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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

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**You are the Light of the World**

**Matthew 5:13**

**Prayer:** *Father God, we do again thank you for your grace, your goodness, for your blessing to us constantly. Lord, this church is an incredible blessing. We have the freedom to come and to gather and to corporately worship, to sing our praises, to pray to you and to also open up your book. And Father, we want to pray today as we do just that, as we open your book, that we would have the presence of your Holy Spirit, that you would guide us into your truth and that you would give us the ability to once again make it of permanent value. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, we have been looking at the Sermon on the Mount and the last time we looked at the Lord Jesus Christ's basic summary statement of what kingdom citizens do, and it's really summed up in two things that Jesus says that kingdom citizens are. This is what he says in *Matthew 5:13*, he says: *"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A*

*city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."*

Now we spent last week looking at salt and we saw three different things that the salt represents: It represents cleansing, it represents a covenant, and it represents warning against condemnation. And we saw that first of all, the salt of the earth, we become the salt of the earth, that is, when we point out Jesus Christ as the source of all spiritual cleansing. We don't do the cleansing, Christ does it, but we point people towards Christ. And secondly, we are salt when we know that we are a vital part of the covenant of reconciliation that God is undertaking in the world and he's doing that through us. And thirdly and perhaps more ominously, we are salt when we understand that judgment and condemnation is the fate of all who are outside of Jesus Christ. So the salt of the earth represents Jesus to a dying world. We also saw last time what Jesus thinks of salt that has lost its saltiness. That's salt that no longer accepts his role in cleansing or covenant or in warning about condemnation, and Jesus says this salt is good for nothing. Now, we don't run into actual unsalty salt in the 21st century any more, it's much more highly

refined, it's not so precious any more but we do have an equivalence in some of the wildly popular gospels that basically are good for nothing. And sadly we do have a useless modern equivalent when we speak of the other half of what kingdom citizens are and that is the light. We'll get into that, some of that uselessness of light in a minute, but this morning I want to look first from the perspective of function and purpose when it comes to light. And we will see that the light itself really, it is a kingdom, it's an actual place and it's a state of mind. Next week we're going to get into what light actually does.

You know, I said we have a modern equivalent of unsalty salt when we speak about the light, and I was reminded of that in a very practical way this last week. I needed a flashlight and the one that I grabbed had a dead battery. Well you know, dead flashlights are the equivalent of unsalty salt; they're good for absolutely nothing. Martyn Lloyd-Jones pointed out that salt and light's function and purpose is one in the same. If you take away their function, well then you automatically lose their purpose. I mean, a flashlight with a dead battery or a burnt out bulb is nothing but a paperweight at best. I mean, you might be able to use it as a little tiny baseball bat or club or something like that but that's about all you could do. It is the 21st century version of a lamp that's put under a bushel. It's of no use whatsoever. And you

see, one of the greatest privileges we have ever received is the light itself. It is a privilege that changes those who receive it into light bearers. Just think about that for a second. You know, Jesus became a man and he died on the cross in order to exchange his righteousness for our sin, and when we place our faith in him, his righteousness becomes our righteousness, and the light that he is becomes the light that we now are. I mean, in order to understand the scope of that privilege, we first have to understand a number of things about darkness, three in particular. Number one, the darkness as a matter of fact as well as the light, the darkness is a kingdom. Number two, the darkness is a place. And number three, the darkness is a state of mind.

First let's look at the darkness as a kingdom. You know, darkness is not something that just happens when the sun goes down. It is a kingdom, and it's a kingdom with its own king. The king's name used to be Lucifer. Lucifer means light. You know, you see all those lightening bugs out now out and about and my kids are out running -- grand kids are running to grab and catch them, I remember I took entomology in college, one of these things that they talked about is how insects produce light. They do it by combining two different enzymes. The name of the enzymes is Luciferin and Luciferase. Put the two of those together, you get light. Lucifer means light. Lucifer was the angel of light. His

name used to be associated with all that was good. He was the greatest of all of God's angels and he dwelt with God *who dwells in unapproachable light* according to *1 Timothy 6*, until at some point, at some point in history past, Lucifer rebelled. *Revelation 12:7* says: *Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world -- he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.* So Lucifer becomes Satan. He's the one who fell to earth, he's the one who established his kingdom here. And he was banished from the light and he embraced its opposite and he embraced it right here on earth. You know, twice in the gospel of John Jesus refers to Satan as *the prince of this world*. And we know he's also referred to as the prince of darkness. And the place where the darkness is is this planet, the place that we happen to live in. It is the earth. You know, darkness is a kingdom and earth is the place where darkness lives. As the scripture says, he was thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him, so unfortunately we share this planet with his kingdom. In fact God refers to this planet, he refers to our world as "the darkness." You know, when God left heaven to take on flesh and come to the planet, come to this planet, Isaiah praised

that event by claiming in *Isaiah 9*: *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shown.*

Now just picture the inky blackness that this planet consisted of spiritually. And just imagine Jesus's willingness to step into this blackness. *John 1:4* says this, it says: *In him was life, and the life was the light of the men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This is John the Baptist, speaking about his role, says: He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, all that might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. You know, there's just three verses here and in those three verses there's nine references to light and darkness, and God is saying he is the light. And he left the kingdom of light and entered into this kingdom of darkness and that kingdom was not very happy at his arrival. *John 3:19* says: "And this is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil." Jesus came into a kingdom that had grown quite used to living its entire existence under a spiritual rock. Jesus flipped over that rock and he exposed all the creatures under it to his light, and because*

those creatures loved the darkness and hated the light, they hated Jesus as well. You know, when Adam fell, when Adam committed that cosmic act of treason against the whole human race, he defied God and he introduced all of us to this darkness. And the result is now from birth men love the darkness and hate the light. And so sharing the gospel is an awful lot like flipping over a rock, and people react on a gut level just like those creatures; they resent that light. They flee the light. They seek the cover of darkness. And they see the light as a source of pain and distress rather than salvation. And this whole sense, this whole darkness that we speak of, this is the kingdom of darkness. This is Satan's kingdom, but it's also our planet. That is to say it's an actual place.

Darkness is a kingdom and darkness is a place and it's a state of being as well. You see, we are either light or we are darkness. There's no such thing as a twilight state where we're half this and half that, and Jesus is adamant about saying that we can't have it both ways. You know, he said no man can serve two masters. And in the case of light versus darkness, we have both kingdoms in existence and both kingdoms are actively opposed to one another. And make no mistake about it, these kingdoms are at war. Jesus is the head of one kingdom entering into another. He's the head of the kingdom of light entering into the kingdom of darkness.

You know, C.S. Lewis in his fiction, he wrote a science fiction

trilogy and one of the books in that trilogy was titled: *The Silent Planet*, and he referred to earth as the silent planet, it was the silent planet because in his fiction, the way Lewis described it, he said the universe understood that something awful had taken place on this planet and that it had through Adam gone into outright rebellion against its creator and God sort of quarantined it from the rest of the universe. Hence it was known as the silent planet. Now this is fiction, it's not scripture. But Lewis's fiction has this element of truth to it, he understood that the kingdom is really a place. You know, the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. Jesus descended into that kingdom. This is the battlefield where we now live, and the battle is intensifying and the battlefield really is our state of being. It's how we think, it's how we respond, it's how we act. We now live in a culture such as Isaiah lived in. He spoke of it in *Isaiah 5:20* by saying: *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!* He's giving an incredibly accurate description of us. We live in a culture that now says that perversion and fornication and homosexual marriage and the killing of unborn children in the womb, these are all now light, these are all good, I mean, they're all parts of tolerance, diversity, freedom, and choice. The culture calls it darkness -- I mean we call it darkness, the culture calls it light. And on the



other hand, our culture now says discriminating against bad and good or having an intolerance of evil, well that's firmly in the realm today of bigots and fanatics. We call that light; the culture calls that darkness. I mean it's now perfectly backwards. You know, it's been said the battle of the ages is never, never a battle between good and evil. It is always a battle between different ideas of what is good. And the battle is clearly on in this culture for what constitutes light and what constitutes darkness. And without a means of discerning what is truly light, then it becomes just a matter of cultural preference. You know, other cultures practice abominable things but they don't do it because they think, oh, this is an evil thing, let's do it. They do it because they think that it's good. They are -- they think that these things are actually instead of darkness, they think that they're light. And many times they're related to place. That is to say, where you are shapes how you think. You know, one example might be the Middle Eastern practice of honor killing. I'm sure you know all about it. If a female family member disgraces the family either by being caught in adultery or by refusing to marry the choice of her parents or even by being raped, well then the father and the brothers and sometimes even the mother are duty-bound for the sake of the family's honor to kill her, and that they do hundreds of times a year. Recently there was a Knight Ridder story that detailed a mother who killed her daughter because

she had been raped by her brother. I mean she claims she was duty-bound. You know in other words, in this mother's eyes, this murder was light, this murder was good, and this murder was something that they thought was a good thing to do. We call it an abomination. They disagree. I mean, they say westerners cherish the individual, they cherish the family, they cherish honor and any violation of that honor, they are duty-bound to avenge. So what we call light, they call darkness; what we call good, they call evil. We find honor killing abominable. They rightly find the practice of killing children in a womb abominable.

So how do we get beyond culture to what is truly right and what is truly wrong, what is truly light, what is truly darkness? I mean, how do we know which state of being is which? Well, you know, Tim Keller once spoke about a world famous female anthropologist who wrote a paper on the practice of female genital mutilation and she knew that this was evil. She also knew that the culture that practiced it saw it as good, saw it as light. And the problem is is that anthropologists are not supposed to take sides, and so she had this major conflict because she knew deep down inside that it was wrong. She wasn't even a believer but she saw a very clear dilemma. She says there has to be something that transcends culture, something that can objectively be identified as good or evil and she felt that way because she knew that she knew that she

knew that this was evil no matter how widespread or accepted the practice was. Well actually her solution was right at her fingertips. There's something that transcends culture that could have directed her in the right way. It's the word of God. It's the scripture. *Hebrews 4:12* says: *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* You see, when my culture supports killing babies and a Middle Eastern culture supports honor killing and a Sub-Saharan culture supports female genital mutilation, then I only have one source that can transcend culture to point out what really is light and what really is darkness. That's the Bible. And *"It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."* Not the culture; the heart. See, without scripture we are morally just flying blind. I mean, your goodness might just be my evil; my light might just be your darkness, and so on and so on. God says worse yet, the entire world lies in the power of this system. It's in that darkness, *1 John 5:19* says: *We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.* Well, that may be the bad news but the good news is the very next verse, *1 John 5:20*, it says: *And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true.*

So how do we cut through the darkness? How do we find that understanding? Well, the answer is Jesus Christ. The answer is the word of God. He is the light and that light is our blessing. You know, it's so easy to take for granted what we've been given. It's so easy to not realize just how privileged we are to be on the receiving end of the light of glory. And you know, we may ask ourselves how in the world did we get here? How is it that you all are here being part of the light, hearing the light, accepting the light, understanding the light, when outside those doors there's vast amounts of people who don't have a clue? I mean, what brought us to the place where Jesus Christ is now the light of our lives? Some of us have known Christ all of our lives, some of us have met him as adults, but none of us know him as the result of our own resourcefulness. All of us, all of us receive Christ, as Ephesians says, as a gift, a gift from God because every single one of us were part of that same world that was under the control of the evil one. In fact, every one of us groped about in that darkness spiritually blind. *2 Corinthians 4:4* says: *The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.* And every single one of us for a time, we walked in, we talked in, we lived in, we reveled in a darkness so profound and so all encompassing, we couldn't begin to tell light from darkness. Until Christ came. Until he came into our lives and gave us

understanding. Jesus said this in *John 12:46*, he says: "I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." In *John 8:12* he says: 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." And in *John 12:35* it says: So Jesus said to them, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going." That's all of us beforehand. "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." So Jesus is saying, I've come as the light, I am the light, walk while you have the light. And he said that because he was the light that came into the darkness and touched all of us who believe. But all of that has changed. That's not the way things are today. Remember what Jesus said, Jesus said you're going to have the light just a little while longer. 2,015 years ago, more or less, he left. The light ascended into heaven. So now we no longer have that light that way. Jesus now sits at the right hand of his Father. And the whole thrust of our text this morning is the change in where that light is now to be found.

You know, I said light was a kingdom. I said it's also a place, and lastly, it is a state of mind. See, if you belongs to Jesus, it is your state of mind. *Matthew 5:13*: "You are the salt of the

*earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."*

You know, Jesus chose salt and light to describe kingdom citizens because our function as salt and light is our purpose. Unsalty salt and light that's stuck in a bushel basket, they're absolutely useless. Jesus uses them to represent at best dysfunctional Christians and at worst, deluded unbelievers. But Jesus is just stating a fact. He's stating a truth. You know, he's not exhorting folks to get with it in order to become better salt and light. He's not trying to gin up enthusiasm for the task. He's saying in the very starkest of terms that our function and purpose in this world is to be salt and to be light because that's what kingdom citizens are. And Jesus is basically saying if the shoe fits, wear it. But what if it doesn't fit? You know, if it doesn't, we have to ask ourselves some hard questions. You see, it's very easy to confuse being and doing. You know, I'm a preacher; that's what I do. I'm a human being also; that's who I

am. Now I could decide tomorrow to stop being a preacher. I cannot stop tomorrow to stop being a human being. You know one's optional; the other one is not. And here's the problem. We think of salt and light as something that's -- well, it's optional. I'd really like to be salt, I'd really like to be light, because that's what good, that's what healthy Christians do, that's how I would go about it. That's not what Jesus is saying. In fact he's saying just the opposite. He's saying this is what Christians are. Because this is what Christians are, it is in no way optional. And because it's not optional, the most likely explanation of an unsalty Christian who hides his light under a bushel basket is that he's not really a Christian in the first place. You see, salt and light define a Christian the way thinking and loving define being human. No ape thinks or loves like a human does and no non-Christian could ever possibly be salt and light like a believer is. It's something that just cannot be fate. You know, somehow or other I think we've confused salt and light. We think it's -- well, it's a part of Christian evangelism. You know, salt makes people thirsty and light points them as to where they need to go and shows them what to do, but that's not what Jesus meant by those words. The end of salt and light is not evangelism. It's glory. You know, *Matthew 5:13: "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* So we evangelize not to help God out, we evangelize

to glorify God. You know, God already knows what he's doing and he's been doing this far longer than we've ever been. You know, he's never going to come to us hat in hand desperately saying how he needs our help because he doesn't. And he never, never limits himself to our fallenness. If I fail to be salt and light to you, you'll have to find that salt and light somewhere else, and by the grace of God, I guarantee you, you will. God will never, never allow the eternal destiny of one soul to rest on something so flimsy, so untrustworthy as another soul. I mean, what if that soul didn't feel like being salt and light that day, what if he was too sick, too depressed, too indifferent to care about another soul to make a difference. I mean, imagine somebody going to hell for eternity because the salt and the light for his one opportunity just forgot to show up? It doesn't work that way. I thank God that it doesn't. God does not sit up in heaven biting his lip waiting for us to act hoping against hope we get it right. His sovereignty reaches right down into our world claiming his elect before the foundation of the world. *Ephesians 1:4: He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.* You know, Paul acknowledged that the active power behind this gospel ever making sense is not our cleverness, it's



not our training, it's not how well we understand our stuff, it's God's sovereignty. You know, describing how the gospel goes forward, Paul said this in *1 Corinthians 3*, he said: *I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.*

So God's not asking that we step up to the plate to be salt and light so that we can help him out with his gospel project. His plan is far grander than that. *The Westminster Confession* tells us that "the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever," and here is how in the scripture when it comes to light. This is what Jesus says -- this is what God says in *John 12:35*. It says: *So Jesus said to them, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."* There it is. We become sons of light. You know, Jesus tells us in *Matthew 5* just who the light of the world is. He says you, *"You are the light of the world."* He's gone to be with his Father and now we are the vehicle, now we are the light. *1 Peter 2:9*: *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. That's us. Called out of*

darkness into his light. *1 Thessalonians 5: For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.* Understand what God is saying here. He's not just saying teach the light, he's not saying preach the light, he's saying something much more profound. He is saying be the light. You are the light of the world. You know, he says that to a world that is still a kingdom and a place in a state of being that is filled with darkness. And what he is saying is you are the only light this darkness will ever see. You know, if that light, if that -- if that desperately precious light is robbed of its power by being stuffed under a bushel of fear or laziness or indifference, then it is no more than a burned-out light bulb or a flashlight with dead batteries. Its very purpose is destroyed because its function is denied. What God is saying is you don't do light, you are light. And when we refuse to be salt and light, we are denying the very reason that we are here.

And so we say, okay, what is the definition of light? Well, it's very similar to darkness, I mean, it too, like the darkness, is a kingdom, it, too, is a place, and it, too, is a state of being, very different from the darkness but a kingdom nonetheless. The kingdom of light is heaven itself. And there according to 1 Timothy God dwells and he dwells there in "unapproachable light." What God is describing there is a light so intense it would

literally kill us. In fact it almost did kill Peter, James and John in Matthew 17. We read about the transfiguration, and what takes place there is Jesus takes the three up the mountaintop and there Jesus is transfigured and by being transfigured, he begins to assume some of the glory that belongs to him that he has pushed aside, that he has kept down, and up on that mountaintop, Peter, James and John get a firsthand experience of a little bit of what that's like. And it says in *Matthew 17*, it says: *And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified.*

You see, Jesus's face shone like the sun. You know, he's trying to use language to tell us something that is very, very hard to understand. They were in a light so blazing it would have killed them, and Jesus's face was shining like the sun, his clothes became as white as light he said his disciples fell on the ground and they were terrified. These are people who were as close to Christ as

you could ever get. In fact the other gospel, the gospel of Mark tells us that Peter literally started babbling. In *Mark 9:5* it says: *Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah."* For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. You know, leave it to Peter when he's got nothing to say and he's completely terrified, he just starts babbling.

You know, God's gospel tells us that he is light. It tells us that the kingdom is light and what we have in this account is a small taste of that light. So light is a kingdom. Light is also a place. And let me tell you, the darkness may be here and now but the light is here and now as well. That's the place. That's where the light exists. *Romans 13:12: The night is far gone, the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. And again Ephesians 5:8: For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is*

*exposed by the light, it becomes visible.*

So how do we go about living as children of light, that is to say, what is the third part, what is light's state of being? Well if you remember, there's another account in scripture that had to do with light, it was Paul. Remember Paul getting knocked off his horse? Do you remember what happened? Paul gets knocked off his horse by this great light and he gets blinded. Well, let's look at what it was that actually blinded him. This is Paul's description of it. He's describing it to King Agrippa in Acts 26. This is Paul, he says: *"In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'* And I said, *'Who are you, Lord?'* And the Lord said, *'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles -- to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that*

*they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'*" Again, there's our answer. What is light's state of being. Jesus speaks to Paul and he tells Paul to go to the Gentiles and he tells him to do five specific things: Number one, open their eyes; number two, turn them from darkness to light; number three, turn them from the power of Satan to God; number four, show them where to find the forgiveness of sins; and number five, show them a place among those sanctified by faith. That's what light does.

Now the question is is that what we do? Every time we share the gospel, we do. I've said nothing is more useless than a flashlight with dead batteries. Now does that describe your light? Does that describe my light? If it's dim or it's flickering, sometimes you have to kind of smack it to get it to work a little bit better, make it glow at all. How about a fresh set of batteries? How about a re-charge? How about reconnecting to the source? You see, it comes from realizing that both darkness and light are kingdoms, places and states of mind, and they're right here and they are right now. We have this extraordinary privilege of being on the right side of the equation. We are on the "light" side of the equation. And so we resist the enemy's attempts to disconnect us from the one reality that reconnects us to the source, and we do that by a simple statement of truth declared by God. He says:

*"You are the light of the world." Let's pray.*

*Father, we thank you for the enormity of the privilege that we have received. We are the light of the world. You have left, you have ascended, you have -- you are now sitting at the right hand of your Father. The light that is in this darkness is light that comes from us, period. We are that source. Give us the understanding, Lord, of the privilege and the responsibility that that entails. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*