

I.N.I.

Fourth Sunday of Easter
John 1:4-9; 8:12
April 26, 2015

In Christ Jesus, the true Light of the world, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

At one of our morning devotions at school we asked the children what would they rather have, the ability to see or to hear. There was a mixed response. I said I'd rather see. Blindness has to be one of the scariest disabilities one can have--seeing only blackness, darkness day after day, with no light. In fact one of the horrors of hell and eternal damnation is the blackness, the outer darkness that the condemned will have for all eternity—without end.

Well did you know that every single one of us were conceived and born blind, spiritually blind? Spiritually we could not see, perceive, understand or know anything about God or our salvation. We too lived in a world of darkness, with no light. Many of us, perhaps most of us were led to the Light very early in our infancy through Baptism and we have continued to be led by that Light throughout our youth and adult years.

Others of you maybe lived for quite a few years in the darkness, in the blackness of unbelief; but now the Light has shined into your hearts also. Unfortunately there are still countless millions upon millions of individuals right in our own country who are still living in complete darkness—still groping around in spiritual blindness.

In our text this morning Jesus declares to a world stumbling around in darkness:

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!

I'm sure most of you have had the experience of getting up in the middle of the night, possibly being awakened by a baby's cry; the telephone, a nightmare, or a bathroom call. You sit up and find yourself in blackness. You grope around trying to find the light switch and what a relief that is. Without light you can not get much if anything done. If the lights went out in your home at night and you had no candles or flashlights, the only thing of value you could do would be to go to bed and sleep.

So it is with unbelieving mankind. Without the Light of this world—Christ, they can only grope around, stumbling through this life trying to find their way out of sin and death and to eternal life; but nothing can really be done, so they continue to sleep in unbelief.

And that is the first point in our text this morning. Jesus declares:

I: I AM THE LIGHT THAT SHINES INTO THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD.

Darkness gives evil its best chance to flourish. You read over and over again about robberies, murders, and sexual assaults that occur in the dark of night. Scripture also equates darkness with evil. In Matthew 6 sin is called the darkness that lives in each of us. Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans and John writes in his first Epistle that **“sitting in darkness”** and **“walking in darkness”** means **“living in unbelief,”** **“having no fellowship with God.”**

The power of darkness is the Devil's power. We already mentioned that part of damnation is being cast into outer darkness. Whenever scripture mentions the works of darkness it means works of evil---wicked perversion. The **“chains of darkness”** is also another picture of hell and the rulers of the darkness of this world are Satan and his evil angels.

On the other hand light is something that is beautiful—**“walking in the light”** is walking with the Lord; living in faith. We are told in I John that **GOD IS LIGHT AND IN HIM IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL.** Jesus tells us He is **“THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!”** He shines in the darkness of this world. As we know this world is under the influence and control of Satan and lives in the darkness of sin, unbelief and death. When Jesus and His Word shine forth the darkness must recede, it must shrink back into the corners and recesses—for darkness can never overpower the Light! When you turn on the light in a dark room, the dark disappears. So also with Christ and His Word.

When a person is born, he or she has a natural knowledge of God. That person knows that God exists because his conscience tells him so. He also knows this because he sees from nature, the world around him, that all of this cannot come just by chance or fate, but some Supreme

Being created it all. But this meager knowledge of God is nothing. It cannot save. There is still no knowledge of who that God is, no knowledge of how mankind is saved and the truth of redemption, no knowledge of true holiness. This natural knowledge still is darkness with no ability to serve God and do one's duty to God.

That is the state of natural man—totally corrupt, dead in sins, living in the darkness of unbelief, spiritually blind to God and the blessings of God, unable to do anything to please God!

That is why Jesus had to shine into the darkness of this world—to save mankind—to purge out the darkness of unbelief—to open the eyes of the spiritually blind to see their salvation in Him—to remove the blackness of sin and replace it with righteousness! In Isaiah 9:2 we are told: **THE PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT; THOSE WHO DWELT IN THE LAND OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT HAS SHINED.** And in Isaiah 60:1-4 we read: **ARISE, SHINE; FOR YOUR LIGHT HAS COME! AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD IS RISEN UPON YOU. FOR BEHOLD, THE DARKNESS SHALL COVER THE EARTH, AND DEEP DARKNESS THE PEOPLE; BUT THE LORD WILL ARISE OVER YOU, AND HIS GLORY WILL BE SEEN UPON YOU. THE GENTILES SHALL COME TO YOUR LIGHT, AND KINGS TO THE BRIGHTNESS OF YOUR RISING. LIFT UP YOUR EYES ALL AROUND, AND SEE...** Jesus is the Light of the world and He is the Light that enlightens us Gentiles.

But from our text in John 1:5 we find that the Light shined into this world of darkness and the darkness did not comprehend, did not understand it—literally “did not grasp it, did not make it its own.” Instead the darkness rejected it, tried to, but could not overcome it. In John 3:19-20 we read: **"AND THIS IS THE CONDEMNATION, THAT THE LIGHT HAS COME INTO THE WORLD, AND MEN LOVED DARKNESS RATHER THAN LIGHT, BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS WERE EVIL. FOR EVERYONE PRACTICING EVIL HATES THE LIGHT AND DOES NOT COME TO THE LIGHT, LEST HIS DEEDS SHOULD BE EXPOSED."**

The scary thing is, that was all of us at one time in our lives. Living in the darkness of sin and unbelief, loving the darkness of doing only what we wanted. Thank God that the Light of Christ has pierced into our dark hearts and destroyed that darkness. And that is the second point of this morning's sermon text. Jesus says:

II: I AM THE TRUE LIGHT OF LIFE TO ALL WHO BELIEVE.

John bore witness to that Light so that all people through Jesus might believe. Jesus says in our text: **HE WHO FOLLOWS ME SHALL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS, BUT HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE."**

With Jesus and His Word shining into our hearts we now have the truth; we now have the knowledge of the only True Triune God who has created us, redeemed us and sanctified us. We know that Jesus has washed us clean of the blackness of our sins and made us white in His shed blood. Paul tells us: **FOR IT IS THE GOD WHO COMMANDED LIGHT TO SHINE OUT OF DARKNESS, WHO HAS SHONE IN OUR HEARTS TO GIVE THE LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST.** And again Paul writes: **OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST HAS ABOLISHED DEATH AND BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL.**

Our I Am Savior, Jesus, says to each of you and to me: **I AM YOUR LIGHT! I have enlightened your dead heart of sin and unbelief. I have removed the darkness of unbelief and now through My Light of the Gospel the Holy Spirit has created the light of faith in your heart.**

Like a houseplant soon shrivels without the sun's light, so we cannot exist and have real life without our Savior's light. No Jesus—no life and no light: with Jesus—eternal life and light.

May our prayer be: Thank you Jesus for bringing me from sin's darkness into Your wonderful life and light.

And as followers of the Light, Jesus Christ, we have become mini-lights to the world. This same **I AM** Savior says to us in Matt. 5:14-16 **"YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. A CITY THAT IS SET ON A HILL CANNOT BE HIDDEN. NOR DO THEY LIGHT A LAMP AND PUT IT UNDER A BASKET, BUT ON A LAMPSTAND, AND IT GIVES LIGHT TO ALL *WHO ARE* IN THE HOUSE. LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN."**

What good is a light if it doesn't work? Our outside light on the church kitchen steps burned out a couple months ago. When I come walking over to church at night it is hard to find the hole in the lock to open the door with the key. That light has to be replaced.

So also a child of God who does not walk in Christ, who blends in with the world, who compromises his faith with the morals of our society will not shine in the darkness of this world. A burnt out bulb is replaced. May that never happen to us!

Instead may our light so shine before the world so that our Father is glorified. How will it shine? It will shine as we put our faith into practice in our day by day living---when we serve others, when we tell those living in the darkness of unbelief that Jesus is their Light who lived and died for them, when we put others first in our lives, when we spend our time and talents in spreading this wonderful message of Christ and Him crucified, when we are led to repent of our own sinful darkness and seek the wonderful forgiveness Christ has earned for us.

The next time you are out at night and see the bright moon shining above you, say, "That's me!" The moon has no light of its own by nature. It is a lifeless, dark planet, but it reflects the sun shining on it and gives off light. It is really not the moon shining, but the sun shining off the moon.

What a perfect picture of us. We are spiritually lifeless, sinfully darkened people by nature who only shine in the darkness of this world when Christ shines on us with His Word. We reflect the Light of Jesus who shines on us.

May we let our light shine every day so that we show to others the way to the source of our Light, the Light of the world, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.