

JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, REVISITED (JOHN 3:1-21)

Last week our message was entitled "The Light of the World is Immanuel Our Peace". Meaning, as Jesus said, "I AM the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (John 8:12) That is just one of many of Jesus' analogies that He speaks to us that HE IS our life! That is also associated then with Jesus saying "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6) How do we follow Jesus, as HE IS the Way? Psalm 119:105-106 tells us. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments." That tells us that God's Word, His spoken and written Word, guides us in His righteous ways AND His Word also guides us through His Holy Spirit!

First for context, as we are in the time of the "New Covenant" that God has with His people through Christ Jesus. The Apostle John said in John 1:12-13, "as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." We are then expected to believe on Jesus as being the Christ/Messiah, the Anointed One of God, of whom God Almighty sent to die on a cross for our sins, taking our sins upon Himself to the grave. And then He rose from the dead on the third day, thereby completely, definitively conquering death, sin and evil, as He is far superior to all of that. And then too, WE also will overcome death, sin and evil and have eternal life in and through Him. Following Jesus. The Apostle Paul explained that thoroughly in his letter to the Romans. In Romans 8:9-17, Paul tells us, "you are not [considered to be] in the flesh [you are not just an inhabitant of this world but are a child of God!] but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. [His righteousness that dwells in us. As Paul says:] But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. [Meaning we are called to live in and according to His Righteousness and not continue in sin against God] For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but IF by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [As Paul said earlier in Romans 6:10-12, "For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts." Romans 8:14:] For as many as are led by the Spirit of God [Spirit of Christ leads us as He dwells in us], these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received

the Spirit of adoption [of liberty in Christ Jesus] by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, IF indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be **glorified together.**" That is one of many bad news/good news passage of Scriptures that we have from Paul, ex:**Rom. 3:23/6:23.** But the good news FAR outshines the bad news!

Getting back to Jesus as being the Light of the world. Now Jesus had also said, "**As long as I AM in the world, I AM the light of the world.**" (**John 8:12**) To address that let us review again the first part of Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" in **Matthew 5**, as Jesus also used a form of the bad news/good news approach to teaching. Yet He actually used the good news/bad news/good news form. "**Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you** [As the Apostle Peter said that as we are following the example of Christ Jesus, "when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (**1 Peter 2:23**) Jesus continues:], **and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. [the Beatitudes and all of what I just read was just for our review. But it then leads to Jesus saying:] You are the light of the world. [How can that be? We have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us and shining forth from us-IF we follow His Way & example! Jesus continues:] 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."** (**Matthew 3:5-16**)

What are those good works? Whatever the works, they must always come FROM the love of God and demonstrate the love of God! As we are "being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God" (**Philippians 1:11**), as we've gone over time and again the fruit of the Spirit is, "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (**Galatians 5:22-23**) Then as the Apostle Paul tells us in his love chapter, **1 Corinthians 13**, that

without love our works are meaningless. "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (1 Corinthians 13:4-7) As Christ dwells in us, and as God IS love (1 John 4:7-8), that, above all things should be what other folks see in us as we are led in the Spirit of Christ!

[John 3:1-21 (One Must Be Born Again)] There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 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. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

In a summary of what Jesus was saying in His dialogue with Nicodemus, Jesus had more than one point that He was making. 1. He told Nicodemus, "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot

enter the kingdom of God". 2. Jesus was also telling Nicodemus that He was the Messiah, the Savior of mankind that the Jews were waiting for, but Nicodemus was not seeing that. As Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." **Believe what and be saved from what?** Jesus died for OUR sins against God. Many people have heard the message that Jesus died on the cross for their sins and they go away from that saying, "awesome, I'm good, I'll join the people that say "I believe", so that I can have eternal life. Believing on Jesus and being saved from one's sins. It seems to answer the question of what or Who we are believing on to be saved but Jesus didn't end the dialogue there. For review, Jesus said: 1. that one must be born-again, 2. that if one believes on Jesus, the Son of God they can be saved and have eternal life. The next thing that Jesus says though, to further elaborate on what He had already said, "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." That alone certainly supports what Jesus previously said, to believe in Him/The Son/Jesus. Those who don't believe are already marked as condemned and He says that those who believe are not condemned for believing.

Very well then, believe on Jesus and you won't be condemned. Let's ask the questions again. Believe what and be saved from what? That's where reading Scriptures in context is imperative. What exactly are we believing in and being saved from? Jesus continued: "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. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God." Simon Peter demonstrates to us that He was listening to what Jesus was teaching. He says, "Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious [and comes to the Light]; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who **called you out of darkness into His marvelous light**; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." (1 Peter 2:7-10)

An analogy of that could be compared to someone being told that if they read a treasure map that they will become rich. It may very well be that the treasure map has the directions and location of the

treasure but just believing that the treasure map will make you rich without doing anything else is a bit short-sighted. You would of course have to follow the map to where the treasure is [go to the Light] and then make the effort to obtain the treasure. You could say what Jesus was saying, in regards to our analogy of the treasure, that only those who want to find the treasure can be rich. That means, those who don't want to be poor anymore can be rich in following the treasure map. Those who want to be poor are already doomed to be poor for they didn't want to be rich. The parable that Jesus used in support of that is Jesus saying, **"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."** (Matthew 6:19-21) That treasure is in Christ Jesus and the love of God, His love for us and our response then is in our love for Him and then loving others as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31). Without the love of God, there is no treasure to be found! The map of that treasure, so to speak, is in the love of God! So with what Jesus was really saying to Nicodemus in all that is, those who don't want to practice evil anymore, those who don't want to be in darkness anymore, those who respond to the love of God and want to follow after truth (that's Jesus), will come to Him, believing on Him to save them from their sins, and He will give them a new-birth in the Spirit (in Christ) so that they can have eternal life in Christ and then live in Him, in the love of God.

We also then are **His light** that shines in this dark and fallen world! As Jesus promised, **"I AM the Light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."** (John 8:12) Jesus also clearly stated, **"I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."** The Apostle John then follows that up for us by saying, the "Truth which abides in us will be with us forever." (2 John 1:2; **"Immanuel God is with us."**) In giving His "Great Commission" to His disciples, of which has been passed on to us, He says, **"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."** "Let your conduct [then] be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, **"I will never leave you nor forsake you."** (Hebrews 13:5) Immanuel, God IS with us! Christ Jesus is our Light to show us the Way, His Way, the Right Way, and He is Emmanuel, God is with us, and then also He is our peace in this sin-plagued world, so that we may overcome.

"For unto us a Child is born, **unto us** a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called

Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace.**" (Isaiah 9:6) Isaiah was speaking to the divinity of Christ, that He would be God incarnate. And that word peace (Prince of Peace) comes from Hebrew word "shalom" and means "**peace and completeness... [and] is used to describe harmonious relationships between individuals, nations, and between God and humanity.** There is only ONE WAY that we will truly have peace, that is, the peace of God, within ourselves, with others, and with God-through Christ Jesus, the Prince of Peace.¹ Jesus spoke "peace" to His disciples just before He was to leave them. He said, "**Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**" (John 14:27) The word Jesus used for peace (eirene) is basically the same as shalom which means "to join or to tie together into a whole"², which is the wholeness we have in Christ Jesus, which can mean individually, or with others, and with God. "**Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God**" (Matthew 5:9), that coincides with Jesus saying "**Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**" For Jesus is our Light to show us His Way, as He promises, & He will not leave or forsake us, and He is our peace, our wholeness and completeness! Jesus said, "**Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**" (Matthew 11:28-30) In Revelation 3:20 Jesus says, "**Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.**" Jesus said, "**I AM the Good Shepherd**", (John 10:11) "**and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.**" (John 10:4) To those who do love God, nothing can be more inviting than to be yoked up with Jesus. After all, Jesus tells us, "**Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I AM the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**" Without the love of God in Christ it is all meaningless and fruitless. How wonderful also is for us to open the door for Him to dine with us, as we find our peace, rest and wholeness in Him!

Psalm 5:11-12 says, "But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You. For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield." Christ Jesus our Lord is our Light that shines our way, as He abides in us and we in Him, and He is our peace and wholeness to not only get us to see His eternal kingdom but are blessed to share and show the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus until He takes us home!

1 <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/7965.htm>

2 <https://biblehub.com/greek/1515.htm>