

## *Candlelight Service*

### *December 24, 2016*

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**Intro:** For some people, one of the greatest fears they face does not come from spiders or tight places or even clowns but instead darkness. In fact, nearly 11% of Americans or roughly 36 million people in the U.S. admit to being afraid of the dark. Some of us, either in the past, or even now, have or currently experience fear of darkness.

When we open our Bibles to the Book of Genesis, we learn that darkness has been around for quite some time.

*Gen 1:2 says, "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep --"*

Even from the very beginning of creation, darkness existed. Isn't it interesting that anywhere that God is not, darkness seems to prevail?

Let me finish that verse from Gen 1:2 for you this morning...

*Gen 1:2, "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good" (NIV).*

Did you catch that? As soon as God arrived on the scene, **boom**, there was light! Do you know why?

*1 John 1:5 says, "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (NIV).*

God is light, and where God is, His light will shine. Amen!

Brothers and Sisters, even from the very beginning, there has always been darkness. When I speak of darkness, understand that I am speaking from a Biblical perspective. Darkness, in a scientific manner simply means an absence of light; Or in our case, in a spiritual sense, an absence of the light, which is Jesus Christ.

In God's Word, the Bible, God lets us know very clearly that Jesus Christ, God's Son is the light. Just listen:

*John 8:12 says, "When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

*John 3:19, "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil" (NIV).*

The problem from the very get-go has been darkness or the fact that people simply did not have THE light. Scripture is very clear that when we don't have the light of Jesus inside of us, we are bound to drift throughout life.

*Romans 2:19, "...you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark" (NIV).*

*John 12:35b, "The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going" (NIV).*

*Proverbs 4:19, "...The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble" (NIV)*

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God's Word makes it clear to us, brothers and sisters, that Jesus is the light, and in order for life to have a sense of direction and purpose, we need the light of Jesus. In fact, the Bible urges us to seek the light.

*Isaiah 2:5, "Let us walk in the light of the Lord"*

*Ephesians 5:8, "Live as children of light"*

*1 John 1:5-7, "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (NIV).*

Some may say that their life is way too dark for God's light to ever make a difference but the word of God says very clearly:

*2 Sam 22:29, "[the] Lord turns my darkness into light"*

*Isa 60:1, "Arise, Shine, for your light has come"*

*Isa 60:19, "[the] Lord will be your everlasting light"*

*John 8:12, "Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (NIV).*

And for those that say that God's light is not powerful enough to cover their past, the Bible says:

*John 1:5, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (NIV).*

Not only do we need the light of Jesus in our hearts, but we should point others to the light of Jesus. In fact, this is one of the main reasons for the existence of the Church, to point people to the light and lead them out of darkness.

Something I ran across during the preparation for this message came from the Gospel of John 9:5 which says:

*John 9:5, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (NIV).*

Pretty cool verse, but do you know what that means? Jesus ascended back into Heaven with His Father. Jesus is not in the world right now, but is coming back. The responsibility has now been placed on you and I to be the light-bearers to the world.

*Matt 5:14,16, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden...In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (NIV).*

*1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellences of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (NIV).*

Understand that you and I have not replaced Christ, but we are the examples of Christ's light to the world. Just like Scripture says in John 1

*John 1:6-9, "There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world..."*

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And brothers and sisters, on that blessed first Christmas, the true light did come into the world and that true light is Jesus Christ.

Isn't it interesting how the Bible has laid out the foundation of light:

1. At one time, the world was in darkness and God created the light.
2. Man was in darkness and Jesus Christ came to be the Light.
3. Jesus commands you and I to continue to be Lights of the world until He comes.

The Prophet Isaiah foretold long ago that:

*Isaiah 9:1-6, "Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress...the people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death...You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder...you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor...For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (NIV).*

Pastor Robert Russel once said, *Reality is we can't make it on our own. It is by grace you are saved through faith, not of yourselves lest anybody should boast. Reality is there's no hope in this dark world apart from the light of Jesus Christ, who came into this world to show us the way, to attract us to himself, and to guide us into all truth.*

*A painter painted a bleak picture of a winter scene. It depicted a storm sweeping across the countryside. Over in the corner there was a cabin, but it still looked dead and hopeless. But with one small stroke, that painter dramatically transformed that picture. He took the tip of his brush, dipped it in gold paint, touched one window of the cabin, and the golden glow from that cabin transformed that picture from coldness to invitation to come in; from a picture of death to life, from a picture of gloom to gladness. Jesus said, "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."*