come back to it in this chapter. He doesn't later say, "You know, let me explain what I mean by I am the light of the world." He doesn't say that at all, he breaks into this, you know, about bearing witness of himself and the Father and that sort of thing.

So what's going on here? I think if you go back and look at this, you'll notice that at least seven times in this passage Jesus refers to these facts: he refers to he is from the Father. Jesus mentions that he has been sent by the Father. He is from the Father. The second fact that you'll notice is this: he says, "I speak on the authority of the Father." In other words, "I don't speak of my own, I speak the words that he has given me." Third fact: he says, "I'm going back to the Father. I've come from the Father. He sent me. I'm speaking the words of the Father, not on my authority but on his authority. And I'm going back to the Father." Now, why is that important? It is important because in those words Jesus is saying, "The fact that I am from God is what it means for me to be the light of the world. The fact that I have been sent by God, the fact that I am speaking on his authority, I'm speaking the words he gave me, and the fact that I'm going back to him, is what it means for me to be the light of the world."

A little background here would help. You see, we need to ask the question: when Jesus said this statement, "I am the light of the world," why did he say it? There's a reason and it's beautiful. You see, in chapter 7 of the Gospel of John, John records the celebration, the Jewish celebration of the Feast of the Tabernacles. The Feast of the Tabernacles was an annual eight day event that celebrated the wilderness wandering of the Israelites that's recorded in the Old Testament. You see, if you were to go back and read the book of

Exodus, you would read the history of the Israelites, how that God rescued them out of Egyptian bondage, called them out to himself to the wilderness, and it's in that context that they're celebrating the Feast of the Tabernacles. In the first century AD, they're looking back. They're looking back like Nick was talking about this morning, looking back and they are looking back and they're celebrating this Feast of the Tabernacles.

Now the evening celebration took place under the glow of light from four huge lamps or candelabras that were located in the temple court. You'll see a picture of this. This helps to kind of put it into focus. This is a replica of the temple and you see the four lights positioned in the four corners, these big four candelabras, and history tells us that the light from these candelabras spread all through the city of Jerusalem. Now get this picture: it's in this setting when the people of God are celebrating, they're dancing and celebrating and rejoicing, remembering what God's deliverance, how he led his people through the wilderness, how he led their forefathers through the wilderness, it's in that kind of setting that Jesus makes this statement. This light that we see from the temple, this light symbolized how God had led the Israelites in the wilderness with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Now it's in that setting but at the close of the Feast of the Tabernacles, the very last evening, one of these lamps was left unlit and it symbolized something. It symbolized that full salvation had not yet come because, as they believed, the Messiah had not yet appeared. Jesus had appeared but they did not receive him. And so in their celebration, you've got the Messiah standing right there, you've got him right there, and they're going through their ceremony and they leave one of these lights unlit to symbolize, "We're still waiting on the Messiah. We're still longing for the Messiah to come." And it's in this setting, it's in this context that Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." Think about it.

You see, in order for us to get the heaviness of this, the weightiness of this, you have to look back at verse 20, "These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come." Now why would John say that? Why would John say nobody arrested him? It's because, man, his words are on fire. His words are burning the religious people of his time, they're burning them up. They're kicked, they're mad, they are not happy about what Jesus is saying. When he says, "I am the light of the world," do you understand what he's saying? Jesus is saying, "Folks, that pillar of fire that led your forefathers in the darkness through the wilderness that was a symbol of the ever-present God, that was all pointing to me. That was all about me. That was all pointing you to me, God in the flesh, the light of the world." Then he would say, "Do you know that unlit lamp? Do you know that unlit lamp that symbolizes you've been waiting on the Messiah? I'm here. I'm here. I'm the light of the world. I'm the one you've been waiting for." It's no wonder John would say, "You know, it's a wonder they didn't arrest him. It's a wonder because, man, his words were on fire."

His words, his presence, his statement, "I am the light of the world," was fulfilling all kinds of Old Testament prophecy like in Isaiah 9. Look at these words, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone." That is a prophecy foretelling what it's going to be like when

Jesus came the first time. So Jesus when he says, just understand this, when he said, "I am the light of the world," he is declaring, first, "I am God. I am God in the flesh," and, "I am on a mission to bring the light of God into the darkness of this world." So that is what it means for Jesus to say, "I am the light of the world. The Father has sent me. I am speaking his words by his authority and ultimately I am going back to him. But my mission, my mission is to come and to reveal God to you, this God who is fully light, and that you may be rescued out of your darkness."

So that's what it means for Christ to be the light of the world but the second question we want to look at from this text is: what darkness is Jesus referring to? Look at verse 12, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness." Now what darkness is Jesus referring to, because wouldn't you admit not all darkness is bad? Not all darkness is bad. Just see the hands of how many of you love to sleep with all the lights out? Look at you. Look at you. You've gotten past the nightlight stage. Bless your hearts. Congratulations. I want it as dark as it can get. I don't even want the little light on the tv, you know? I don't want that on. I want complete darkness.

Not all darkness is bad, is it? How about when you're watching a movie, do you want all the lights on? No, you want all the lights out, probably. You want the full impact of what's going on on the screen. That's why the cinema, it's dark. They don't leave the lights on. They dim the lights, right?

Not all darkness is bad, however, there is a bad kind of darkness, a dangerous kind of darkness. Just a few Sundays ago, it was about 6 AM and it was on a Sunday morning, in fact, a couple of Sundays ago and I opened the door to go into the garage and there is a flight of steps, about 10 steps down, and typically when I hit the garage door, the garage door will come up and at the same time, simultaneously a light will come on. That morning, I hit the garage door, no light came on and it was total darkness outside so there was nothing but darkness out there. Well, for a split second I thought, "Now, Van, you've navigated this before. You know there are about 10 steps down and then you can turn and you go to your truck." And then I heard a wiser voice that said, "You idiot, you're 60 years old. Don't try to do that." Can you imagine, in total darkness you're walking down steps, wooden steps, onto a concrete pad. So better wisdom, I flipped on the auxiliary lights so I could see.

So there is a bad bad darkness, right? The question is: what darkness is Jesus referring to? What kind of darkness is Jesus referring to? This will help: Scripture often uses the metaphor of darkness to illustrate spiritual blindness. Okay, now think with me. God wants us to understand spiritual blindness and so he uses the metaphor darkness and notice this, in Deuteronomy 28:29, God told his ancient people, Israel, that if they disobeyed, here's one the consequences they would face, "and you shall grope at noonday as the blind grope in darkness." Now keep in mind: God said that to his people, "if you disobey me. If you disobey me, here's what it's going to be like." Now he's speaking metaphorically, speaking of here spiritual blindness. As the blind grope in darkness, just like a blind person is trying to reach and find his way, you in noonday, in the noonday, the brightness of the sun, you're going to be groping around in your spiritual darkness.

Why? Because you've turned from me. You've disobeyed me. You're not following me as the light. You're walking in darkness. You see, darkness here is referring to a spiritual blindness.

It's interesting, too, that Scripture also uses the metaphor of light to speak of God's moral purity. Notice this in 1 John 1:5, John says, "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Now what does that mean? Well, a couple of weeks ago, the second largest diamond in history was found in the country of Botswana and they named it, interestingly, they named that diamond "Our Light," and they named it that because that diamond was entirely void of any impurities. In other words, they found a diamond, no impurities, and the first thing that comes to their mind is, "Our light. Our light."

So when John says God is light, he's speaking about the moral perfection of God. God is light, he is morally perfect. In him there is no darkness. In him there is no immorality. But if the Bible speaks of God's moral perfection in this way, how does the Bible speak of our condition? We find it in John's Gospel. Jesus said in John 3 these words, "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world," that's speaking of Jesus, "and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."

Now what does all that mean? I think this illustration might help. Have you ever heard of the word "phototaxis"? Phototaxis is an organism's automatic movement either toward light or away from light. Think about it this way: you walk into your kitchen, you go into the pantry, you flip on the light and you see a cockroach running across the floor, and what is it trying to do? It's trying to get into the darkness. It's trying to get away from the light. You're never going to have a cockroach say, "Could you turn on some more light, please?" No way. They're wanting to get into the darkness, you see. Why? Because their phototaxis, they are what's called negatively phototactic. They are negatively phototactic organisms. They run away from the light. On the other hand though, and you laughed at it earlier, a moth. A moth. A moth is positively phototactic. Why? Because they, what? Move toward the light, right?

Ah, which one are you? Which one are you? I'll tell you what, according to the Scripture, remember Jesus says, "And this is the judgment, light has come into the world." What Jesus is saying in some Bullitt County language, are you ready for Bullitt County language? Jesus is saying a Bullitt County language is this: before God, we're nothing but cockroaches. Yeah. Because he came into the world, the light came into the world, we get scattering every which a way; walking, living in and loving spiritual darkness and blindness. Let me say it this way so that you'll understand: every philosophy and moral code outside of Christ lies in the deepest of darkness.

What I mean by that is this, I'll give this example. Last night I officiated a memorial service for a 63 year old man who pretty much burned his life out on drugs. I met with his family yesterday afternoon. I asked, I said, "Can you tell me any religious background?"

Any religious background at all?" The first words that came out of their mouth was, "He was a real caring person." No hope whatsoever. The man died with no Gospel hope whatsoever. You see, what they were describing to me was a philosophy or a moral code that you're all very familiar with, "I'm a good person. I'm a good person. I'm a good person. I'm not that bad." As a matter of fact, they went on to tell me a story of this man's goodness, of what he did for somebody. He didn't believe in Jesus, he didn't come to the light but he had his own moral code and I want you to hear this: every philosophy and moral code that is outside of the light of Christ lies in the deepest of darkness.

So here is a question that we need before we go to our final question, we need to stop here and ask this: who can deliver us from such spiritual blindness? That spiritual blindness of, "I'm a good person. I'm a good moral person. I'm not as bad as this person." And just ever marching, marching, marching toward the lake of fire. Marching toward outer darkness. Who can deliver us from this? I mean, we're trapped. Who can get us out of this?

And that brings me to the last question of this text and I think it's a logical question because the first question was: in what way is Jesus the light of the world? And then what kind of darkness is Jesus talking about? And then finally we look at this: how do we receive the light of the world? How do we appropriate what Jesus is saying here? Because in verse 30, there were some people who appropriated it, said, "many believed." So I'm asking the question for you, for me: how do we receive the light of the world? How do we enter into this? How do we embrace this? How does it shine upon us?

The first thing I want you to notice is in verse 12. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." Look at the very next word, "Whoever follows me." I want you to notice how Jesus goes from the universal to the individual. You see, it may not warm your heart too much to hear Jesus say, "I am the light of the world," oh, but I'll tell you what, it ought to set your heart afire when he says, "Whoever follows me." He's getting right down personal with me and you. Whoever. Whoever.

So that's the beginning of understanding how do we receive the light. We understand that it's not just a universal proclamation, but it comes right down to the very center of where you're at, where I'm at. But then look back at verse 12 again and notice a particular word I want you to see, "Whoever follows me." Do you see that? "Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Now shift your eyes over to verse 24. He says, "unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." So what's going on here? We're asking the question: how do you receive the light of the world? Well, on one hand, we must believe, and on the other hand, we must follow, right? See both those words: believe and follow. What is Jesus saying? How do we receive the light of the world? One must believe on Jesus Christ and keep on believing.

Someone will say, "You know, I was baptized when I was 15. I was baptized when I was 15 and I remember I joined a church somewhere. I can't for the life of me think of the name of it and haven't been back. But you know, in reality I've kind of gone on and just lived my own life; I'm just kind of doing my own...I'm living for me. I'm not living for

Christ." I want you to understand something: you're not following Jesus. I don't know what you'd call it. You may say, "I'm a Christian," but you say all these things but Jesus said, "Whoever follows me." He doesn't say, "Whoever starts following me and then stops. Whoever follows me. Whoever believes in me. Whoever trusts in me and keeps on trusting me." How do I receive the light of the world? Believe, trust in Jesus and continue trusting in Jesus.

I don't know if this will have any impact on anybody here today but I've got to say it because I thought about this this week. I've had just in the last few months, I've had two people not in this church but out in the community come to me and say, privately and said, "Look, I need to talk to you. I've had this particular experience. I had a heart attack and they said I died, they brought me back and, preacher, I saw the light." I was officiating a funeral just a few months ago and a gentleman came up to me after the service and said, "I've got to talk to you," and he just went through that experience. He said, "I saw the light," and he goes, "I don't know why God let me live. I don't know why he's letting me live." And, you know, I've heard these stories over and over, "I don't know why he's left me," and in my head I'm going, "Because you're so special." Now, don't get mad with me. I'm not trying to be sarcastic, you'll know what I mean when I say this. They'll say, "I just don't know what God wants me, he's kept me around. He kept me around. I don't know what he wants me to do." And then there at the funeral home, I looked him in the eye and I said, "I can tell you exactly what he wants you to do. He wants you to believe in his Son and keep on believing until the day you die. That's what God has kept you around for. That's what God has kept you breathing for. Understand that. It's not so you can be an astronaut or something or a brain surgeon or whatever it is. Fundamentally it's that you would believe upon his Son Jesus Christ and follow him." That's what Jesus is saying in this chapter. It really is.

Now remember and I want to try to bring this down to...remember we said that darkness is used as a metaphor for spiritual blindness and I just want to point this out to you, this is no accident. The Bible, God has good logic and reasoning. The Bible is not just a spattering of a bunch of stuff. No, no, it has some good logic and reasoning behind it because we're reading chapter 8, when you get to chapter 9, would you just flip over to chapter 9? Would you do that? Just flip one chapter over to chapter 9. I want you to see something. At the top of your chapter 9, what does it say? Somebody yell it out. Jesus heals a man born blind, right? Well, what an accident. I mean, what a fluke. I mean, "What?" Hey, something's going on here.

If you'll drop your eyes down to verse 5, look at what Jesus says, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Uh-oh. Jesus seems to be carrying this theme over now from what he said in chapter 8. He's in a different setting now and he is getting ready to heal a blind man, okay? As he gets ready there, he says, "I am the light of the world." Okay, don't miss this because look at verses 6 through 7, "Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent)." Look at this, "So he went and washed and came back seeing." He came back seeing.

And what happens next is this man has been gloriously healed and he can see, he's been blind from birth. The religious leaders in the synagogue want to know, "What's going on here? What's going on here?" Well, he says, "Well, I was blind and now I can see, that's what's going on." Well, that's not good enough and so ultimately they throw him out of the synagogue. If you'll look at verse 35 in chapter 9, "Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.' He said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshiped him." Now let's go on reading, "Jesus said, 'For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.' Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, 'Are we also blind?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, "We see," your guilt remains.'" What's going on here? When Jesus said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" he is saying, "Do you place your trust in the one who is the revelation of God to man?" And what I want you to see here is this: Jesus is using this occasion of healing a blind man to address the condition of spiritual blindness. He is showing that only he, not only can he heal physical blindness and ultimately one day everyone who is blind physically will be able to see, he is also saying, "I am able, I am the only one able to cure your spiritual blindness."

So the question is: how did this blind man who is an example Jesus is using, how did he receive the light of the world? How did he do it? Did he say, "Jesus, I'm blind but I'm a good person. Jesus, I'm blind but I'm a good moral person. I've been doing really good works and I've been helping people and, you know, my grandpa was a preacher and..." No, he didn't do any of that. How did this man receive the light of the world and have a cure for his blindness and how can we have a cure for our spiritual blindness? Here's what the man did: he obeyed Jesus' instructions and trusted him as God's revelation to man. That's what Son of Man means, God's revelation to man. Jesus said, "Go and do this," and he said, "Okay. Okay. I'm just going to obey you and I'm going to believe in you. I'm going to believe that you are God's revelation to man." Boom! He can see.

Quickly. I'm going to do this quick so you're going to have to put your eyes on the overhead. Like the blind man, our situation is darkness. In Ephesians 5 Paul said this, "for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." In other words, if you're a Christian here, you were in darkness. If you're here and you're not a Christian, you're not a believer, you are darkness. You are. It is only the miraculous new birth, trusting in Christ, coming to faith in Christ, that we are born again and we're brought into light.

Secondly, without Christ, we remain in darkness. Look at John 12, "I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." If you're here and you're a Christian, you have been translated out. You're out of the kingdom of darkness. You don't remain in that anymore. But if you're not a Christian, you are dead set, right bull's eye in the kingdom of darkness.

Thirdly, the evil of darkness could not put out the light of God's truth in Jesus. In John 1, notice this, "In him," in Jesus, "was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." The darkness is no match for the Gospel light, friends. No match.

Our deliverance from darkness is a divine miracle. 2 Corinthians 4, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." In other words, spiritually blind people, the only way they're going to be healed is by a miracle of God, a miracle of God to open spiritually blind eyes and it happens through the light of the glorious Gospel being proclaimed. No wonder many believed. Will you believe?

Finally, our deliverance places us squarely and surely in the kingdom of God to now walk in the light. In Colossians 1:13, "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son."

So very quickly I close with this: how is all of this possible? How is it possible for you and I who could not heal ourselves, who could not save ourselves, who were groping in the darkness because we had wandered from God, we were sheep who had gone astray, how in the world can we be rescued? How can we be healed? It's found in verse 28 of chapter 8. We read it. Look at it, "So Jesus said to them, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man.'" Now if you've been in the church very long, you've been reading the Scriptures very long, you know that when Jesus says words like these about being lifted up, it's speaking of his sacrificial, atoning, substitutionary death on the cross, right?

So he begins speaking about being lifted up, about being on the cross, now what I want you to understand is this, in the Gospel of Matthew we're told that when Jesus was on the cross, darkness was over all the earth. What does that mean? Does it just mean this freak thing during the day that it just all of a sudden got dark? No. It was God's way of telling us that on the cross, Jesus endured the darkness of the Father turning his face away from his Son. Jesus would say, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Answer: because on the cross he was bearing your sin, my sin, the sins of the world. He, Christ, faced the darkness that we deserved, that we might have the light that we did not deserve.

And when Jesus as he was saying these things, it wasn't like he got to the end of verse 30 and said, "Now let's bow our heads and close our eyes. How many of you will believe?" No, as he was saying these things, as he was saying these things, the Spirit of God was at work convicting, convincing, opening eyes, spiritual breakthrough, seeing life in a new way. That can happen for you. That can happen for you. As he was speaking, as his words are speaking today to your heart, you can move from death unto life, from darkness to the light. It's not a matter of saying, "I'll become more religious. I'll try harder." No, it is coming to Jesus. It's coming to Jesus and obeying his instructions and seeing him as God's representative to man come down, speaking to you, the light of the world to rescue you out of your spiritual blindness. Will you be like this group in verse 30 and believe in him?

Let's bow our heads.