

A close-up photograph of red granite with a speckled texture of white and grey minerals in a reddish-brown matrix. The surface shows some natural cracks and variations in color.

Red Granite

**31 Daily
Devotions**

**LIGHT OF
CHRIST**

**brought to you by
Marshall and Jessica Jones**

**Published by
Red Thread Poets**

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ENDORSEMENTS

From: Jessica Jones, written prior to her marriage to Marshall on November 1, 2022

I'm a former Recreational Leader of the New Lisbon Correctional Institution and I have to say that I am SO thankful for the 9 months I got to spend in prison. I would have never understood the need for prison reform if it wasn't for my experience.

When I was hired at N.L.C.I., I came in with the understanding that my position was to help rehabilitate the men to become successful citizens of society. I encouraged them to put the work in during their time, so they would have the tools to thrive in their freedom. Well, administration did not like that. The administration was threatened by the joy and empowerment that I brought to Recreation. They didn't like that the men were choosing healthy outlets, they didn't like that the countenance of the general population was lifting, they didn't like that the men were excited to be treated with humanity rather than as unimportant scum. My time in prison was cut short because the administration felt threatened by the atmosphere I brought to the dark institution. Light is not wanted within those walls and that is something I believe needs to change.

After 40 days of unpaid administrative leave, I was terminated on Friday, December 13th, 2019 for "not passing probationary standards". It didn't matter that all the programming I had added and built upon was changing the atmosphere in the institution for the better. They needed a scapegoat to get rid of me, and "not passing probationary standards" was it. Friday, December 13th was a day of sadness but also a day of resolution. As I drove away from N.L.C.I., no longer employed by the DOC, I made a pivotal decision to write Marshall Jones.

Marshall Jones was one of four inmate workers that assisted me in my Rec Leader position. He led fitness classes, refed all competitive events, assisted setting up Rec events, helped encourage men that came to Recreation, and counseled the men to prepare for their release. Marshall's conduct spoke for itself, and I could see he was a man of his word by the actions displayed. He worked hard in Rec and Marshall worked even harder doing his time by becoming a published author of his first book, "A Raven's Meal". While working with Marshall, I learned he was serving a double life sentence, and I was shocked he would be there for the rest of his life. The reason I was shocked was because Marshall lived more freely within the walls of that prison than any other person I'd met in my life. How is that possible? It was possible because of the faith he so boldly lives. Marshall was incarcerated at 21 years old and has served 17 years of his sentence. When I drove away from N.L.C.I. I decided I wanted Marshall to know that he was remembered by someone. I wanted him to know he made an impact on my life by living the way he did within the walls of prison. I wanted him to know that despite the circumstances, I wanted to extend the olive branch of becoming his friend. Writing Marshall Jones was one of the best choices I have ever made in my life.

I believe so many men like Marshall are deserving of a second chance. This is something I wouldn't have ever understood if I didn't have my time in prison, working closely with the general population. There is a deep need for prison reform and Marshall is the perfect story of a cast away finding redemption. I know how many second chances I have had. I believe it's time for those who have proven rehabilitation exists, get their second chance. To make evident their efforts aren't for nothing.

Received from Jessica December 2020

From: Kelli

Comment from Kelli, who read the Climb, a poem by Marshall on Red Thread Poets Website

<https://www.redthreadpoets.com/the-climb/>

Re: The Climb, by Marshall Jones

This poem personally speaks to my heart because I know the struggle of many who are fighting for their freedom from incarceration. Prisons are full of people who have been given unmerciful harsh sentencing who are just wanting to be given a chance to redeem themselves in society to help others. God wants to use those who have surrendered their hearts to His Son Jesus Christ who's incarcerated to become the mentors for our youths in today's culture. God has a plan for every individual's life. Keeping people confined to incarceration who God need to be Ambassadors for His Kingdom is certainly not the answer. Treating all people how one would want to be treated should be the defining moment when passing a judgment onto others. Love and mercy covers a multitude of sins. God and the Lord Jesus are expressing love and mercy everyday towards all people and humanity must practice in doing the same. God Bless all who read this comment and take it to heart.

From: Peter W Stevens,

Friend to Our Triune God, the Founder of Red Thread Poets <https://www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/peter-will-stevens/>

I met Marshall through Jessica mid 2020. We become very close brothers in just a few short months emailing back and forth most days. I live north of Toronto in Canada and was building a website to glorify God and honour poets. Red Thread Poets. Marshall sent me his poems, I have his book "A Raven's Meal" and he is one of our first-five honoured poets on the website. HOWEVER it is his daily devotionals under the 'banner 'RED GRANITE' that show his anointing - they are high impact for me every day. We post them on Facebook under Red Thread Poets, and recap them on the website.

<https://www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/red-granite-daily-devotions/>.

Marshall is DEARLY LOVED, peter December 2020

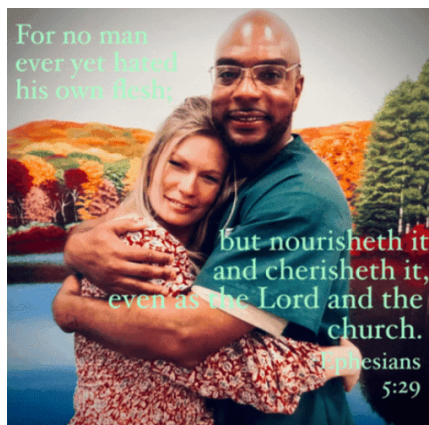
Peter's April 2025 update on Marshall and Jessica Jones:

Since November 1, 2020, Marshall and later with Jessica have written well over 900 Daily Devotions, of which there are 13 Series. On November 1, 2022, they were married. Hallelujah.

Marshall continues to study and write from within the confines he remains in for now. He continues a bachelor's degree in biblical studies, please pray for them both, and for The Lord to arrange his release before too long. Jessica posted this recently:

'I can confidently say my husband is everything he's supposed to be in our marriage, and he is always wanting to love me more tomorrow than he did today. He's not smothering, nor is he one who says things but doesn't follow with action. My husband is the real deal, and I am so thankful to know what it means to truly be loved by him like Christ loves the Church. Today's message (Ephesians 5:29) is great encouragement to husbands, wives, and the whole walk of marriage. God bless each of you and your marriages you are committed to!'

Much love!



INTRODUCTION

This world is being covered in darkness. We see this in news coverage, where stories of violence, war, and apathy are so frequent that they have become normalized. We see this in our personal lives, where the rise in crime, the fragmentation of the family structure, and proliferation of lawless, sinful behavior has invaded once sacred space. In a world filled with darkness, hopelessness abound, but in Christ there is always light! In this series, "The Light of Christ", we explore the biblical history of light in our faith. We highlight the conditions that have called for God to send forth the true Light in the world, Jesus Christ. Finally, we will come to an understanding that the same light that God called forth in the beginning is the same type of light that lives in all who place their faith in Christ, a light that transforms the darkest souls into pillars of light and hope. Journey with us as the Light of Christ draws us deeper into a powerful oneness with our loving God!

1. Genesis 1:3 - light that became

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

Before we can ever step into the light of Christ, we have to understand the origin of light.

We have to understand that light first came to the works as the result of the spoken Word of God, calling forth light to appear.

So our beginning into the study of light begins with the faithfulness of God's Word, and God's omnipotence to produce something completely out of nothing.

To understand the light of Christ and how it ultimately finds its way into those who believe, we have to first believe that God is capable of calling light forth, from Himself.

If we don't believe that, then we are going to have a hard time forsaking the darkness that tries to reign within us in order to accept the light that God has provided to us by Christ.

I was captive to darkness until the light of Christ shined in my heart, the result of God calling it forth.

What if the creation of light is a picture of what has transpired in our hearts by salvation?

Today, we will look at Genesis 1:3, light that became.

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

God began creation by commanding light to come forth. This is the first recorded command of God.

In Genesis 1:2, the Bible says, ***"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."***

Imagine with me a God who is all powerful, bringing light to pass just by speaking it.

An all-powerful God who refuses to create from darkness.

Why do we think that we can become who God desires us to be from the darkness of sin?

The phrase "let there be" means "become, come to pass, or exist".

The word "light" means illumination in a literal sense. So this is no metaphor for something else. God literally produced light to appear by His Word!

This first look into light is really a picture of faith. God didn't convince the light to appear, nor did he beg for it to come. It came precisely from His nature, what He spoke it to be.

In Romans 10:17, the Bible says, ***"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."***

The faith we have comes by the Word of God, so there is no concept of true faith without God's Word.

When we look at the word "faith" we can agree that it means "belief, constancy, reliance upon Christ".

There is a space between what we request of God and the answer that comes, but faith in God's Word keeps light there instead of darkness. In darkness, there is worry and fear, but in light there is faith and confidence.

In Mark 11:22-23, the Bible says, ***"And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith."***

When we experience the light of the Christ, we come into an understanding that just as God spoke light into creation and it became what He declared it to be, Christ tells us that this same power to speak things into existence lives in us. This is why we were created in the image and likeness of God, because our lives on earth are supposed to be a manifestation of His light and Word at work in us.

In Isaiah 55:11, the Bible says, ***"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."***

Understanding the light of Christ has to first begin with faith, because if we don't believe that the Word of God will do the very thing that God commands it to do, then we will have no understanding for how God's Word is Christ. The first time God spoke, He called something that wasn't present to come forth as though it had always been there.

In Hebrews 6:17-19, the Bible says, ***"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil"***.

God is showing us through His spoken Word that what He speaks will become exactly what He declares, and that should produce a faith from Him to anchor us when things don't look as if they will work out.

We can place true confidence in Him knowing He can replace darkness with His light, because God's Word is faithful!

2. Genesis 1:4 - the separation between light and darkness

"And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."

As a kid, I used to be afraid of the dark.

The lights went out and my mind immediately went to the monsters lurking in the closets, the beast hiding under my bed, the terrible masked Jason Vorhees that was sure to come into my room and hack me to pieces, or weirdly, one of the zombies from Michael Jackson's "Thriller" video.

Darkness for my tender mind represented all of the evil that was lurking, waiting for an opportunity to expose themselves.

The light came on and I didn't have those fears anymore because I could clearly see everything that could approach my way.

In that moment of reflection, I realize that my fear wasn't in the terrible things my imagination concocted, but it was the possibility of those terrible things coming up on me unexpectedly, leaving me with no chance to cry out for help.

The difference between what light and darkness represented for me was understood as a child, but when I got older, I lost sight of the dangers that lurked in darkness and even became one in-common with what I feared.

Today, we will look at Genesis 1:4, the separation between light and darkness.

"And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."

The word "saw" isn't merely beholding it, but it is God taking a moment to make a mental observation of what He just created, perceiving and savouring all of its ramifications.

Imagine this being like an artist painting a picture, and when it is done, they take an extra second to reflect upon something that was produced from their imagination. Well, this is the same thing God did. Another thing to consider is that God has never needed light because He is light, so the first thing He created in the earth is what He truly is in heaven.

Seeing something heavenly manifested for earth made God take a moment to experience the blessing He just imparted to the earth.

In Genesis 1:31, the Bible says, ***"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."***

From the first thing God created, to the last thing God created, He never forsook taking a moment to experience what He created.

The word "good" means "well-pleasing, fruitful, or morally correct".

This is the first time in the Bible that the word "good" is used, so let's reflect upon how it is used.

God speaks, calling for light to appear, and it appeared just as He said. God looks it over, and gives His stamp of approval. So when God calls something "good", He means that it has fulfilled His creative intent.

In Psalm 33:4-6, the Bible says, ***"For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."***

If we ever need to see that the world God created is indeed God, take a second to reflect upon creation.

Look at how a bird soars under the wind's current. Look at how a tree waves in the wind. Look at how a dolphin leaps out of the water. We can only see these things because of the light that God created. By God created light first, He intends us to see His goodness in everything He creates.

In Psalm 27:13, the Bible says, ***"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living."***

If we can't see the goodness of the Lord, then we are left with a reason for our hearts to fail.

The word "divided" means "to separate or distinguish".

The word "light" means "illumination".

The word "darkness" means "the dark", but it also means "misery or destruction"

Because God distinguished light from darkness, He conveys to us that because He never had to create darkness, light has so much more importance for us.

God never desired for us to live in darkness.

In Psalms 82:4-5, the Bible says, ***"Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course."***

Darkness also expresses a lack of understanding, and creates a scenario where stumbling is all but certain. The person without understanding can not determine the difference between danger and safety, and they can't find their way.

In Proverbs 4:19, the Bible says, ***"The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble."***

God created light so that we could live in full understanding of the goodness of the Lord, so we would have a constant reference to God everywhere we go.

In Ecclesiastes 2:13, the Bible says, ***"Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness."***

Light was always supposed to triumph over darkness, but why is it that so many proudly embrace darkness?

3. Exodus 13:21 - light that leads by day and night

"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night".

God uses light to expose and eradicate darkness, both physically and spiritually.

The light God gives does so much more, and there is always something supernatural that can happen when God's light is involved.

What if God used fire as a light source, to guide a growing nation into a promised land He has designated for them?

What if I said that God also controlled the amount of light that came in to protect them from the harsh heat of the sun?

This is what happened when God led Israel through the wilderness.

This miraculous provision teaches us a number of things.

First, it teaches us that God is in control of nature and weather, and He calls forth what He desires when He desires.

Second, this teaches us that God is deeply concerned with our needs, and desires us to experience how much He cares for the details of our lives.

Today, we will look at Exodus 13:21, light that leads by day and night.

"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night".

The word "Lord" here refers to the Self-Existent God.

God is now leading Israel through the wilderness into His promised land for them, following their having just seen God do wonder after wonder in Egypt, in answer to their cries for freedom, ultimately causing Pharaoh to let them go.

God certainly was concerned about Israel's mental fortitude in the presence of adversity.

In Exodus 13:17-18, the Bible says, ***"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt."***

This shows that God knows us on a heart level and will never allow us enter into a place that we are not built to handle. Sometimes, the road we take seems hard, but God will never command us to take a path that would ultimately lead to our destruction.

The phrase "went before them" expresses a God who has already gone where we are traveling.

The phrase "pillar of a cloud" expresses that the sky by day was completely covered, and part of the Hebrew definition is "nimbus or thundercloud".

This gives us a picture of how the sky looked, like it was going to erupt in rain. Sometimes, what looks like a storm brewing is really God protecting us from something that will completely break our spirit.

The phrase "pillar of fire" gives us a picture of a rolling fire in the sky.

Now, imagine Israel seeing this sight daily, His wonders provided to protect and lead them in the wilderness.

In Exodus 14:19-20, the Bible says, ***"And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night."***

Egypt came to pursue Israel again, to enslave them, but God used these same wonders to block the Egyptians from seeing Israel. The picture of a cloud being between Egypt and Israel gives me the picture of a super dense fog, that prevented Egypt from seeing Israel and their way. Also while God's provision is blinding the Egyptians it is providing the light that is guiding Israel.

In Exodus 40:36-38, the Bible says, ***"And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was***

taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys."

When Israel built a tabernacle for the Lord, to worship Him, God used the same cloud that protected them to cover the tabernacle, which ushered in the glory of God that filled the tabernacle. This cloud was now the indication for whether they should move or stay.

Finally, we should look at that fact that God caused all of these wonders in order to give Israel light.

In Isaiah 4:5-6, the Bible says, ***"And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence"***.

God uses His light to also protect us from the elements, defend us from our enemies, and to project His glory. Hopefully, we'll never look at a storm cloud the same way again.

4. Psalm 119:105 - a light for a traveler's feet

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Since I received my salvation, God's Word has been sure and true.

When I first started, I just wanted to read God's Word and develop my relationship with Him.

Even though I wanted to change, I wasn't concerned with changing my life, because a part of me knew that it would come by learning more about the Word of God as I built this relationship with Him.

God's Word stepped in to check me when I was regressing, encourage me when I was frustrated, and comfort me when I felt broken.

Within the pages of Scripture, I found out that God has been walking this journey with me the whole time, keeping me from self-destruction and leading me to deeper levels in His Word.

I remember a brother told me that one day I was going to be teaching the Word, and I laughed, because I felt I was so far off that mark that it didn't seem possible.

Well, I guess he was right! It is because God's Word has shown me where I am and where I need to be, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

Today, we will be looking at Psalm 119:105, a light for a traveler's feet.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

The word "word" pertains to the written and spoken Word of God, but the meanings also include "commandments, message or His cause".

The word "lamp" refers to a candle that is lit with oil, so there is fire involved.

Fire gets our attention whether we want to pay attention or not.

In Exodus 3:2-3, the Bible says, **"And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."**

Moses didn't know that God caused this bush to catch fire and not be consumed because He was going to speak to Moses through the fire. Sometimes, God speaks to our heart when all hell is breaking loose and sometimes, He allows fire to happen because that is the only thing that can get our attention.

The word "feet" is a term to describe the foot, but it is amplified to describe the foot in motion.

Life is a journey, and even when we feel like we are standing still, we are still making progress.

In Ephesians 6:15, the Bible says, **"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace"**.

Our activities, when led by the Lord, will continue to allow us to receive the Word and spread the gospel through our word and through our light. It is funny how when I used to share the Word a little bit, I spoke to people in the same struggle as me, but as God continued to teach me on this journey, he expanded it to people everywhere. I thought I was just walking, but God kept growing me and changing me.

The word "light" means "illumination".

The word "path" refers to a beaten track that has been established as a walking route.

You know what this means? It means that people have been where I have been before! With tears in my eyes, I can say that I am blessed that my path has been made easier to navigate due to waves of people who blazed the trail before me.

In Psalm 112:4, the Bible says, **"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous."**

When our hearts are postured towards the Lord, it doesn't mean that we get everything right, nor does it mean that we are ready for this 180 degree turn we have made in our hearts.

What it does mean though, is that we have allowed the light to come into our dark place and we have made ourselves available to hear the Word of God.

When I first started, I was still cursing, still nearly fighting, and still trying to keep up my tough persona in public, but the more miles my feet logged, the more things were shed off me.

In Ezekiel 36:26-27, the Bible says, **"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."**

When a person has a new heart, they desire change, even when there is a process involved in seeing the behavior change.

This is where the church has to come into an understanding that the process we went through to find our place, is the same journey others will need to take to follow our footsteps.

In 1 John 1:7, the Bible says, **"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."**

Walking on the beaten track that is lit by the Lord will bring us into fellowship with other like-minded people and will cause us to receive His cleansing through salvation and sanctification.

It's been a long road, but I am grateful for every step.

5. Psalm 27:1, a radiant light that casts out fear

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Where is our confidence in times of trouble?

Who do we turn to when we are afflicted by life's circumstances?

As a kid being afraid of the dark, the light being on gave me the confidence that everything around me was okay, but it also subconsciously taught me that there is a danger always lurking in the dark.

When the Lord is our light, we have a different vantage point towards the things we encounter, a higher perspective, a deeper look into the things in our path.

David was a man after God's own heart, and he was promised by God that His everlasting kingdom would come through, but even David had moments in his life that seemed to counter the narrative God gave him.

He fled for his life from King Saul, living in caves to prevent capture, and he also fled from his own son Absalom, who tried to take the kingdom from him. His life wasn't roses, but because his confidence was in the Lord, I guarantee that it was a lot easier because he was planting his feet on a sure foundation.

Today, we will look at Psalm 27:1, a radiant light that casts out fear.

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

The word "LORD" refers to the Self-Existent God.

The first three words of this psalm are so important, "the LORD is" because if we don't believe that He "IS", then we can never fully partake in the divine promises of God.

In Hebrews 11:6, the Bible says, **"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."**

It is impossible to place our confidence in someone we don't believe exists, but it's our true faith in God that comes out during times of struggle.

This verse isn't addressing merely our belief in God, but it also implies an active pursuit of Him. I remember being real little, before my Dad left, and whenever I was afraid, I would come around my Dad because I knew that in his presence, I didn't have to worry about anything.

My Dad posed a real threat to anybody who tried to harm his family, me included. How can we feel this way about the capability of humanity, but not feel this way about the God who created us?

The word "light" means "illumination or luminary".

The word "salvation" means "liberty, deliverance, prosperity or safety".

In times where I was afraid as a child, the light being on gave me the ability to see what was going on around me, and when I was in the presence of my Dad, I had added confidence knowing he was close by. God is a whole lot better than my father!

The word "fear" means "to revere".

In 1 John 4:17-18, the Bible says, **"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."**

The Lord is perfect love, and being in His love gives us the boldness in judgment, the confidence in adversity, the faith in trial, all because we are aware that our God is right there.

In Exodus 15:2, the Bible says, **"The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him."**

Moses led Israel in song after they experienced victory from Pharaoh through the Lord's deliverance. They were afraid, but God showed Himself mighty in the presence of Pharaoh's army and in the presence of Israel, and Israel no longer had anything or anyone to fear.

The word "strength" pertains to a stronghold which is fortified and guarded against invasion.

God is someone who guards our life when we put our trust in Him.

The word "afraid" means "to dread, be alarmed or terrified".

In Psalm 118:21, the Bible says, **"I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation."**

Sometimes, sitting back and recalling how we made it through an impossible circumstance points us directly to God, but when we are done breathing a sigh of relief, is our posture towards God gratefulness and praise for what He has done?

In Isaiah 12:2, the Bible says, **"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."**

Our confidence isn't in our might or power, but it is in our ability to rest in the Lord.

In Moses' life, David's life, and in the life of the church, we have seen how the saving hand of God delivers from the kind of things that can completely consume us.

God's deliverance gave them the evidence that He is trustworthy, and the same should apply to us, but does it?

6. Psalm 97:11 - a light planted for joy to be exhibited

"Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

God gives His light so that those who are of His light can live lives fully directed by Him.

Those who are resistive to God are not going to want His light to be shone in and through them.

If any of us have kids, we can equate this to a school morning when we walk into their room and put the light on. Immediately, they throw something over their eyes to shield themselves from the foreign invader of light.

They don't see the light as an opportunity, but as an intruder.

But the kid who actually enjoys school is going to be more receptive to what the light means, not the inconvenience of it.

Trust me, God's light exposing some dark place in my life doesn't feel good in any situation.

However I am learning to be receptive to God's light because I understand now that He is using it to guide me into becoming the person He is calling forth.

The closer I get to God, the more I welcome His light.

Today, we will be looking at Psalm 97:11, a light planted for joy to be exhibited.

"Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

The word "light" means "illumination".

The word light also should be viewed as being representative of God's guidance.

The word "sown" means "planted".

The word "righteous" means "just, those who show conformity to the ethical and moral standard of God".

Packing this all together, when we conform to a Godly standard, God's guidance becomes planted in our lives, so that we always will know where we should go and what we should do.

In James 1:5-6, the Bible says, ***"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."***

The person who doesn't conform to God's standard is going to reject the wisdom of God, but those who place themselves under God's standard will experience a wealth of wisdom that God will willingly make available. Think not?

In John 16:13, Christ says, **"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."**

This is available for those who believe in Christ, a promise made available so that we who are deemed righteous will always have God's guidance.

In 2 Corinthians 5:21, the Bible says, **"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."**

The same person who gave us the promise of the Spirit of truth is the same person who took our sin upon Him so that we who believe can become God's righteousness. God's guidance is for those who are of His kingdom.

Would we give a person directions to our house if they aren't supposed to come there? Well God is guiding us into His kingdom because He created us to dwell with Him, but the choice is ours, to be guided or not by His light.

The word "gladness" means "blithesomeness, joy, or glee".

The phrase "upright in heart" pertains to those who allow God's light to shine in their innermost being, changing the cognitive, affective, volitional, and behavioral parts of us to reflect His image and likeness.

This means that our countenance changes when we are guided by God.

In Nehemiah 8:10, the Bible says, **"Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength."**

The people of God were exiled to Babylon and they have now returned to the promised land. When the Word of God was read to them, it was something they mostly had never experienced.

Nehemiah 8:8, the Bible says, **"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."**

God caused a miracle to happen. He opened their understanding so they would understand His Word.

For us too, it should produce joy to know God's Word and live according to His standards.

In Proverbs 10:28-29, the Bible says, **"The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity."**

With God's guiding light, we have real hope that can produce an everlasting joy in the face of any circumstance.

Because of this light, we have strength in the face of situations that could crumble the average person. This doesn't mean that everything is going to be great all the time, but it does mean that we have a sure anchor for our soul when things crumble.

7. Psalm 139:12 - nothing is hidden from an omniscient and omnipresent God

"Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

When I was in the street life, one of the obvious goals of partaking in a life of crime was to not get caught.

One morning, when preparing myself to run away, I swiped my Tee-Tee's debit card. My goal was to take money out, buy and sell drugs with that money, then deposit her money back into her account without her knowing.

I thought I was a smooth criminal until I was called into the kitchen to meet the Milwaukee Police.

They asked me did I used my auntie's debit card, and I instinctively said "No".

They smiled and showed me still shots of me from a camera at the ATM machine.

I am clearly taking the money out, and I was wearing the same spring jacket that I walked down the steps with!

I was busted, and I was taken to jail. The camera saw everything. God is that camera, watching everything we are doing, even the things we don't want Him seeing.

Today, we will look at Psalm 139:12, nothing is hidden from an omniscient and omnipresent God.

"Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

David is writing this Psalm to express that God sees everything.

In Psalms 139:1-2, the Bible says, ***"O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off."***

There is a show called "Big Brother", where people live in a house as cameras follow their every move. Nothing is hidden from view, even the sneaky conversations as they strategize against each other. The people being back-doored don't see it coming, but the viewer watches the scandal unfold.

Imagine, and cringe, at the fact that God sees every move we make in real time, but he goes even further. He knows the thoughts we are thinking as well. This is why I try not to be fake about anything, because Gods sees it anyway.

David knows this all too well, with God exposing his secret sin with Bathsheba and his murderous plot against Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, all done from 'the shadows'.

The word "darkness" not only talks about a physical darkness, but also about wickedness.

The phrase "hideth not" implies something that cannot be withheld from God's sight.

The word "night" implies a twisting away from God.

The word "shineth" means "to make luminous".

All while I thought that I was getting away with my life in the streets, God saw it the whole time, in real time. If this doesn't express the love, forgiveness, grace, and patience of God, then I don't know what ever will.

In Job 34:22-23, the Bible says, **"There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. For he will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God."**

We think we are getting away with it when we get away with it with earthly authorities, but there is a greater authority in God, Who always also sees our most hidden thoughts.

In Matthew 9:2-4, the Bible says, **"And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?"**

Christ was healing someone of a crippling medical condition, and He declared that his sins were forgiven. Wouldn't Christ deal with the obvious problem, the man's palsy, first?

Well, the obvious problem wasn't the most important problem. Christ saw in the man's heart. While this was happening, the scribes were murmuring within themselves, meaning that they weren't speaking audibly! Christ heard their thoughts in real time! If Christ heard their thoughts, and God hears thoughts, then why is it so hard to believe that Christ is God incarnate?

The "darkness" and "light" are alike to God because He sees them both clearly.

In Proverbs 15:3, the Bible says, **"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."**

God sees us, yet, despite what He sees, He still loves us and makes salvation available to us.

In Hebrews 4:13, the Bible says, **"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."**

I know it may make us uncomfortable to know that God knows our business, but the God that sees everything also knows how to lead me from the darkness as well.

In Romans 8:1, the Bible says, **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."**

Just as our sin is clear before God, salvation is clear through Christ. The light not only exposes our indiscretions, but it also exposes our redemption!

8. Proverbs 6:23 - enlightened by the divine instruction of the Lord

"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life".

We are implementing an after school schedule for our son, and he is not happy about it!

On our video visit, I got the chance to see his disappointment loud and clear in the kitchen.

The funny part about it is that we are only changing an hour and a half of his schedule where we are having a phone-free zone for homework and for reading books. You would have thought we were sentencing him to the electric chair!

I laugh at the thought of this, but it points to a greater issue, that rules may come as an inconvenience to him, but our intention is that he develops more intentional study habits now before he gets to high school in a couple of months.

We are positioning him for success because we clearly see what it takes for him to become successful. He is in the dark, because he can't see beyond the loss now that he feels like he is taking.

Similarly and sadly, people approach the faith like it is a bunch of rules and miss the beauty of the relationship they can have with God.

Today, we will look at Proverbs 6:23, enlightened by the divine instruction of the Lord.

"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life".

When a verse begins with "for", then that means that a previous thought was made that is being validated by this one.

In Proverbs 6:20-22, the Bible says, ***"My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee."***

The context of our topic verse deals with us building an attachment to and a oneness with divine instruction. We are supposed to store it within us, cherish it like it is priceless and allow it to produce growth within us. Our topic verse is the reason why we should become one with the divine instruction we receive.

The word "commandment" means "law, precept, or ordinance".

The word "lamp" means "candle".

We have to understand that back in those times, they didn't have light bulbs. They had to use lamps, candles, and torches to provide light at night time or they were effectively in the dark, and be vulnerable to whatever dangers were lurking in the dark and risk not seeing until it was too late.

The word "law" means "statute", something written to govern the activity of someone else.

The word "light" refers to illumination of God's standard.

In Psalm 19:7-8, the Bible says, **"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."**

Our posture towards the law of the Lord is that it is perfect, and in it we have the ability to excel beyond our wildest imaginations. Our posture towards the commandments of God determines whether we are enlightened or imprisoned. Our son thinks that somehow he is being unfairly treated, and that is because his posture towards the commandments we have implemented is not receptive.

The word "reproofs" means "rebuke or correction".

The word "instruction" means "chastisement or warning according to the doctrine of discipline".

When we reproof something, we check what we are doing according to the Word of God, and if we are found falling short, then we correct it according to the Word.

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the Bible says, **"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."**

Who would have ever thought that the commandments of the Lord, that the Word of God, would actually be given to me in order for me to be prepared for everything that comes my way?

I, like our son, didn't see it as preparation, but I saw it as a burden, and I resisted the commandments of God because I felt that He was raining on the parade that I wanted to have. Sometimes, reproof is not going to feel like it is what is best for us, but it is a warning for us to re-group and being ourselves under subjection to God's standard so we can excel in life.

In Hebrews 12:10-11, the Bible says, **"For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."**

God knows that His instruction is going to feel painful, but it bears fruit, and it is to make us even better. Many resist medicine the same way...

9. Luke 1:79 - a light guiding us in peace

"To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

It is a relief to be able to live in the light of the Lord.

I don't have to figure out a bunch of stuff on my own, nor do I have to make a way for myself.

I don't have to live my life trying to be my own light, which is a waste of time and energy, sometimes with harsh consequences.

I am quick to tell people that I took the path blazed for me, and I thank God for caring about my success so much that He gave me people who led me to Christ, so that I wouldn't just be a church goer, but an actual member of the body of Christ.

I seriously understand that the light of Christ led me out of my own prison of sin and I walk in light and freedom due to Christ being a light to me.

To be someone where peace is my norm after all that I have gone through is beyond anything I could ever imagine.

Today, we will look at Luke 1:79, a light guiding us in peace.

"To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

These are the words of Zacharias, who was the father of John the Baptist. When the angel appeared to him, letting him know that him and his wife Elizabeth would be having a son in their old age, he didn't believe it. This is a major problem because Zacharias was a priest in the temple, and the angel came as an answer to Zacharias' own prayer.

Imagine a pastor, who knows the Word of God extensively, including the history of God opening up barren wombs, not believing in the words of the angel sent by God. So God silences Zacharias until the birth of John the Baptist, all the way to the point that Zacharias confirmed that his baby's name would be John. Sometimes, we can talk our way right out of our blessing.

In Luke 1:64, the Bible says, ***"And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God."***

He then speaks this prophecy over his son, that he will blaze the path for Christ to come.

This is confirmed by Luke 1:76-77, which says, ***"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins"***.

This is why Zacharias' mouth was closed because God didn't want Zacharias' lack of faith to cause him to say something that will hinder the word of God.

The phrase "give light" means "to shine upon or make appear".

John the Baptist isn't the one that will be giving the light, but it is Christ that gives light.

In Luke 1:78, the Bible says, ***"Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us"***.

The word "dayspring" has an alternate meaning, also referred to as "the branch".

In Isaiah 11:1-2, the Bible says, ***"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: [2] And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;"***

It is important to establish, from this topic verse, who is giving the light, or it would be easy to mistake John as the light. It is Christ who is the Light.

The word "darkness" speaks of moral darkness, absent of light and truth, including the idea of sin and its consequent calamity.

In Isaiah 9:1-2, the Bible says, **"Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."**

This prophecy of Christ was written over 700 years before Christ was to come. This is the spiritual state we are in without Christ's light: dimness, grief, and anguished. Most of us don't even know it.

The phrase "guide our feet" means "to direct or straighten fully".

The word "way" means "the mode or means".

The word "peace" refers to the peace of mind and tranquility arising from reconciliation with God and a sense of divine favour.

In Acts 26:18, the Bible says, **"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."**

This is a spiritual transformation that Christ came to make in our hearts and minds. Paul is giving this account of Christ speaking to him when he was converted, where Christ was giving him his purpose.

Paul went from someone who persecuted Christians to being their lead pastor, only because of the light of the Lord, and his job was to make that light evident, same as ours!

10. Luke 2:32 - a light of revelation for the outsider

"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Some people have a mistaken impression that because Israel was God's chosen people, that the Gentiles never had a place in God's kingdom, but that isn't true.

God's design was to bring all men into His kingdom, Jew or Gentile, outsider or churchgoer, criminal or pastor.

The Jewish people were the people who God chose His salvation to come through, and throughout the history of this world, the Bible is a history of how God preserved Israel in order to produce salvation that would be offered to all who call upon the name of the Lord.

It feels good knowing that despite my flaws, despite my separation from Him due to sin, and despite my failures, God's gift of salvation was made available to someone "broken beyond repair".

Through experiencing God's revelation, I enjoy my life more, knowing that I have a growing relationship with my God.

Today, we will look at Luke 2:32, a light of revelation for the outsider.

"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

These are the words of Simeon, who held Jesus in his arms when He was a baby.

In Luke 2:28-31, the Bible says, ***"Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people"***.

Simeon was waiting on God's salvation, the Messiah, to be revealed to him, and God was faithful in fulfilling the word He spoke to Simeon.

In Isaiah 55:11, the Bible says, ***"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."***

Simeon held the prophesied promise of salvation in his hands, the fulfillment of Scripture, and the evidence that when God speaks a word, He will fulfill it.

The word "light" means "moral and spiritual light and knowledge which enlightens the mind, soul or conscience; including the idea of moral goodness, purity and holiness, and of consequent reward and happiness; used especially of Jesus as the great Teacher and Saviour of the world who brought life and immortality to light in His gospel".

The word "lighten" means "to disclose, reveal, or make manifest; the removal of the veil of ignorance and darkness by the communication of light, knowledge, illumination and instruction".

The word "Gentile" refers to a non-Jewish person.

In Isaiah 42:6-7, the Bible says, ***"I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."***

This blessed salvation is going to change the nature of what we see and experience, and it also breaks us from the prison of our mediocrity and sin to become something that we never could imagine being. Today, we are experiencing the manifestation of a prophecy offered up 2,700 years ago, one that was just as real as when Simeon experienced it 2,000 years ago.

In Isaiah 49:6-7, the Bible says, ***"And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee."***

It is not lost on God that Christ is going to be rejected and despised, but people from nobility and people from the slums will have the opportunity to experience salvation. This is a gift from God that He preserved through the Jews so that all may encounter and experience Christ for themselves.

The phrase "glory of thy people Israel" speaks of Christ being the shining symbol, the prime example of Israel to follow.

In Isaiah 60:1-3, the Bible says, **"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."**

This light is Christ, and the invitation to salvation is extended to all, even those who are jacked up and ostracized even by people who go to church. The light of Christ breaks the darkness within people, so they will experience the revelation of salvation available to them in Christ.

11. John 1:4 - the light of life for all mankind

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

If the sun doesn't shine, we cease to exist.

It is a known fact that the sun is the center of the solar system, and if the earth wasn't positioned exactly where it is, life wouldn't be able to survive.

God is that precise as to where the earth is set in orbit that never allows earth to come closer to the sun than God allows.

We are at the perfect distance for God's will to be done.

Looking at this same idea from a spiritual standpoint, Christ is the center of the universe and all things in creation are built around Him and for Him.

It is because of Him that we have true light, that we couldn't survive spiritually without, but sadly, we live in a world that gives more glory to created things instead of Christ, who set everything together.

Without Christ, there is no such thing as real life because His life provides the light to guide us.

Today, we will look at John 1:4, the light of life for all mankind.

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

To be able to dig into this passage, we have to understand the context. We have to know who "in him" refers to or we could attach that to anyone.

In John 1:1, the Bible says, **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."**

In John 1:3, the Bible says, **"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made".**

So we can establish that whoever "in him" is, He made everything in the earth and in heaven.

In Genesis 1:1, the Bible says, **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."**

This clears up the context that we are talking about God, who is also known as the Word.

In John 1:14, the Bible says, **"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."**

So at some point, the Word became incarnate, taking on human flesh, being able to dwell among mankind.

Looking at John 1:17, we see that the Bible says, **"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."**

From these verses, we know the Word Incarnate to be Jesus Christ, also known as Emmanuel, which means "God with us", because in Matthew 1:23, the Bible says, **"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."**

This leaves no doubt that "in him" refers to Jesus Christ.

The word "life" means "in a general sense of existence, life in an absolute sense, without end; in a Christian sense of eternal life, the life of bliss and glory in the kingdom of God which awaits the true disciples of Christ after the resurrection".

In John 10:10, Christ says, **"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."**

Christ doesn't just want us to exist in a general sense, but He wants us to experience a life of bliss and glory. He didn't come so that we can be mediocre and live unfulfilled lives. He came so that we would shatter our own impressions of how we can live in this earth.

In John 5:24-25, the Bible says, **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."**

I can speak from experience that I was walking dead, wrapped in failure, and slated for destruction. In Christ, I live in a way that defies not only my own expectations, but it also defies the expectations and understanding of people who have known me for decades. I know what it feels like to be given new life, and I live from that new life, because Christ is life for me.

The word "light" refers to the moral and spiritual light and knowledge which enlightens the mind, soul, and conscience; including the idea of moral goodness, purity, and holiness, and the consequent reward and happiness.

In John 8:10-12, the Bible says, **"When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. 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."**

This is an example of someone passing from death to life because of the light of Christ, a woman tried in the very act of adultery. Christ didn't come to condemn us for walking in darkness, but He came to show us that we can walk in His light and live!

12. John 1:5 - the gulf between light and darkness

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

Light and darkness are physical expressions of spiritual states that people find themselves under.

The illustration of someone walking in the light shows the one who positions themselves in a great life in the Lord, because they allow their feet to tread in truth, leading them into the presence of God.

Those who walk in darkness are blinded by the lack of light, and do not care to see that the enemy is hunting them down, trying to consume them.

We all have a propensity for both light and darkness, even those in the church, because light and darkness are also representative of the natures that we live in at various points when "life happens". The respective natures derive from separate kingdoms, one aiming at our destruction and another aiming at our salvation.

One has nothing in common with the other, but only those who have once walked in darkness can understand the darkness of others.

Today, we will look at John 1:5, the gulf between light and darkness.

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

The word "light" speaks of the moral and spiritual light and knowledge which enlightens the mind, soul, or conscience; including the idea of moral goodness, purity, and holiness, and of consequent reward and happiness.

This affects our volition, our will, and will be manifested in the choices we make. When we allow God's light to shine in and through us, there will be evidence of it, even when we don't initially understand what is at work.

In Matthew 5:16, Christ says, ***"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."***

The light that shines in and through us may confound someone who doesn't understand our nature, but when they do, it will open up the floodgates for them to understand more about the God we serve.

The word "shineth" means "lighten, to appear, or to show".

The word "darkness" speaks of moral darkness that is absent of light.

Just as Christ came to a world darkened by sin and became light for the world, we must do the same, because in Matthew 5:14, Christ says, ***"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."***

God designed us to walk in light, and in the process, become a people who stand out in the face of darkness. Sadly, we can't expect people to understand the light that is in us, because their nature causes them to be blind to what is at work in us.

In 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, the Bible says, ***"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."***

Understanding that darkness is a nature that adheres to a kingdom, we know that Satan is in place to keep us blinded to the light, so that a change doesn't come over us, so that we will make conscious choices in favor of the darkness to have it reign in our lives.

Sadly, there are people in church who are still blinded, and have not experienced the light of Christ.

The word "comprehend" means "to perceive or seize with the mind".

In John 3:19, the Bible says, **"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."**

I know this firsthand, because I resisted the light more times than I could count. The pleasures of darkness made me feel like it was a huge sacrifice to give it all up for something that doesn't provide immediate gratification, and it was something that I didn't want to do.

I wanted to stay in my mess and according to me, everybody else were the ones who were jacked up. Now I will never be a believer who develops amnesia about who I used to be.

In Romans 13:12-13, the Bible says, **"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."**

In the face of light, I had to make a choice. I could either continue to choose darkness, partaking in all the stuff that brought on so much pleasure, or I could choose to walk into the light and experience a new life in Christ. God is not going to force us to choose either way.

In Galatians 5:17, the Bible says, **"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."**

Light and darkness is Spirit and flesh, and we have to make the choice between which nature we are going to serve. Either way it goes, the fruit we bear will be the evidence.

13. John 1:7 - testimony of the marvellous light of Christ

"The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe."

Two nights ago, my witness was a little shaky to say the least, because during an argument with my wife, I lost my temper, saying some things that are completely uncharacteristic of me.

During that moment, a person couldn't look at me and see Christ in me, and that is a real problem.

You know it's bad when people who don't go to church tell you they prayed for you.

I went to Bible study the next morning and humbled myself before my brothers, giving testimony, with tears in my eyes, about my behavior.

I left there encouraged by my brothers who shared truth with me, that God has already forgiven me and restored me.

I talked to my wife, and we both humbled ourselves, though still having to talk through the argument we had the night before.

We had a visit last night, and God's peace and love flowed between us. Only God could turn this seemingly impossible situation around for His glory, the same way that Christ became the atoning sacrifice for the impossible situation named Marshall Jones.

Today, we will look at John 1:7, testimony of the marvellous light of Christ.

"The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe."

The phrase "the same", written in King James' English, starting a verse immediately gives us the indication that there is a connection that must be made to a person, place, or event. This means we have to go back to establish the connection in order to understand the context.

In John 1:6, the Bible says, ***"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John."***

In our finite minds, we think that we are merely born, but birth was no accident to God. We were sent to earth by God to perform His purpose in the earth. John, also called John the Baptist, was born for the purpose of bearing witness of Jesus Christ.

In Luke 1:13, the Bible says, ***"But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John."***

An angel appeared to Zacharias and told him that his barren and old wife would bear a son named John.

Also in Luke 1:16-17, the Bible says, ***"And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."***

John the Baptist was born to preach the good news about the appearance of Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Saviour of the world.

The word "came" means "to appear publicly".

The word "witness" means "a person who gives testimony, who establishes a record, or provides evidence of truth".

In Acts 1:8, the Bible says, ***"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."***

This is the same power that John the Baptist received to bear witness of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of truth, so when he spoke of Christ, he gave sound testimony. We must do the same, because our speech is not the only thing that gives testimony of Christ. Our behavior should as well.

In Acts 4:13-14, the Bible says, ***"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it."***

Our conduct, especially as believers, should always point to Christ, and while we might be the one to not cause a man who is paralyzed to walk again, but we can love our neighbor on a high level, which will always correlate to our faith.

The phrase "bear witness" means "to testify".

The word "Light" refers to Jesus Christ,

Who brought life and immortality to light in His gospel, and Who also dispenses moral light and truth?

Testimony always has purpose, and the testimony of Jesus is so men may hear and believe.

The word "believe" means "to entrust one's spiritual wellbeing to, or to place faith in".

In Romans 10:13-15, the Bible says, ***"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"***

What does our witness reflect, Christ or the sin that Christ came to deliver us from? Is the testimony of our lives drawing others to the cross, or giving them a reason to stay away?

14. John 1:9 - receiving the Light of Christ

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Within the street life, there is an excitement of spontaneity, where some days, making it home in one piece was a blessing.

Even in the midst of life in the streets, there were always these beacons of light, people who tried to share the Word of God with me.

They were people who saw what I could become if I would just place my trust in Christ instead of in my ability to navigate the streets effectively.

Many times I did want to hear it, even knowing it was right for me. I have come to realize that even that was a part of the process that has led to me to the right standing I am in today.

God is going to provide us with these beacons of light in many junctions of our lives, no matter how jacked up we are, no matter the discrepancy we have with normalcy, or no matter the difficulty we will have in changing our lives.

This displays the love, patience, and grace of God in continuing to try to lead us in His Light.

Today, we will be looking at John 1:9, receiving the Light of Christ.

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

We have established in our series so far that Jesus Christ is the true Light of the world.

In John 1:8, the Bible says, **"He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light."**

We also established that John the Baptist was not that light, but was born with the purpose of showing the world blinded by sin and religious legalism who the Christ was.

Finally, we have established that the purpose behind sharing the Light of Christ with others is so that they will believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

This is our witness, the experience that we have with the risen Saviour that allows us to share the gospel of Christ's light with the world.

This is validated by Matthew 28:19-20, the says, **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."**

This is the commission that Jesus gave His disciples when He ascended to the Father, and it is the same commission that believers today are responsible for fulfilling.

The word "Light" refers to Christ, but it means "the author and dispenser of moral and spiritual light, used especially of Jesus Christ as the great Teacher and Saviour of the world who brought life and immortality to light in His Gospel".

The word "lighteth" means "to impart moral or spiritual light, to enlighten, brighten, or cause one to see".

There is a big difference between people who are light bearers and the one True Light. Our job is to not be Christ for someone, but rather to be a light and a road to show people who Christ is. This can be done in our speech, but it is displayed more through our behavior.

In James 1:22-24, the Bible says, **"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."**

When our behavior lines up with the Word of God, not only will we always remember who we are, but people will be able to see the connection between us and Christ. If Christ isn't reflected in our conduct, then we are shielding a person from the Light that can save their souls.

Within this topic verse, it uses the phrase "every man", meaning this gospel of Jesus Christ is not just for "church folks", but it is for everyone.

In Isaiah 49:6, the Bible says, **"And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."**

God desires that the light that leads to salvation be available to all people, including people who are on the outside.

In Mark 2:17, the Bible says, **"When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."**

God doesn't look for those who think they have it all together, because they are their own salvation, but He looks for people who know they are jacked up and know they are a little crazy.

In 2 Peter 3:9, the Bible says, ***"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."***

When I was in the streets, God sent beacons of light to show me the gospel when I was neck deep in sin, and decades later, I am one of those beacons of light, showing others the gospel! Praise God!

15. John 3:19 - a light that exposes the darkness operating in us

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

The light of Christ exposes the darkness that rests in all of us.

It doesn't matter if a person has gone to church for 50 years, or doesn't go at all.

The light has the same purpose, to expose the darkness within us, to introduce us to loving God who desires to forgive our sins, and restore us according to His divine intention for us from the beginning of creation.

When the light shines upon us and our deeds, there is no hiding what is there, and it is our job at that point to take a hard look at ourselves, and work back into making change.

Our own actions condemn us, but Jesus didn't come to condemn us. He came to be the perfect atoning sacrifice for sin so that He could save mankind from their sin.

The light exposes that truth as well. Whatever choice we make, it will be plain to God because the light will reveal all things.

Today, we will look at John 3:19, a light that exposes the darkness operating in us.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

There is a misconception about God that deserves to be clarified.

Some people believe that God isn't loving because He allows barbaric acts to be performed, and that He let's bad things happen to good people in good towns.

It is not God performing these acts, but it is the sin that lives in us, drawing us into these decisions. God created us with free will, and sadly, some people are going to make atrocious decisions towards mankind.

I know this firsthand, but I also know that God has given us His word and the pathway to salvation, which will vastly impact our decisions for the better.

In John 3:16-17, the Bible says, **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."**

It is not God's desire to condemn us, but to provide a way for us to be saved. His light exposes our sin as God should, but the light also exposes our way out of a life of sin.

The word "condemnation" means "a judgment, sentence pronounced where consequence or punishment is given".

The word "light" here means "True knowledge of God and spiritual things, Christian piety".

The word "world" means "the present order of things as opposed to the kingdom of Christ, and hence, always with the idea of transience, worthlessness, and evil both physical and moral".

Imagine the light coming on in a room full of roaches, and you will understand what happens when the light of Christ shines in a dark place.

In John 1:9-11, the Bible says, **"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not."**

Imagine Christ coming to the world He created only to be rejected for being the true light, for being Who He is. This is what happens when we, being evil, are exposed to the light. We scatter, or flat out tell God to turn the light off!

The word "men" means "mankind".

The word "loved" means "to serve with fidelity, to respect, with an idea of veneration and duty".

The word "darkness" speaks of moral darkness that is absent of spiritual light and truth, including the idea of sinfulness and consequent calamity".

The light of Christ shines to prevent us from experiencing the calamity and destruction that we are sure to suffer if we continue on this path.

In Romans 6:16-17, the Bible says, **"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."**

When I was in the world, I gladly served sin and enjoyed the pleasure behind it, thinking that if it felt good, that it must be right. Even then, the light of Christ was always there, giving me a choice: to keep serving sin or to choose a better way.

The word "deeds" means "acts or behavior".

The word "evil" means "morally corrupt".

In John 8:10-11, the Bible says, **"When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."**

This woman stood rightfully accused, her misdeeds brought to the light, but Christ didn't condemn her. The Light told her to go and sin no more. The Light compels us to change our behavior, not condemn us for our choices.

16. John 3:20 - the practice of evil diminishing the light of Christ in us

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."

When I was living in the world, proudly living a life that countered the Word of God, I didn't want to change badly enough to make a step in the right direction.

The sad thing is that I would hear someone share the Word with me, know they were right in my heart, and still go back out there and make my life even worse.

I used to tell myself that I wasn't a bad person, that I did good things for people, but the truth was that I did way more evil deeds than good.

What we practice is the prime indication of what nature we are in service to, whether light or darkness. In sports, practice is used to hone our skills, to build resiliency, or to make a behavior an instinct. That is exactly what happens when we practice sin. We begin to love sin more than living a life pleasing to God, and we stay away from God because we don't want light to shine on our behavior. The further we get in our practice, the further we get from God.

Today, we will look at John 3:20, the practice of evil diminishing the light of Christ in us.

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."

The verse begins with the word "for", which means that it is the conjunction that is connecting two points. This means we have to go back to understand the full context.

In John 3:18-19, the Bible says, ***"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."***

Jesus Christ came to save the world from sin by being the perfect, atoning sacrifice for sin. If we believe in Him, there is no condemnation, because we heeded the warning given by the light that our deeds were evil, and conformed ourselves to the Word of God.

In Romans 8:1, the Bible says, ***"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."***

People quote the first part of this verse all the time, without giving credence to the condition that activates the promise. The disclaimer says, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit". This describes the person living their life under the instruction and direction of the Holy Spirit.

The word "doeth" means "perform repeatedly, habitually, and continuously".

The word "evil" means "morally bad or wicked deeds".

The word "hateth" means "to detest or love less".

The word "light" refers to the true knowledge of God and spiritual things, but it also refers to day light, where all things are made clear.

When I sold drugs, I used to prefer selling drugs at night, because I was less visible to the police who desire to interrupt my behaviors. In the daylight, in that same place, I stuck out like a sore thumb for all to see. The light disrupted my desire to perform evil deeds without being seen.

In Job 24:13-14, the Bible says, ***"They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof. The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief."***

There was a church lass named Sister Linda who used to live in my old neighborhood. She would come outside, walk around the block, looking for one of us to pray with and share the Gospel. Guys ran from her quicker than they would run from the police, and I get it now because they didn't want to acknowledge that the way they were living was wrong. They, like me, fought against the light. Strangely enough, I never ran from Sister Linda, and I let her share the Gospel with me and pray with me.

The word "deeds" means "acts or behavior".

The word "reproved" means "to admonish, convict, or rebuke".

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the Bible says, ***"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."***

God isn't trying to convict us of our evil deeds just to show us what filthy sinners we are, but so that we can receive the light of Christ and become everything that He created us to be.

In Romans 1:28, the Bible says, ***"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient"***.

There will come a point where we will continue to reject the Word of God, where we will continue to push away the reproof of God, and where we will continue to ignore the warnings God gives us through countless people, before He turns us loose to enjoy sin in its fullness. This is not a good place to be!

17. John 3:21 - what the light reveals

"But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

The closer we get to the light, the more viable we are to those who see us.

The further away we get from the light, the likelihood of us being seen diminishes.

My Tee-Tee told me when I was younger that the truth will come to the light, and I think she might have told me that because even though I was trying to hide my evil doings, she knew God could see everything clearly.

If God could see me, and when I got closer to the light, then it is only a matter of time before someone else would be able to see me.

As believers, we want our lives to be under the light, so our behavior, our speech, our love, and comfort can point to Christ.

We want people to see us and be able to attribute what they see to God's work in us, because someone may ask us how can they get some of that good news for themselves.

Our behavior should reflect the light we walk in, not the darkness we have been delivered from.

Today, we will look at John 3:21, what the light reveals.

"But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

This ends the conversation that Jesus had with Nicodemus, who was a ruler in the Jewish synagogue. He came to Christ by night because he knew that Christ was the truth, but it is my opinion he wasn't yet ready to deal with the scrutiny of following after Christ.

In John 3:2, the Bible says, ***"The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."***

Jesus provide an ample enough record of behavior and deeds to show exactly where He came from. He is Light, so His deeds were on full display for all to see. In the last study, we looked at the evil deeds in mankind that keeps them from coming to the light of Christ. Now we will look and the deeds that are pleasing to God.

The word "doeth" means "to perform habitually, continuously, or repeatedly".

This is what we can expect to see from a person on a daily basis.

The word "truth" means "conduct conformed to the truth, integrity, probity, virtue; a life confirmed to the precepts of the gospel; someone who lives uprightly".

In Luke 6:43-45, the Bible says, ***"For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."***

Our fruit identifies the tree. We probably will never know the type of tree we are looking at until we see fruit from it, and the same rules apply in the faith. Good fruit doesn't appear until we start living out the Word of God, allowing His seeds to produced increase.

Where does truth come from? In John 17:17, Christ prays, ***"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."***

If we are trying to bear fruit with anything other than the word of God, our conduct cannot be tied back to God.

In John 8:31-32, the Bible says, **"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."**

Continuing in the Word of God is an action, not a thought or idea, and it shows a oneness with the Word of God that displays that we follow Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, the Bible says, **"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."**

Do we live that someone actually died so that we can live? Do we live like we belong to God? Do our actions bring glory to God?

The word "light" means "true knowledge of God and spiritual things, Christian piety".

The word "deeds" refers to our conduct.

The word "manifest" means "to cause to appear, to make apparent or visible".

The word "wrought" means "worked by, or engaged in or with".

This simply implies that it is the product of God's work in us.

In Acts 6:8, the Bible says, **"And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people."**

Our lives will always bear evidence of the faith we have and our obedience to God's word.

In Acts 6:15, the Bible says, **"And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."**

We want our faces to reflect the same thing, that God has to be at work in our lives, even in the face of our enemies. This is what coming to the light can produce, a life that glorifies God!

18. John 8:12 - Jesus Christ, the Light of the world

"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."

In pitch darkness, a single candle can be seen for miles. Light provides such a disruption to darkness that that one candle can be traced all the way back to its source.

Understand where I am coming from?

As believers, we radiate the light of Christ in a world of darkness, and people trace the light back to the source, we have the ability to share with them the Source of true light, which is Jesus Christ.

When Christ walked the earth, He did the exact same thing, radiating God's light so when people traced the light back to the Source, He showed them God. We have an amazing privilege to radiate the light of Christ, to allow His light to shine in us, because in it, we have the beauty of sharing who Christ is with someone who doesn't know. We can only show someone Christ effectively if we are also following the light of the Lord.

Today, we will look at John 8:12, Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.

"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."

This context is pretty interesting. Jesus went to the temple to teach, and while He was teaching, the scribes and Pharisees brought in a woman caught in the act of adultery.

In John 8:5, the Bible says, ***"Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?"***

Putting this in modern day, imagine pastors taking a prostitute, bringing her to church, with the full intention of giving her the death penalty for her sin. Isn't church the place where the sinner can find salvation, where the spiritually sick can be made well?

Didn't Christ say in Matthew 18:11, ***"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."***

It is completely illogical to expect that Christ is going to condemn the woman to death for her sin.

It is also comical to think that they came to the living Word of God and tried to tell Him about the law.

Christ's response?

In John 8:7, the Bible says, ***"So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."***

Of course this cleared them out, from the oldest to youngest, leaving Christ and the woman. Christ tells her that He doesn't condemn her, but to go and sin more. Then, Jesus goes right back into teaching in the temple, as if this wild disruption didn't happen, leaving us right at our topic verse.

The word "I am" is used as Christ is identifying Himself.

This is no accident, because in Exodus 3:14, the Bible says, ***"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."***

There is a huge difference between me saying "I am Marshall" and Jesus saying, "I am", because in that one statement Jesus recognizes Himself as the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form. Those two words spoken by Christ not only invoke power, but impart truth.

The word "light" means "true knowledge of God and spiritual things, Christian piety, and the moral and spiritual light that enlightens the mind, soul, and conscience".

The word "world" not only refers to the earth, but also the present world and order of things, as opposed to the kingdom of Christ, always with an idea of transience, worthlessness, and evil both physical and moral.

Christ is that candle in the midst of pitch darkness that can be seen for miles. Think not? Remember the birth story of Christ?

In Matthew 2:2, the Bible says, **"Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."**

If a star was seen from the east leading the wise men to Christ, then imagine the light the Creator of that star radiates, leading us to Him?

The word "followeth" means "to become a disciple of someone and through faith and practice, to follow their teaching".

You see, that it is much bigger than believing in the teachings?

It is putting the teaching into practice so that we become what we believe, so that when we live our lives, it gives an accurate reflection of Christ.

In Matthew 16:24-25, the Bible says, **"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."**

In order to follow after Christ, we have to admit ie declare ourselves untrue, and deliberately choose to be identified with Him.

The phrase "walk in darkness" means to live a life of sinfulness that is contrary to the Word of God.

When we follow after Christ, we are led out of darkness by that candle that is seen for miles, which means that there is no form of darkness that the light of Christ can not penetrate through.

Gives us all hope, doesn't it?

19. John 11:10 - walking in the light of day

"But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him."

Many days I stumbled when I was involved in the streets.

Of course, as hard-hearted as I was, I always thought that I could still find my way, even though I continued to crash into things everywhere I turned.

My crashes were no light matters, because my crashes landed me in prison, caused me to be shot multiple times, and ultimately landed me in prison with life sentences without the possibility of parole.

In the dark, the enemy lurks and preys on the fact that he has the darkness to veil his true intentions.

Some hunters in the animal kingdom hunt at night because it gives them an advantage, and they know that if they walk in the light, they would see the threats coming.

The spiritual realm works the same way, and if we walk in the light of the Lord, we will not only have a sure foundation under our feet, but the enemy can't cause us to stumble.

Today, we will look at John 11:10, walking in the light of day.

"But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him."

In this passage, Jesus was given the report that His dear friend Lazarus was sick. Lazarus' sisters sent people to go get Jesus, because they knew He could heal him.

In John 11:4, the Bible says, ***"When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."***

Jesus already knew the end of the matter from right where He sat, so He remained in that same place for another two days. This is where many of us are tripped up in our prayer lives, me included, because we seek Jesus in the face of our suffering, but then there is a delay, or nothing appears to happen in our favour. This is when darkness comes upon us, because in our discouragement, we will then try to seek our own way, or give up.

In John 11:5, the Bible says, ***"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."***

It will also seem like God doesn't love us when the answer to our pleas doesn't seem to come. That can be a dark place as well. The Bible says that Jesus loved them, so how we may feel about what we are going through doesn't remove that truth.

In John 11:7, the Bible says, ***"Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again."***

Two days after He got word about Lazarus' sickness, He now sets about to go, but He is going into enemy territory. The Jews there tried to stone Jesus.

The disciples are walking in fear now, which is another form of darkness, but the Bible says in John 11:9, ***"Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world."***

Simply put, Jesus is telling His disciples to not worry because they are safe with Him.

The word "walk" means "to live or to be a companion of".

The word "night" refers to a life apart from Jesus where they don't believe and obey Him.

The word "stumbleth" means "to stub on, or trip up".

In Jeremiah 13:16-17, the Bible says, ***"Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD's flock is carried away captive."***

This is a dangerous spiritual state to be in, walking in the night, because we are vulnerable to all of the enemy's advances. In our arrogance, we will forsake God as our light, and leave ourselves unprotected in the process.

In 1 Peter 5:8, the Bible says, **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour".**

A lion operates in stealth, trying to find the weak or young to separate from the herd. He operates best in darkness, from vantage points that can't be seen. If he is spotted early enough, he knows that he has lost his advantage and usually won't pursue.

The phrase "there is no light in him" confirms that Jesus is talking about a spiritual state and not a physical condition of light.

This is the person who has no spiritual life.

In Malachi 2:8-9, the Bible says, **"For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts."**

Walking in the night is a serious problem, because we are trying to live a life without Jesus Christ. That is a life without direction, that is a life of fear, and that is a life void of power.

20. John 12:35 - receiving the light of Christ while it is still time

"Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth."

A couple of years ago, a friend of mine died suddenly. He was having leg pain and swelling, and he complained to health services nearly daily about his condition.

That is the first indication that something was wrong because he never complained.

He stood for institution count, and by the time he was to go to work an hour later, he was found dead in his cell.

The word came that he apparently had blood clots in his leg that went to his brain and lodged in his brain, killing him instantly. I was just getting ready to write him a letter and one of my brothers just got a letter from him. His name was Eric Johnson.

What I am saying in all of this is that we don't have forever to receive salvation for our sins. Eric wasn't a believer, and despite all the witnesses around him, despite all the conversations about Christianity, he wouldn't believe. He thought tomorrow was coming and sadly, it didn't.

Today, we will look at John 12:35, receiving the light of Christ while it is still time.

"Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth."

This passage comes out of a conversation that Jesus is having with the people.

He knows that He is going to the cross soon, and wants people to receive salvation before it is too late. He is once again using a physical state to highlight a spiritual condition.

In John 12:24, Christ says, **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."**

Christ is describing Himself in this, expressing that through His death, the power of salvation and redemption will be available to all who believe.

In John 12:26, Christ says, **"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."**

There is a call for us to serve the Lord, with a promise attached, that wherever Christ will be, so will we be. Where does this sound familiar?

In Ephesians 2:4-6, the Bible says, **"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus".**

It is because of Christ's death on the cross that we not only have direct access to experience the light of Christ, but we also experience this light from the heavenly places that He is seated in. His death brought salvation, and that redemption snatched us from death and brought us into life with and in Him.

What a precious gift and yet, people take the invitation for granted, thinking that they have forever to get their lives right with the Lord.

In John 12:34, the Bible says, **"The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?"**

They are asking Christ if His kingdom is supposed to last forever, and He is to live forever, how is it possible that He will die?

In this, they don't realize that Christ has always been talking about a heavenly kingdom, a kingdom that dwells in those who believe, and they have no clue that Christ is going to be raised from the dead with all power! The people think that they have forever, but Christ is trying to tell them to live in His light now, while there is time.

Christ speaks of "a little while", which is an undetermined, but relatively short period of time. The call went out, and also the warning that the window is short.

The word "light" here is Christ speaking directly about Himself as moral and spiritual truth.

The word "walk" means "to tread around or to live".

Christ is compelling people to experience Him while they have the chance, to not take His presence for granted, because He knows that He is going to the cross.

This is why Isaiah 55:6-7, the Bible says, **"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."**

The call is for us to walk out of the darkness we are captive in, and live in the light of Christ. Those in darkness think they have it together, but they "knoweth not where he(they) goeth", showing us that we can't find our way into His salvation without His light.

Psalms 95:7 says, **"For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice."**

Today. Not tomorrow. Not when we get our lives together. Today is the day!

21. John 12:36 - becoming children of the light

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them."

We don't have the rest of our lives to figure out whether or not we are going to serve the Lord or not, neither will we have the rest of our days to figure out if we are going to be fruitful for the Lord or not.

Christ is calling us, whether we believe or not, with hopes that we will believe.

Tomorrow is not promised to any of us, and today is the day that we stop procrastinating, and we stop making excuses for why we refuse to walk in the light of the Lord.

I remember a time 23 years ago where I ironed my clothes at night because I promised my auntie that I would go to church with her in the morning.

I walked around the block and I was gunned down by two guys I didn't know over a beef I had nothing to do with. We are watching the news and seeing tons of people not make it home on planes and in cars. There is no guarantee on life, but there is a guarantee on Christ if we believe.

Today, we will look at John 12:36, becoming children of the light.

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them."

We should understand by now that Christ is nearing His death on the cross and He is trying to implore the Jews to experience the truth, that He is indeed the Light of the world, the Savior of the world, the promised Messiah. He is telling them to live as if tomorrow is not coming and today is the day for salvation.

Remember in Psalms 95:7, where the Bible says, **"For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice"?**

Well, there is an obvious call being made, but there is actually more to this call.

In Psalm 95:8-9, the Bible says, **"Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work."**

The same hardened heart that was present with the children of Israel is still present with them, and Christ is standing right in front of them. Sadly, the same hardened heart is also present in us, and we have the Holy Spirit continuing to drop bread crumbs that lead right into the presence of God.

The phrase "while ye have the light" is evidence that there will be a day where the light, that is Christ, won't be there, and that should be a scary thing to think about.

The word "believe" means "to have faith in, or to entrust one's spiritual well-being to".

Christ came so that we would believe in the light and become children of the light.

In John 1:11-12, the Bible says, **"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name".**

This is a picture of what is happening in John 12 and it is also a picture of what is happening in the world today. There is a call going out in the world to believe in the name of Jesus Christ for salvation and redemption, but God is not going to force us to believe.

In John 3:16, Christ says, **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."**

This iconic verse isn't something to merely quote, but it is a divine call given to us by our Savior that is God's plan for salvation. In John 12 Christ knows that He is nearing the cross, and He wants to make sure that people understand that we have to believe in order to experience His light.

The word "children" means "kinship or heir" usually implying that a person is a partaker of something.

In Romans 8:16-17, the Bible says, **"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."**

Our faith in Christ makes us children of God and also the children of the light, but the Holy Spirit will continue to confirm to us that we are indeed the children of God.

Why is that? Because we have an enemy who tries to blind us from receiving who we are in Him

Remember when Satan tempted Christ in Matthew 4:3, where the Bible says, **"And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."**

Satan tried to get Christ to question His identity, and he will do the same thing to us as well. When we are sure of who we are, we don't have to prove anything. Our light will speak for us.

In Matthew 5:16, Christ says, **"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."**

We will radiate the light of Christ if we are God's children, and it will bring glory to God. Our belief turns into light that displays the glory of God!

22. Acts 12:7 - a light that produces true freedom

"And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands."

God is capable of shining His light in the darkest of places.

There are places that we won't go where God's light is shining brightly, and while we sit back on our soap boxes and cast judgments, God's light is setting captives free.

Two days ago, my wife posted a video, where she talked about our video visit. We laughed, joked, had a dance-off (I won, of course!), and it was hilarious.

There were people who liked the posted, but there was one person who told my wife that she is basically ruining her life if she thinks that she can be happy with someone in prison.

We have been trolled by all kinds of people, all who discount the work of the Lord that is happening in this place and in places like this. We are experiencing true freedom in what society deems to be a dark place, because God's light has shone in the prison.

Today, we will look at Acts 12:7, a light that produces true freedom.

"And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands."

Peter is spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ and people are receive the gospel in record numbers. At the same time salvation is being experienced, hatred is being birthed as well.

In Acts 12:1-3, the Bible says, ***"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also."***

The only reason Herod took Peter was because it "pleased the Jews". When a person lives in darkness, their aim is to always serve flesh and not to serve God. Peter was imprisoned and he was sleep in between 2 soldiers chained to a wall. This is a bad situation, but God has other plans!

In Acts 12:5, the Bible says, ***"Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."***

Please understood the power of the moment here. The church could do nothing physically for Peter, and his goose was essentially cooked by human standards, but the church prayed for Peter. Please don't ever discount the power of prayer, especially over someone in prison, because God will respond! I am a living witness of the power of an answered prayer over a prisoner.

In Ephesians 6:18, the Bible says, ***"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints"***.

We are supposed to pray for the saints, being mindful of their needs and situations, but we are also supposed to pray for those who are in darkness, those who are imprisoned, and those who are captive to sin, that the light of Christ shines in their hearts. Prayer works, and we are going to see how.

The word "behold" gives us the indication that this is something that God wants us to pay close attention to.

In 2 Corinthians 6:1-2, the Bible says, **"We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"**

I am the product of the answered prayers of the saints, because I understood that now is the time for salvation and I took the Lord's hand, accepting Him as Lord and Saviour.

The word "angel" refers to a divine messenger from God sent as an agent in administering the affairs of the kingdom of God and in promoting the welfare of humans".

In Hebrews 1:13-14, the Bible says, **"But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"**

An angel comes to produce the will of God in someone's life, and the angel came in the prison as an answer to the church's prayer, to release Peter from prison. Something happened first though.

The phrase "a light shined" refers to the splendor and glory of God radiating and beaming through the angel of the Lord.

Before Peter was set free, the light had to shine in the darkness of the prison His was in.

In Isaiah 9:2, the Bible says, **"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."**

While society is condemning prisoners, the church is praying for the prisoners, and the light of Christ is being shone, setting captives free, spiritually first, then physically. Never discount what the light of Christ can do, or where it will reach!

23. Acts 16:29 - a light that shines in the darkest of prisons

"Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas."

The darkness we live in can be scary.

What happens when the darkness we face shakes us to the core, causing for us to look for light?

In all actuality, darkness is supposed to be scary, but those conditioned to live in it did have to learn to live in it and even find some comfort with it.

Hopefully we will get to a point in our lives where the darkness is no longer good enough, no longer a safe place, no longer comfortable for us, but it is my hope that instead of finding an appearance of light (self-help), we would turn to Christ, who is The True Light, who will dispel all the darkness we have in our lives.

I experienced a darkness so severe where, one night, it WOULD have caused me to swan dive off of the third tier in a former prison environment if the Light of Christ had not showed in my cell that night.

That was the day I had true repentance and received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.

Today, we will look at Acts 16:29, a light that shines in the darkest of prisons.

"Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas."

I am so blessed that God shined His light in my prison environment.

Sadly, there are many people who are yet to experience the light of Christ, and where they are right now is their prison.

The topic verse we are covering takes places inside a prison, where Paul and Silas are confined for casting out a demon from a woman who, for many days, followed them proclaiming repeatedly that they were servants of God who show the way of salvation.

In Acts 16:19, the Bible says, ***"And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers"***.

The woman was hired for her soothsaying and Paul destroyed her boss's way of making money, so they had him imprisoned.

Before they made it to the prison, Acts 16:23, the Bible says, ***"And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely"***.

Paul and Silas were stripped and beaten before they were taken to jail. Naturally, we would think this is totally unfair, because Christ told the disciples to cast out demons, so why were they being beaten and jailed for obeying God's Word?

The Dean of my Biblical Studies Program, Pastor Robin Knoll, always says, "Sometimes, the reason you are there is not the reason you are there".

So Paul and Silas are in prison, and Acts 16:25, the Bible says, ***"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."***

Despite being beaten and imprisoned unfairly, Paul and Silas praised God so fervently that the other prisoners heard them.

In Acts 16:26, the Bible says, ***"And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed."***

A miracle happened in the prison, a response from God to the praises offered up by Paul and Silas, and you'd expect the prisoners to hightail it out of there instantly. That is the difference between light and darkness. Those in the light would never take their own blessing unlawfully.

Normally, the officer responsible for the inmates would be put to death if any inmate got away, so this officer charged with overseeing his prisoners was going to kill himself after thinking that they escaped, but Acts 16:28 says, **"But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here."**

Despite the darkness, God allowed Paul to see what was in the heart of the jailer. The jailer was affected, not just by the earthquake which broke doors open and loosened chains, but by the fact that prisoners forsook the expected response in a hectic moment like that.

The word "called" means "to ask".

The word "light" means "a lamp or torch".

The word "trembling" means "terrified".

The phrase "fell down" means "to prostrate oneself in supplication or homage".

The man wasn't bowing down to Paul and Silas. He was bowing down to the God they served!

The jailer saw his own darkness, and in Acts 16:30-31, the Bible says, **"And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."**

Allow me to take an interpretive journey with you.

The jailer was in the darkness of his sin. The foundation of the prison was shaken, producing a life-or-death moment. He saw his own darkness in this moment, but he also experienced the light of Christ through the living testimony Paul and Silas. He got into a posture of worship and asked to be saved.

Our darkness will provide moments for us to see the light or call for a light, and receive salvation for our soul, but the question is, will we take it?

24. Acts 26:18, a full change brought on by the light of Christ

"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."

There is a major change that happens when we receive the light of Christ.

For the first time in our life, our eyes are open and we are able to see life from the lens that God desires us to see through.

We have now been placed under the care and authority of Christ as His body, and we are partakers with Him of the divine nature of God.

We have received the kingdom of God, which now lives in us, and we have been forgiven of all of our sins, having our sins washed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Because Christ was the atoning sacrifice for sin, He left behind an inheritance, the Holy Spirit, so that we can live in the kingdom of God right here as we live and breath on the earth.

If the light never came on, we would still be in darkness but these promises would remain active and available in our lives.

Today, we will look at Acts 26:18, a full change brought on by the light of Christ.

"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."

In this passage, Paul is preaching to King Agrippa. Paul was arrested by the Romans at the behest of the Jews, and he initially starts by defending his innocence, but in doing so, it opens the door for him to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with King Agrippa. He gives King Agrippa his testimony, how Christ met him on the road to Damascus. What we are reading in this topic verse are the words of Jesus Christ spoken to Paul, the words that Paul is sharing as his testimony to King Agrippa.

Sometimes, we expect that God wants us to preach eloquent sermons to win souls for Christ, but a lot of times, He just wants us to tell our story, how we were living a life outside of Christ until we met Him and He changed our lives forever.

The word "their" is important for context, because we have to know who Christ is talking to Paul about.

In Acts 26:16-17, the Bible says, ***"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"***.

So the "their" are the Jews and Gentiles, but especially the Gentiles. Paul was sent to the outsiders to show them the way into the kingdom of God.

The phrase "open their eyes" implies a restoration of sight, but this context implies spiritual vision being restored.

In 2 Corinthians 4:4, the Bible says, ***"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."***

Satan is responsible for our sight being taken, but through salvation, we now have our eyes open, and most will see that we were duped by the enemy.

The word "turn" means "to turn to the service and worship of the true God".

The word "darkness" refers to the moral and spiritual darkness absent the light of the Lord, including the idea of sinfulness and consequent calamity.

The word "light" refers to the true knowledge of God and spiritual things.

There is not only a change in direction, but there is also a change in purpose.

In Ephesians 1:18, the Bible says, ***"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints"***.

God shows us what our purpose is, and He also shows us, what we truly have in Him. We have divine instruction at work inside of us, and even have warnings in place if we saunter outside of God's will.

The word "forgiveness" means "to pardon or remit".

The word "sins" means "offenses against God".

A pardon means that our offense is completely wiped away as if we never committed the offense. All of the rights we lost would also be restored back to us.

In Luke 1:76-77, the Bible says, ***"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins".***

This is what Christ was prophesied to provide and He is still providing it to this day.

In 1 John 1:7, the Bible says, ***"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."***

This is our inheritance, something bestowed upon us due to the death of someone else. That someone else is Christ, and through His death on the cross, our eyes are open, our hearts are changed, we are under the authority of God, we are forgiven, and we are set apart for divine use!

25. Romans 13:12, robed in the armour of light

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

When I received true repentance and salvation for my sins, I saw my true self in the mirror for the first time, and I hated what I had become.

In that great moment of my life, I felt so unworthy.

I felt that I had no right to be forgiven for what I have done, especially since I grew up in church and was supposed to know better.

That was nearly 17 years ago, and God has miraculously changed my life beyond anything I could ever imagine.

I have sadly seen the news and received the reports of old friends of mine being killed, and I wondered if they even took the many chances they were given to receive the same salvation that I did?

I realize that there is no tomorrow when it comes to salvation, because tomorrow isn't promised. I also realize that tomorrow is not the time to live saved, because tomorrow may not come.

Today is the day for salvation, and today is the day to live saved.

Today, we will look at Romans 13:12, robed in the armour of light.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

Paul is writing to the believers in Rome, preparing them to live as believers, to live as if today is their very last day.

In Romans 13:11, the Bible says, **"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."**

If he us writing this to the church, it is because people in the church have forgotten who they are in Christ and have blended in with the world in their behavior. Paul is trying to rouse them out of their spiritual sleep, so they can experience the importance of the moment they are in right now.

In James 1:23-24, the Bible says, **"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."**

See, if we go to church to "hear the good word" but our behavior is not changed in the process, then eventually we are going to forget who we are.

The word "night" refers to the time of wickedness.

The phrase "far spent" implies that the time has worn down, leaving a small window of opportunity.

The word "day" means "light of true and higher knowledge; moral light".

The phrase "at hand" means "fast approaching, soon to appear, close enough to experience".

We have to live like there is no tomorrow, and that is the problem with the church. We have become so arrogant with our tomorrows that we take our salvation for granted today.

In James 4:13-14, the Bible says, **"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."**

Our lives are truly a vapor, and I know this very well, because this passage in James was the one used at my sister Angela's funeral. She was 37 and a mother of three when the Lord called her home, falling to cancer that caused the invasion of PML, an aggressive brain condition which shut down her brain in zones until she breathed her last breath. She left this earth wishing she had more time, wishing she would have done more, loved more, and experienced more.

The phrase "cast off" means "put away".

The phrase "works of darkness" means "deeds that are absent of spiritual truth and are filled with wickedness"

In Ephesians 4:21-22, the Bible says, **"If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts"**.

The behavior we display should not be consistent with the life we have been delivered from, but of the life we have been delivered into. Remember, Paul is writing this letter to the church, so there were believers then who still were allowing sin to reign, even though they were believers. We can't just take our foot off of the gas because we have received our salvation.

The phrase "put on" means "sink into, or invest with clothing".

The phrase "armour of light" speaks of the spiritual nature of Christ that we walk in through life and warfare.

In Philippians 2:12, the Bible says, ***"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."***

This means we are responsible for ensuring that we live according to the Word of God. This means that we have to do more than listen to the Word of God, but we have to sink into our new nature with gratefulness and joy.

26. 2 Corinthians 4:4 - a blind mind that rejected the gospel

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Sometimes, people can't see what is right in front of their faces.

People are so close to the gospel of Jesus Christ, yet refuse to believe.

In my Biblical Studies Bachelor's Degree Program, there seems to be more unbelievers than believers, which is astounding, because we are given a curriculum that clearly shows how a sovereign God created the events in history to produce undeniable evidence that Jesus Christ is not only the Son of God, but He is also God Incarnate.

Amid all three classes that are teaching us not only the Bible, but historical and literal context surrounding Scripture, people still make the choice to not believe.

How can't they not see? The only answer is that they are blinded from seeing the truth.

Today, we will look at 2 Corinthians 4:4, a blind mind that rejected the gospel.

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

The first thing we have to do is find out who the "in whom" pertains to. Establishing who the characters are is extremely importance in understanding context. This means we have to go back to understand.

In 2 Corinthians 4:3, the Bible says, ***"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost"***.

So the "in whom" are those who are lost?

Those who haven't accepted the gospel as truth and accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Since Paul is writing this letter to the believers in Corinth, where the church is growing, the question probably has surfaced as to why some people aren't receiving such a clear gospel message when it is right in their faces. Paul is providing this answer. Sometimes, people aren't receiving the gospel because it is hiding in plain sight.

The phrase "god of this world" refers to Satan.

In John 14:30, Christ says, **"Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."**

Christ identifies Satan as the prince of this world, which signifies that there is an authority he has in the earth, but this authority and kingdom authority have nothing in common with Christ.

In Ephesians 6:11-12, the Bible says, **"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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."**

To think that there is not a spiritual realm where the enemy is trying to divide and conquer believers, where he is trying to get believers to deny their faith, where he desires to see us broken and in despair is to think unrealistically.

The word "blinded" means "to obscure".

The word "minds" means "perception or understanding".

In Ephesians 4:18-19, the Bible says, **"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."**

When a person's understanding has been blinded, they have unwittingly removed themselves from a life with God and have given themselves over to experience whatever worldly lust comes to mind. The enemy wants to keep us so consumed by sinfulness that we never see our way out of the darkness.

There is a kind of person who is blinded like this.

The phrase "believe not" means "to disbelieve, or to be distrustful".

This is the person who refuses to believe even when the truth is sitting right in their faces.

In Romans 2:5, the Bible says, **"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God"**.

There is an expiration date on sinfulness, and on blindness. There is going to come a point where there will be no excuse.

In John 16:8-9, Christ says, **"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me"**.

The Holy Spirit is moving through the earth, trying to impart truth in all of us, especially the unbelieving.

The word "light" means "moral and spiritual truth".

The phrase "glorious gospel" refers to the good news of God's plan for salvation by Jesus Christ.

The word "shine" means "to illuminate or beam forth".

The enemy wants to keep us in darkness so we don't receive the gospel truth.

In 2 Corinthians 3:16, the Bible says, **"Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away."**

Only through Christ can the light come in our darkness, and only through Christ can the blinders come off that the enemy has placed, exposing us to the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ!

27. 2 Corinthians 4:6 – a beautiful light shining in our hearts

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Receiving salvation by faith in Jesus Christ not only adorns us with His light, but we are filled with His light, giving us the power and ability to become who God created us to be.

We can't become who God created us to be as believers from darkness, but we have to be led by His light, so that we can know how we should live, where we should go, and how we should believe.

This isn't some eye-opening moment, where our sight is restored, but this is knowing what to do when the light actually comes on. With this light comes power, wisdom, knowledge, and true understanding of our Lord and Saviour, so that we can allow His light to shine through us as we share the gospel.

Our lives are to be reflective of that light all to bring glory to God by our lives.

Today, we will look at 2 Corinthians 4:6, a beautiful light shining in our hearts.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

There is a purpose for receiving the light of Christ. In this verse, it begins with the word "for", which is a conjunction connecting points of view. This means we have to go back to experience context.

In 2 Corinthians 4:5, the Bible says, ***"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."***

In order for us to preach Christ, we have to understand that Christ is the Word of God and that comes as the result of us receiving the light of Christ, the light God commanded to shine out of darkness. If the light doesn't come on, then we don't experience Christ, and without that experience, there is no witness.

In 2 Timothy 4:2-3, the Bible says, ***"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears"***.

We were in darkness until the light of Christ shined upon us. We received this Light as truth and the light shined in us. So now, we are entrusted with being a type of light, so that others can receive the true Light. We are preaching to the same darkness that we were delivered from.

The word "commanded" means "to speak, call, or bring forth".

The word "light" speaks of moral and spiritual truth.

The word "shine" means "to illuminate or beam radiantly".

The word "darkness" implies a life absent of Christ, a life without moral or spiritual truth.

In Genesis 1:2-3, the Bible says, **"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."**

The same way God called light forth from darkness is the same way He called light forth from the darkness that was in us. If God could light a whole world with His light, then putting light in our darkness is light work for Him.

The word "hearts" refers to our innermost being, the center of our thoughts, desires, passions and will.

I cringe at the thought of God shining a light on some of the stuff I was thinking about, but 1 Corinthians 4:5 says, **"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."**

Instead of cringing at the thought of some of the ideas that try to work within us, let us give that to God and praise Him for knowing what is going on inside of us, and for His word being true that His light shines out of darkness.

Fortunately for us, the light of Christ convicts, but there is also a more beautiful purpose involved.

The word "give" means "to bestow or offer up".

The word "light" "moral or spiritual light".

The word "knowledge" doesn't speak on just head knowledge, but it really expresses oneness with what is known.

Essentially, God's design is for us to become Scripture. Think not?

In 2 Corinthians 3:2-3, the Bible says, **"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."**

God created us to experience His Word in our innermost being so that we can share that with others.

The word "glory" means "splendor, glory, or honor".

So when God's light shines in our hearts, we are giving His truth and the ability to experience oneness with God through Christ.

We then pay this forward by sharing what we have received, and God is glorified in the process.

28. Ephesians 5:8 – living our faith in Christ out

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:"

I remember when I was living in darkness.

The world was a cold place and I became cold with it, and my behavior was consistent with someone completely in submission to Satan.

Sure, I had some great moments. I did good deeds for people, I was sacrificial, I was generous, I respected the elders and I protected the children in my neighborhood.

When I was arrested for my homicide case, it shocked the neighborhood I lived in Racine, a city outside of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

It shocked my family.

It took five years for it to finally shock me.

The reason?

The darkness I was consumed in kept me making excuses instead of taking responsibility for my behaviors.

As a believer, I am a staunch advocate of a person being who they say they are.

If we are believers, then we should see fruit. If we are in darkness, we are not going to bear fruit. We cannot profess faith without living it out.

Today, we will look at Ephesians 5:8, living our faith in Christ out.

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:"

The word "for" beginning a Scripture suggests that more context is need from previous Scripture to establish the connection.

In Ephesians 5:6-7, the Bible says, ***"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them."***

Paul is writing to believers, telling them to remember that they are no longer children of wrath, that they don't have to serve the sinfulness that once ruled them. Paul is imploring the church to distinguish themselves from the world, because it should see a difference in us.

In 2 Corinthians 6:16-17, the Bible says, ***"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."***

If we are supposed to be the temple of the Lord, a place people can come to in order for them to experience the presence of God, then will they actually experience God or Satan?

The word "darkness" speaks of moral darkness, those who practice wickedness and are under the influence of Satan.

This verse says "ye were darkness", so this is an identity issue as well.

In Isaiah 9:2, the Bible says, **"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."**

This is the same great light that Saul saw when He met Jesus on the road to Damascus, the same light that Christ spoke from, and the same light that changed Saul to Paul. Paul's change caught so many people off-guard that they had to check to make sure it was real.

In Romans 1:20-21, the Bible says, **"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."**

God has given us creation to provide a record of the existence of God, but we allow ourselves to become blinded to the truth by the darkness within us.

The word "light" means "true knowledge of God and spiritual things; Christian piety".

The word "walk" means "to tread all around as proof of ability, or to live.

We are the light of the Lord and not our own light.

In Matthew 5:14-16, Christ says, **"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."**

If we are children of the light, then we have to let Christ radiate from us. When people see us, they are supposed to identify us with Christ.

In 1 Peter 2:9-10, the Bible says, **"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; Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."**

Because of the light of Christ, we have a different identity, and are perceived differently because of God with us.

If we really are partakers of the kingdom of God, and we really are children of the light, then everything we are should reflect Christ.

29. Ephesians 5:13, a light that manifests everything

"But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light."

The light reveals all things.

I know this well, because I lived in a house that had roaches.

In the darkness, the place looked like anyone else's but when the light came, we clearly saw the silent invaders who raided our home unawares.

Sadly, this is what happens in a believer's life when they allow Satan's influence to have some level of reign in their lives.

An infestation of wickedness is happening unawares and even though we look normal on the outside, the inside is being filled with a bunch of stuff we don't want.

We need to want to continue walking in the light as believers, because the light makes plain everything that rests in the darkness.

Just as the light of Christ reveals the evil laid rest within us, so the light will also manifest the evil that exists in the world.

We will be able to see things as they are, not as we desire them to be.

Today, we will be looking at Ephesians 5:13, a light that manifests everything.

"But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light."

The word "but" is a conjunction that connects to ideas. This means we have to travel backwards to grasp the context of the passage.

In Ephesians 5:10-12, the Bible says, ***"Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."***

Ephesus was a major trading port, so many people from all over came into Ephesus, but Ephesus also embraced Paganism.

So establishing a church in this location was prime, but it also ensured that the people being converted had come in with some baggage to say the least. Some of the habits the people had built from a lifetime of practice would take time to unlearn, care was needed lest judgment be cast too hurriedly on those who don't get it right away.

Paul's letters to believers, makes it clear that these new church folks are still battling the flesh that they have been delivered from. So Paul is commanding that they break fellowship with these deeds of the world and not even speak on them or make provision for them, to reduce the risk of them coming back.

In Romans 13:14, the Bible says, ***"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."***

The only way we keep ourselves from being another Ephesus is to keep Christ in our hearts and minds.

The word "reproved" implies "rebuke, admonishment, or conviction".

The phrase "made manifest" means "to render apparent".

The word "light" refers to moral or spiritual truth, the true knowledge of God and spiritual things or Christian piety.

I remember being moved from a cell hall I was in when I was in Waupun Correctional Institution, and placed in a different cell hall that was quiet, respectful, where inmates didn't get into trouble. I was there for four years before I went to the hole for a fight, defending an already-injured person from another person's attack. I was placed with the original cell hall I once was in.

But now the light revealed everything and I saw a wickedness there that I had never seen before!

I wanted out!

In Hebrews 4:12-13, the Bible says, ***"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."***

The Word of God coming into my heart taking residence over those four years I sat in that quiet unit gave me a different perspective, and also made me aware of not only the evil around us, but also the evil that lived in my heart. The light revealed exactly what sort it was, and dwelling around so much wickedness and godlessness was unsettling.

In John 3:20-21, Christ says, ***"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."***

I saw a difference when I tried to share truth with the brothers I used to be side-by-side with when I was doing evil. I was now seen as opposition because I chose to walk with the Lord, and they tried to convince me to get re-involved 'just a little'.

God revealed that compromise is the fastest way to relapse, and that is what Paul is teaching us. The light revealed that to me and still reveals that to me.

There can be no compromise when it comes to the Word of God.

30. 1 John 1:7 - in the light the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

One of the most beautiful gifts given because of the light of Christ is that it paves the way for us to be saved.

Salvation was a part of God's plan for mankind, to restore us unto Himself after the fall, and the Bible is a series of stories that ultimately tells one story, how God provided us Jesus Christ as the atoning sacrifice for our sin, so that we can live as children of God in a fallen world.

The blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin, including as well, the sins that produce enormous weight and guilt.

The beauty of salvation is that it also grafts us into the family of God, a powerful community of believers where we can grow together, learn together, and help each other.

When we look at the church it should be a place where we not only experience the presence of God, but it is also a place where we begin to experience oneness with the family of faith.

Today we will look at 1 John 1:7, in the light the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us.

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

In order to understand the context of this passage, we have to find out the connection made by the conjunction "but". When the word "but" is used, there is a shift from one state to the next. So we have to go back a little.

In 1 John 1:5-6, the Bible says, ***"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"***.

If we are believers, then we walk in the same light that Christ walks in because God is light. In order to fellowship with light we have to understand that the darkness within us will be extinguished because light and darkness can't exist at the same time.

We are not talking about an occasional occurrence of sin, but we are talking about a lifestyle of sin, because the word "walk" means "to tread all around as proof of ability, or to live".

There are many who say they are believers but their lifestyles reflect the darkness they have been delivered from. That means their lives are lies, because there is a contradiction between their salvation and their lifestyle.

They can't receive His salvation and still live the same way.

In James 1:22-24, the Bible says, ***"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."***

We have to put the Word of God into practice in order to "walk in the light" as the Bible commands us.

We have to live the Word out so that our fruit is Scripture, bearing evidence of the presence of God at work within us. Living the Word of God out produces light that brings God glory.

The word "fellowship" means "partnership or social intercourse".

This expresses oneness the precise thing Christ prayed for in John 17:20-21, which says, ***"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."***

There is a lot here, but this expresses that God has prepared us for ministry, to share the light of Christ with others so that others will come to the faith. Our body bears witness that we belong to Christ, so it is important that the church is also one.

In 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, the Bible says, ***"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."***

God desires communion with the body of Christ, and He also desires us to partake in His divine nature together.

The "blood" refers to the blood Jesus Christ shed on the cross, atoning for the sin of mankind.

He "cleanseth" means "to purify, make free from filth in a moral sense."

The word "sin" means "offenses against God".

By walking in the light of Christ, we are living out our atonement and our salvation, which causes us to live according to the Word of God.

In 1 Peter 1:18-19, the Bible says, ***"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"***.

Do we live as if we have been redeemed, brought back to life, or do we live like we were never made whole?

31. Revelation 22:5 - reigning in the light of Christ forever

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

We are ending our series on the "Light of Christ", and in it, we have learned that light has produced the fulfilled will of God in the earth.

We have learned that light exposes darkness, that sinfulness not only exists in the world but within us.

We have also learned that Jesus Christ is the light of the world, imparting spiritual knowledge of God and truth in the world, all to the glory of God.

In learning that our experience with light ultimately led to our salvation, we now know we are filled with the light of Christ and are to serve as beacons of light that show others the way to Christ.

Now that we clearly see the importance of the light of Christ, we are empowered and enlightened by His light so that we can be who God calls us to be.

When this life on earth is over, we will have the privilege of heaven, where we will be in the presence of the fullness of God's light, and we will reign with Christ forever.

Today, we will look at Revelation 22:5, reigning in the light of Christ forever.

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

The word "and" expresses an addition that is connected to the context of Scripture.

This means we have to go back and establish what our topic verse is connected to.

In Revelation 21:1-2, the Bible says, ***"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."***

Our topic verse is connected to the picture of heaven, our new Jerusalem, our city of true peace. From Revelation 21:1-22:5, it is describing heaven's attributes, and God is giving the Apostle John a guided tour through heaven, so that we would have this testimony of heaven written in Revelation.

The words "night", "candle", and "sun" all give an indication that the concept of days and seasons has been forever abolished by God.

In Revelation 21:23-25, the Bible says,

We won't need fortified city walls, because we will live perpetually in what we know as day, and we will walk in the fullness of the light of Christ. We will be perfect, not just spiritually mature, but truly perfect in Him. Time is non-existent in heaven.

The phrase "giveth them light" means "to shed ray upon, to shine or brighten".

In Psalms 36:7-9, the Bible says, ***"How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light."***

This is a type of picture, as written of in the Psalms about what John experienced in Revelation.

It won't do justice to what we will see when we actually experience it for ourselves.

Our loving God made His light available to us so that we can experience the great provision of His kingdom.

In Psalm 84:11-12, the Bible says, ***"For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."***

When we see God as our sun and shield, we will understand that we can't live without His provision or protection. To eliminate the sun's need means that God is much more powerful than the sun, and that He provides something so much greater for us.

The word "reign" means "exercise dominion, to enjoy the high privileges, honor, and felicity of the Messiah's kingdom".

God doesn't just want us to go to heaven, but He desires us to reign with Christ in heaven!

In Romans 8:16-17, the Bible says, ***"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."***

When we receive God's gift of salvation, we experience adoption and we become co-heirs with Christ, possessing the same power, authority and dominion that He had when He walked the earth.

In heaven, we will experience the complete magnitude of what God bestowed upon us to experience here on earth, dominion by and through His light!

God Bless!
Marshall & Jessica

WHY KJV (King James Version)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

This is one of my favorite Bible verses, a constant source of encouragement for me to dig deeper and deeper into the Word of God to receive truth in its deepest form. I believe it is our job as believers to study as deep as we can, and then build our way up. The King James Version of the Bible is one of most popular early translations of the Bible to English, so that is where my study begins. I have come to learn that by putting the King James Version side by side with other translations that may be easier to read, that easier doesn't always keep the deeper meaning intact. The "thee", "thy", and "ye" can be a little overwhelming at first, but as with anything else we study continuously, it will become easier to decipher.

The Bible I use, the KJV AMG Hebrew-Greek Keyword Study Bible, gives me an enormous tool to not only study the Word of God from an earlier English translation, but gives me access to study the keywords in the Scripture to find the deeper meaning of the verses I study. The more I studied the Word of God, the deeper I wanted to go. When I first started my incarceration over 17 years ago, I read the NIV version of the Bible. As I matured as a reader, I went back to the King James Version in 2007, wanting to learn the most difficult English translation. I went to the Hebrew-Greek Keyword Study Bible in 2014 and have been using it since. I recently was given a MacArthur Study Bible, NASB, which I use for scriptural cross-references and commentary purposes. I am in no way saying it is wrong for anyone to study any translation other than the King James Version, but I do suggest that everyone possesses one, so we can break down the Word of Truth side by side. It is important to go to the earliest possible translation, to see the modernized translations accurately convey the Word of God.

Studying the Word of God pleases Him, and I desire to break down the Scriptures rightly, understanding that by studying the Word of God, I am breaking down truth so I can position myself for the Holy Spirit's teaching. Whatever I learn, I then share, and by sheer repetition, I am able to retain what I learn better.

May the study of God's Word release amazing truths and powerful revelations in your lives.

Marshall's Bio, Poems, and History

Marshall's Bio

Marshall Jones, born September 26, 1981, is on a lifelong journey of bearing fruit for the Kingdom of God. The author of "A Raven's Meal" (RoseDog Books), a poetry collection, he aspires to target the grey areas, and the people who are terribly misunderstood by society. Believing that everyone deserves a voice, he not only shares his testimony, but he also tries to use his gifting to share other people's experiences as well. He writes from the prison system that has housed his body since July 2003, but also from the place that has been the catalyst to his freedom.

His biography, written with Jessica, called "The Prodigal Son" is available at Amazon online.

Marshall's Poems

You can view Marshall's poems at <https://www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/marshall-jones/>

History

Red Granite Daily Devotions commenced on Red Thread Poets Facebook page on November 1, 2020. This is the 13th in his Daily Devotion Series. The Daily Devotions are recapped by date at

<https://www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/red-granite-daily-devotions/>

Marshall uses, among others, these resources in his Bible Study: AMG Hebrew Greek Keyword Study Bible (KJV), Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, The MacArthur Study Bible (NASB), Webster's New World College Dictionary.

ABOUT RED GRANITE DAILY DEVOTIONS AND MARSHALL JONES

- Entirely influenced by Holy God Almighty
- Conceived November 2020
- First Daily Devotion November 1, 2020
- 13 Series available as of Q2 2026
- Over 1,300 daily Devotions written since November 2020.
- Written by Marshall Jones from his cell in Wisconsin, United States of America
- 22 years to 2026 serving a double life homicide sentence
- Jessica his wife and partner from November 1, 2022
- We all await the Lord's grace for a positive outcome from the new 2026 Commutation Advisory Board in Wisconsin, please pray for such

FOLLOW MARSHALL AND JESSICA JONES:

<https://www.redthreadpoets.com/red-granite-daily-devotions/>

[Forged by Fire; Iron Sharpening Iron Private Facebook Group](#)

THE SERIES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

1. PSALM 91: 16 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on January 2, 2021.
2. LOVING YOU: 30 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on January 28, 2021.
3. THE FEARLESSNESS OF FAITH: 21 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on March 13, 2021.
4. WARFARE IN THE SPIRIT: -16 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on May 19, 2021.
5. THE BEATITUDES: 10 Daily Devotion: The first was posted on July 21, 2021.
6. THE FORGIVENESS OF GOD: 15 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on August 13, 2021.
7. PSALM 23: 6 Daily Devotions: The first was posted in November 2020.
8. JESUS CHRIST - THE MYSTERY UNCOVERED: 31 Daily Devotiion. The first was posted on November 28, 2021.
9. MARITAL BLISS: 12 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on August 21, 2022.
10. GODLY PROSPERITY: 10 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on October 10, 2022.
11. SLAIN TO RECEIVE: 7 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on September 4, 2023.
12. FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: 12 Daily Devotions. The first was posted on October 28, 2023.
13. LIGHT OF CHRIST: 31 Daily Devotions: The first was posted on February 23, 2025.

LIGHT OF CHRIST

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