

Light in the Darkness
Luke 1:78b-79; Psalms 107:10-11; John 3:16-20

Pastor Arlyn
Message Transcript

[00:00:00] Merry Christmas, Anchored Fellowship. I know it's a little early for that, but I realize this may be the last opportunity that I get to see you before Christmas. I know that not everyone will be able to attend our evening service tonight or our Wednesday night Bible study. So I'll go ahead and get my Merry Christmas in. And this needs to be my Christmas message. This may be the only chance that I get to speak to you (or I should say, the last chance I get to speak to you) about Christmas. So that's the way that I'm thinking today. And I'm just wondering, is everyone ready for Christmas? *[00:00:37][37.6]*

[00:00:41] Wow, let me guess, you're all planning on breaking quarantine to spend time with family, right? Uh huh? I knew it. I know you people well. Bunch of rebels. Don't worry. Your secret is safe with me. I will not report you to the grinch.... er, pardon me, the governor. Your secret is safe with me. How about this? Is everyone decorated? Got your homes decorated? *[00:01:15][33.9]*

[00:01:16] You did that without lighting the tree on fire or falling off the roof, right? All right. You're doing good then. Based on your own decorations that you put up this year, and every year, and based on your casual observance of the decorations of others during the Christmas season, what would you say is the most commonly used decoration during the Christmas season? *[00:01:41][25.0]*

[00:01:43] Wow, I heard that. *[00:01:46][3.4]*

[00:01:47] I heard answers that I agree with. Now, it's OK if you don't agree with me. This is more so from opinion and impression as opposed to black and white facts. *[00:01:58][11.1]*

[00:01:59] But, yeah, if I had if I had to take my pick and make a guess as to which is the most commonly used Christmas decoration, I would say in one word the answer is: light. *[00:02:11][11.8]*

[00:02:13] I know ornaments are common, but generally you use ornaments inside your home. You don't generally see ornaments hanging from the gutters outside, ornaments plodded along the sidewalk. You generally don't see that. That's sort of an indoor thing. Same with pretty much everything else. Your Santa Claus figurines, your reindeer, your Diehard figurines (that's a Christmas movie), even even your manger scenes. How many of those do you have? Maybe one. Maybe a few. *[00:02:53][40.4]*

[00:02:55] Probably don't have about a thousand of them hanging off your house, do you? But when it comes to lights, we put lights on the tree, we put lights inside our home, we line our windows sills with lights, we have lights hanging from our gutters. So I think that's the answer for me. I think that is the most common decoration that is used at Christmas time. In fact, we have a couple here from Anchored Fellowship that have nine hundred and ten lights on their tree alone. And it's so bright that they don't even need to put decorations or lights on the outside of their home. Now, we're a tight knit community here, so I'm going to protect their identity this morning. *[00:03:40][44.8]*

[00:03:41] I'll just say this. It's a couple that just got married this year. *[00:03:46][4.1]*

[00:03:48] And for whatever reason, the husband seems to be infatuated with electricity. He even drives an electric car. *[00:03:55][6.2]*

[00:03:56] But that's all I'll say. We'll protect their identity. [00:04:00][3.9]

[00:04:04] So, yeah, I think that's it. I think it's light. Because that's what we do. We decorate for the Christmas season by lighting up the night. And that is the perfect segue way into my message topic this morning, because the reason that we commemorate with lots of light during this Christmas season is because we are celebrating the fact that the light of the world, Jesus Christ came into the world to be the light.

[00:04:31][27.1]

[00:04:34] Turn with me, if you will, to Luke, chapter one. Yeah, I know. Luke Chapter one, Luke again. Luke, [00:04:43][9.1]

[00:04:43] Chapter one, Verse 78. We're going to actually read 78 B, so we're going to pick that out beginning at the word the. Let's read that and get started here in our thoughts. [00:04:56][13.3]

[00:04:58] Luke one Verse 78B and verse 79 says this The dayspring from on high has visited us to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. To guide our feet into the way of peace. This was a prophecy about Jesus that was given by Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. Now, he began that prophecy by prophesying about his son, John the Baptist. But that prophecy spilled over into a prophecy about Jesus. He gave this prophecy eight days after his son, John the Baptist, was born. And John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus. Which means that Jesus, at this time, is still in the womb of Mary. [00:05:51][53.2]

[00:05:53] He is about three months along and he has another six months before he will be born. But there in that passage that we read, Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit, according to verse sixty seven, spoke these words of prophecy about Jesus and declared that Jesus would be the light that would be sent into this darkened world. [00:06:16][23.1]

[00:06:17] That word, Dayspring, means Morning Star or if you will, sunrise. [00:06:22][4.6]

[00:06:24] He would be the sunrise for the darkened world. And that depiction of Jesus as the light holds emphatically and unmistakably consistently true throughout the entire Bible. You can read about it in Old Testament prophecy. You can read about it from the contemporaries of Jesus. You can read about it as we unfold the fulfillment of Jesus as the light of the world. It's unmistakable. It's tough to miss. It is a title, it is a metaphor, that is used very often for Jesus. In the next chapter in Luke, that old man Simeon, at the dedication of Baby Jesus, will declare of Jesus in Luke Chapter two verses 30 and 32, that Jesus would be a light to the Gentiles and the glory of his people, Israel. In John, Chapter eight, verse 12, Jesus in one of those great I am statements said this: I am the light of the world. And the apostles would make that assertion as well. They would confirm that in their writings. The Apostle John in John, chapter one, verse nine, would go on to say that Jesus is that light which lights every man that comes into the world. The apostle Peter in first Peter, chapter two, verse nine, would say of Jesus that he is marvelous light. And then when we get to the Book of Revelation, Revelation, chapter twenty one, verse twenty three, we read of the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. And we read that that new Jerusalem, that God has built for us to dwell in, will have no need of the light of the sun and the moon, because, the scriptures say, and I quote, The lamb is its light. And Jesus of course, is the lamb that is spoken of there. So Zacharias has landed on the perfect metaphor for Jesus. But he has also used a perfect metaphor in his assessment of the condition of the world at the time of the first coming, the first appearing of Jesus Christ. Zacharias said that the world would be in darkness at the time of Christ's arrival. And he's not just pulling that out of his hat, he is taking that statement from an Old Testament prophecy in Psalm Chapter 107, verse 10. In Matthew Matthew Chapter four, verses 14 through 16. Matthew speaks of the same dark and condition that would be in the world at the time of Christ's ministry. And in that statement, in Matthew four, he is quoting from Isaiah, Chapter nine, verses one and two. So you have Isaiah,

the Psalmist David, Zacharias, Matthew, the the apostle Matthew. You have all of these people prophesying and then assessing the condition of the world and saying that when Jesus came, the world was about as dark as it can be. And I find that extremely interesting. [00:09:35][191.5]

[00:09:38] Because that was a minority opinion. [00:09:40][2.6]

[00:09:43] That was an opinion that would only be held by those that were spiritually attuned to the Holy Spirit of God, who are able to sense the darkness of the world and see the need for God to send the Lord of Light to pierce through it. [00:10:02][19.6]

[00:10:03] But it would not be the majority opinion if you were to ask the Romans at this time. Is the world in darkness? The Romans would say, of course not. [00:10:17][14.6]

[00:10:18] I mean, it was until we got here. We Romans. But we Romans, we brought the Pax Romana. That means the Roman peace. Which, by the way, was a forced peace. Oh, they had peace, but it was at the edge of a spear. Now, we brought the Pax Romana. We brought peace to the world. We brought stability. We brought order. We brought government. [00:10:42][23.7]

[00:10:43] We even brought the Roman road system to the known world. You know, we're like PennDot, except we know what we're doing. We actually fill our potholes. So the Roman would say, no, the world isn't in darkness. We Romans have brought about civil enlightenment to the world. [00:11:03][19.5]

[00:11:04] Now, if you head on over to the Areopagus, there in Athens, and you ask the Greeks, is our world in darkness? [00:11:10][5.8]

[00:11:12] The Greeks would say, of course not. Of course not. [00:11:15][3.3]

[00:11:15] We Greeks have given to the world the depths of human philosophy. We've given to you, Plato, Aristotle and Socrates. Our world is not in darkness. Our world, because of us, the Greeks, has experienced philosophical enlightenment. And then if you were to head on down south there into Jerusalem and ask the religious Jews, is our world in darkness? The Jews would say, of course not. [00:11:47][31.3]

[00:11:48] We've never been more spiritual than we are right now. We've never been more religious than we are right now. We have the renowned rabbis. We have Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees that are at the top of their religious game. We know more about the scriptures than we ever have. Our knowledge has been increased and expanded and our religious practices are finely tuned; like never before. So they would say, of course not. The world is not in darkness. Because we Jews have brought about religious enlightenment. And yet in God's assessment and in the affirmation and confirmation of those speaking from the word of God as God inspires, God would say that in spite of all of those human endeavors to bring about civil, philosophical and religious enlightenment, that indeed at this time the world was in a very dark place. [00:12:53][64.8]

[00:12:55] And I said, I find that interesting because truly spiritual people alive today, [00:13:02][7.1]

[00:13:06] people that are [00:13:06][0.2]

[00:13:08] acutely tuned in to the moving of the Holy Spirit, will give the same kind of assessment of the world that we live in today. We would say, we live in a darkened time. [00:13:22][13.3]

[00:13:23] We would say that our world is dark. And just as Jesus predicted, just as the scriptures predicted, that in his first coming, the world would be a darkened place has. And he also predicted, prophesied, that at his second coming, the world would be in that same spiritual condition. [00:13:41][18.8]

[00:13:44] Darkness. So I find it interesting. [00:13:50][5.8]

[00:13:53] Because spiritual people in the minority look around and see this world as a dark place.
[00:13:59][5.4]

[00:14:01] But that's not the majority opinion. If you go out on the streets and you ask [00:14:06][4.9]

[00:14:08] a handful of people, most of what you're going to hear is something similar to the Roman or the Greek or the Jewish responses that we would have heard in the first century A.D. They would say... is the world in darkness? [00:14:23][15.3]

[00:14:25] Of course not. We have the Internet. [00:14:28][3.3]

[00:14:31] We have instant access to all the knowledge that the world has ever compiled. Anything you want to know is just a Google search away. [00:14:40][8.6]

[00:14:41] And we have smart everything. We have smart phones and smart cars, we have laptops and tablets and computers. We have YouTube videos where you can learn anything you want to be able to do.
[00:14:56][14.9]

[00:14:57] You can just watch some videos and then go out and do it. Incredible. So our world would say, we are evolved, we are in the light, not in just one category, but through our technology, we have provided total enlightenment across the board. [00:15:15][17.2]

[00:15:16] We humans have arrived. We are evolved and enlightened. And yet the Lord would look at that same situation and say, what you think is enlightenment is actually darkness. And I think the statistics bear out the truth that the Lord is right about his assessment of our world today. If we were truly enlightened, then how do you explain the suicide rates? I'm not just talking about this year, so don't try to blame it on covid. No, I'm talking about decades of statistics. Why are our suicide rates off the charts? How do you explain that? How do you explain all of the psychoses in the world today? How do you explain all of the depression that is in the world today? People weren't this depressed back before we experienced all of this so-called evolution and enlightenment. So what's the problem now? How do you explain our public school environment that looks more like war zones as opposed to learning zones? [00:16:35][79.9]

[00:16:38] How do you explain the hatred and the violence that is in this world today? How do you explain the fact that practically nobody makes it to marriage as a virgin anymore? How do you explain all of the moral darkness that we see in this country if we are, in fact an enlightened people? [00:16:56][18.3]

[00:16:58] Can I resurrect a verse from our recent Wednesday night study? Well, of course I can. Just try to stop me. I'm going read a verse to you that I read in our last Wednesday study, as we were talking about the plague of darkness in Egypt. John, chapter three, verse 19 says this: And this is the condemnation that the light has come into the world. And men (mankind) loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
[00:17:40][42.5]

[00:17:42] Now, folks, that's John 3:19. That's only three verses from John 3:16, probably hands down the most popular verse in all of the Bible. Let me read to you that block of scripture. Just just listen to these verses of scripture. John [00:18:01][18.9]

[00:18:01] Three, beginning at verse 16, I'm going to read down to verse 20. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. He sent the light. 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. Here's verse 19 again. And this is the condemnation that the light has come into the world. [00:18:45][44.4]

[00:18:46] And men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. [00:18:50][3.7]

[00:18:51] Verse 20. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. This answers a big question that we have when we consider the fact that Jesus came as the light of the world to take away sin. As Isaiah throws in with his prophecy there in Isaiah nine, to take away the gloom, the despair, the hopelessness, the depression, the darkness of this world, that light came. And yet here we are, less than two thousand years later and we find our world in the same condition. We look around and the world in general is in gloom, despair and hopelessness. How did we get back to there? How did the world come back to that place of darkness, if indeed, if in fact, the light has come, if Christ is the light? Well, there's your answer. The light has come and nothing changes that fact. But people will remain in darkness [00:19:56][65.4]

[00:19:58] because they're more comfortable with the darkness. The light hurts their eyes. The light exposes their deeds. [00:20:06][8.0]

[00:20:07] So that's why we are where we are now. There's no excuse for any person on this planet to be in spiritual darkness. And that's what we're talking about here, right? Spiritual darkness. The Bible defines spiritual darkness as spiritual ignorance, [00:20:23][16.3]

[00:20:26] sin, and spiritual gloom. And I'll maybe throw those scripture references at you later, but there's no reason for a person to be in spiritual darkness today. [00:20:40][13.5]

[00:20:42] After the coming of Christ, the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ and the ascension of Christ, and yet that's what we have and that's what we will have until the end. [00:20:51][9.4]

[00:20:53] Because people resist and reject that light. [00:20:56][3.1]

[00:20:58] Now, I don't know about you, but I love the date that was chosen for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. I love the fact that Christmas Day is on December 25th. [00:21:14][16.7]

[00:21:16] Don't look so shocked out there, all you unbelievers. Yes, we Christians know that Jesus was not born on December the 25th. We never said he was. We know that was a chosen date to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. We are not as dumb as you think we look. We know that it was a selected day. The reason it was selected was, well, if you rewind to the 4th century A.D., there were several holidays already being celebrated in that week of December 25th. Every year you had the winter solstice that was celebrated and you had a holiday called Saturnalia, which was celebrated from the 20th to the 25th. The 25th was that final day of the celebration of Saturnalia. And there in oh, I believe it was three thirty six (correct my memory, if you know better), I believe it was about three thirty six that Emperor Constantine decided to take those holidays that were already in place and christianize them in order to redeem them. And so that date of the 25th of December was selected; that final day of Saturnalia, that final day of the celebration of the winter solstice. [00:22:39][82.6]

[00:22:40] The reason I like that is because of what the winter solstice is. Do you realize what the winter solstice is? It is that week of every year where the length of darkness is at its longest and the length of daylight is at its shortest. It is the deepest, darkest part of winter. Now this year, the winter solstice falls on the 21st. That means when we get to the 21st (that's tomorrow), [00:23:12][31.9]

[00:23:15] that means that is the darkest day of the whole year. So there is more darkness tomorrow, tomorrow night, when you lay your head down to sleep at like 4:00 PM, that is the day of longest darkness all year long. It is the day of shortest light. So the most night and the least amount of day. But a cool thing happens on the days following that winter solstice, typically around the 25th of December. We make the turn. See, from June 20th, which is the opposite, that's the summer solstice, from June 20th this year, all the way to December 21st, every day we lose a little bit more light and plunge further into darkness. But when the winter solstice hits from December 21st, all the way back to June the 20th, with every day that passes, the light increases. So that's the mark of the turn, right? That's when we go from the most amount of darkness and start trending back upward in light, eventually coming to spring. Praise the Lord. And ultimately summer. Hallelujah. Camping. [00:24:41][86.2]

[00:24:44] Amen. So it's significant. [00:24:49][4.4]

[00:24:52] It is a perfect choice of dates to symbolize what took place on that first Christmas. Christ came when the world was at its what? Its darkest. And when Christ came as the light, [00:25:11][18.8]

[00:25:12] now, that didn't necessarily change a person's life instantaneously in that moment, but what it did was provide an ever increasing light in the hearts and lives of people so that they could trend not toward the darkness anymore, but toward the light. [00:25:28][16.2]

[00:25:33] If we had the actual date of Christmas, if we knew it, the actual date he was born, absolutely we'd pick that one. Yes, that's when we'd celebrate it. But since we don't know, I just think that this is perfect. What a symbol. What a perfect depiction of Jesus coming into the darkness of this world. So right now, that's where we are. We're in the depths of winter. Tomorrow is the crest of it. [00:26:01][28.3]

[00:26:04] How many of you ever get sad during the deep winter months, how many of you ever get sad around Christmas time and New Year's? [00:26:13][9.7]

[00:26:14] I mean, it seems like it would be a time for us to be happy and celebrating, but, [00:26:19][4.7]

[00:26:20] it's a season for the most depression, the most sadness. You know why that is? [00:26:26][5.4]

[00:26:26] You know what that's called when you get sad around December, the depths of winter and the holiday season, you know what that's called when you get sad during that time? It's called SAD (S.A.D.), seasonal affective disorder. That's what that's called. [00:26:45][19.0]

[00:26:46] And the reason that we get sad is because our bodies need to be absorbing [00:26:52][6.1]

[00:26:54] the photon energy of the sun. We need the sun. We need the sun to fall on our skin so that we can absorb the energy of the sun. We even need it for our eyeballs. We even need the sun to reach our eyeballs, to strengthen the rods and cones in the eyeballs and even supply the brain. We need the sun. And as the sun gets weaker and weaker and weaker heading into December the twenty first, [00:27:22][28.0]

[00:27:24] we get gloomier and gloomier and sadder and sadder. And you know what the cure is for SAD? It's light therapy. Light therapy is the cure for SAD. [00:27:36][12.2]

[00:27:38] And so because of that, they have these little UV lights that you can buy and set up at your desk while you're pecking away there at your computer in the wintertime. And that UV light is an artificial way to supply your body with the rays that it needs, with the spectrum of light that it needs, that you would ordinarily get naturally and normally from the sun in the spring and summertime, but can't get now because the sun has weakened to a state that is not adequate to feed your body with what you need. [00:28:08][30.0]

[00:28:09] You get the proper amount of sunshine. It's healthy for the body and even for the mood.

[00:28:15][5.9]

[00:28:17] It's even good for our emotions. So when you don't get the sun, when the sun weakens and becomes less efficient and adequate to feed the body, then you get gloom, you get depression. Now, spiritually, I think we find the same pattern, don't we? The cure for darkness is light. So when the world was at its darkest hour, the light came. You know, joy to the world, the Lord has come. From gloom and despair and darkness to this light and joy. And now we find that there is no reason for any single one of us to be in darkness any longer. [00:29:05][47.7]

[00:29:07] Those references, the Bible's definition of darkness, spiritual darkness, Ephesians 5:8; 1 Peter 2:9, Ephesians 6:12. You can write those down and read those later. But I just want to ask you, is that the state that you are living in today? Are you living in a state of spiritual darkness? Are you gloomy? Are you depressed? It may not just be physical and seasonal affective disorder, it could be SAD. [00:29:38][31.5]

[00:29:39] Spiritual affective disorder. Jesus said that... I've taken him up on this offer, [00:29:47][7.3]

[00:29:50] and that is why I don't live in a state of spiritual gloom or spiritual darkness. I live in a state of joy and rest in my heart and peace in my soul, because I've taken Jesus up on this offer that he gave to all of us in John 8:12. Jesus said these words to us, I am the light of the world. [00:30:09][19.1]

[00:30:11] He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. You won't walk in darkness, sin and wickedness, spiritual ignorance. You will walk in light, which is spiritual illumination, spiritual light. Purity of walk, moral excellence, joy and peace. So if you're in the dark today, [00:30:40][29.0]

[00:30:43] let me show you what you're missing out on. I want to take you back. To what our first scripture today has referenced, I'm going to take you back to Psalm 107 and I'm going to read, first of all, verses 10 and 11. And then what I'm going to do is I'm just going to poke around some of the other verses. And here's what I want to do. [00:31:02][19.6]

[00:31:04] If you're in the dark today, I want to show you why you're in the dark. I want to explain your condition to you, and then I want to show you what you're missing out on by deliberately choosing to stay in the dark, as opposed to coming to the light. Read with me, if you will, Psalm 107. Versus 10 and 11.

[00:31:29][24.6]

[00:31:31] It says those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death (right, that was the quote that Luke pulled out there, [00:31:38][7.3]

[00:31:39] well, actually, Zacharias in his prophecy), those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, bound in affliction and irons, Verse 11, because they rebelled against the words of God and despised the council of the most high. So let me start at the end of that and tell you why you are in the condition that you are in. If you have not come to Christ and known him as the light of your life, here is why you are in that condition. [00:32:14][34.9]

[00:32:15] It's because, as verse 11 has told us, you have rebelled against the words of God. [00:32:20][4.9]

[00:32:22] You have rejected the counsel of the most high. You have rejected the light of the world because he did not make sense to you. You were just sure that your way made more sense. You were just sure that you could listen to the impulses of your fleshly body and that surely that would lead you to satisfaction and fulfillment. Well, how has that worked out for you? [00:32:43][21.5]

[00:32:45] I don't even need to ask because I know the answer to that question. It has not worked out for you at all. A life that is hidden away from the light of Christ is a life that is in darkness. So here's your condition. Just picking around Psalm 107 a little bit. If you've rejected Christ as your savior, your condition looks something like this. You're unfulfilled. You're unsatisfied. You're unhappy. You're addicted and bound. In short, your SAD. Spiritual affective disorder. You have a spiritual condition of sadness. And the cure for spiritual affective disorder is light therapy. It's coming to the light. So, here's what you're missing out on if you're in the dark today. Same passage. Psalm 107. I'm going to poke around and pull some things out. Let me just do it like this. Here's what you're missing out on. Psalm 107:1. God's Goodness and mercy. Verse 2. Redemption. Verse 3. Being found. You're lost now. You have no clue what you're doing. That shows in your life. But though you're lost, you can be found (verse three). Verse 6. You're missing out on being heard by God. You can be calling out to the Lord in your times of trouble. [00:34:23][98.1]

[00:34:24] And he could be delivering you from all of your distresses. You're missing out on that. A God that listens to prayer and responds to prayer. Verse 7. You're missing out on being on the right path in life. [00:34:37][13.0]

[00:34:38] That's a path you cannot find without spiritual illumination. You need light. In Psalms, as David said, Lord, your word is a light unto my feet and a lamp unto my path. Or vice versa. A lamp unto my feet, pardon me. And a light unto my path. The word, Jesus. The word in the flesh. Our light. [00:34:59][20.2]

[00:35:00] Verse 9. You're missing out on the satisfaction of your soul's longings. This is the one that doesn't make sense. This is why you need spiritual light. You can't listen to the soul to fill the cravings and the longings of the soul. [00:35:15][14.6]

[00:35:16] The more you try to do that, the more empty you become. You try to fill it with relationships doesn't work. You go from one to the next. [00:35:24][8.3]

[00:35:25] You never can find that relationship that fulfills you. You think you might find it in a bottle. So you go through bottle after bottle and none of those bottles give it to you. No matter what your fleshly desires tell you to pursue in order to get rid of the darkness and find your joy, your peace, your fulfillment and satisfaction, it's never going to be the right thing because you're working from a base [00:35:48][23.0]

[00:35:50] of fallen flesh that has sinful tendencies. So Verse 9. [00:35:54][4.8]

[00:35:58] If you stay in the dark, you're missing out on the total satisfaction of your soul's longings. Verse 14. You're missing out on the breaking of every addiction, and every bondage in your life. The things that you cannot break free from without Christ, he will break from you. [00:36:15][17.2]

[00:36:16] You're missing out (Verse 16) on being set free from your prison. Verse 20. You're missing out on being healed. [00:36:25][8.5]

[00:36:25] Verse 27. You're missing out on the calming of your storms. Who doesn't like that one? Lord, I've been through way too many storms. I'm going through one now. And Lord, I need you to calm it. That's what you're missing out on. Verse 30. You're missing out on reaching the proper eternal destination. [00:36:43][18.0]

[00:36:46] Verse 32. [00:36:46][0.3]

[00:36:47] Maybe you don't care about this one, but I like this one. You're missing out on being a public worshiper with the fellowship. [00:36:52][4.8]

[00:36:54] Because you're in darkness. Because you choose your darkness. Because you don't want your darkness exposed by the light. Verse 42. You're missing out on the shutting up of your iniquity. That's where there's something inside of you when your fleshly desires try to rise up, that just says, would you shut up and leave this poor guy alone. Let him live for the Lord. Verse 43. Let's read verse 43 of Psalm 107. It says this. Whoever is wise will observe these things and they will understand the loving kindness of the Lord. So let me ask you today, are you ready to change your decision? For whatever reason you've been clinging to your darkness and loving your darkness, and it hasn't given you what you've been looking for. [00:37:43][49.1]

[00:37:45] Now you've read the chapter. [00:37:46][0.8]

[00:37:49] Pardon me, I should say, you read the verse in Psalm Chapter 107:43. [00:37:52][2.8]

[00:37:55] It says, if you'll learn these things, if you'll know these things, you'll come to the knowledge of the loving kindness of the Lord. We've shared with you all of the blessings and benefits that the light brings.

[00:38:07][12.5]

[00:38:08] I want to ask you, are you ready to change your decision? Are you ready to step out of your darkness? Are you ready for all of that to be broken so that you can walk in the light with Christ as your light? Would you do me a favor and would you bow your heads and close your eyes? Now, you all know how I do it here. I don't single anyone out and I don't embarrass anyone. But if there's anyone this morning that wants to make that decision to leave the darkness and everything that it holds completely behind and come to know Jesus this Christmas season as the light of your life, as the savior of your life, would you raise your hand? And I just need to see that hand for the sake of prayer. So that we know how to pray for you publicly. I won't ask you to do anything. I just want to see your hand, then you can put it down. Does anyone want to come to the light today? OK, raise your heads, open your eyeballs back up. I want to speak to the church now.

[00:39:21][72.9]

[00:39:21] I want to speak to the born again Christian as I close this out. Because if you sit here today as a born again Christian, I just want to remind you once again of what you should already very well know, and that is Christ is the light of the world. [00:39:38][17.0]

[00:39:40] But he did what? He ascended. Yeah, he left. [00:39:44][3.9]

[00:39:45] Man. [00:39:45][0.0]

[00:39:48] And he has passed that torch to you. [00:39:51][2.8]

[00:39:54] And John, chapter nine, verse five, Jesus said this, As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. He was a present light. In the flesh. But then in Matthew, Chapter five, Jesus said to the disciples, you, the church, are the light of the world. As long as I'm in the world, I am the light of the world. But I'm leaving.

[00:40:20][26.8]

[00:40:22] And you're going to be the light of the world. The church is how that light is going to be shown into the darkness of the world. In Acts, chapter 13, verse 47, it says this: For so the Lord has commanded us, I have set you as a light to the Gentiles that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth. That is now our role. That torch has been passed to us. It is not as though Jesus has ceased to be the light. It's just that he is not visible to the world, but we are. So that torch has been passed to us to be the light of the world. And I want to ask you this morning, Church, how is your light burning? [00:41:04][42.1]

[00:41:06] Are you a dimwit, I mean, pardon me, a dim light? Are you a dim light? Or are you brightly lit for Christ? Here's the amazing thing. If that bulb of the truth in you is a little dim, there's no reason to be feeling

condemnation over that. Because something amazing happens when you take dim little lights, collectively bring them together in one location, what happens? Those dimwits can produce some light. And that is the visual that we are going to see tonight for our candlelight service. That's why I want you to be here. If you've never been to a candlelight service, I encourage you to come tonight. I don't know. It just does something for me. It's the perfect visual for me as a light for Christ, the reflective light for Christ. I don't have that source innately ingrained into me. I am completely bankrupt of that. But I am a reflective light of the light of Christ. [00:42:20][74.3]

[00:42:22] And I can do so much with that light. But when I work together collectively with a church full of people that have that same light burning within them, that light that we can produce as a church is exponentially greater than what I could do on my own. [00:42:39][16.5]

[00:42:40] For example, it'd be tough to be preaching up here this morning if there was no one in the seats. [00:42:44][3.4]

[00:42:46] We need each other and tonight is going to be a perfect visual of what that looks like when we let the light of Christ shine in our lives, and then bring that together as a church. [00:42:56][10.6]

[00:42:57] One candle does not light up the front of this sanctuary. But come tonight and watch what happens when we all light up those candles. [00:43:08][11.4]

[00:43:09] The church needs to get lit. Not in the sense that the world would say it, but in the spiritual sense. So come tonight and see what that looks like. I'm sure it'll inspire you. It always inspires me. Would you stand? We're going to give one final call. Is there anyone this morning that is tired of the gloom, tired of the sadness, tired of the darkness and would like to step into the light? [00:43:33][24.0]

[00:43:33] Raise your hand. Show me. I invite you to come. Everything I read to you today is promised to you by the Lord if you'll just step into the light and receive him as savior. All right. If not church, I'm going to pray for your lights today. I'm going to pray for those flames in your heart. That the Lord might breathe some wind, the wind of the spirit, onto those flames this morning. Let's pray. [00:43:33][0.0]

[2422.5]