

Refuge City Church — December 18, 2022
The Light of the World
“Light of Salvation” Part 3 [2 Corinthians 4:5-7]

Review

- 2 weeks ago, we discussed the need to position ourselves to receive the proper light of Christ.
- Last week, we looked at who it is we are actually seeking in the face of God and His radiant presence.
- **TODAY:** We fill out the Trinity of Light, and look at how we need to depend on the Spirit's presence in us, to achieve the victory God wants us to have!

Introduction

- Why do we put Christmas lights up? Wrap our trees in lights? Light candles for advent?
- Ever go through the painstaking task of putting up lights, and half the line doesn't turn on??
 - Is it the glass shell's fault? Maybe no electricity is flowing. Maybe you punched a hole in the line with the staple gun? What if there's no gas in the lighter, or the candle wick is too short?
 - What do you do with a bulb that won't glow? Or a candle that won't burn?

Weapons check. Got your light?

- Let's start by looking at a great story of victory in Judges 7 [Gideon defeats the Midianites]
 - After the Lord made Gideon commander of the army...
 - Gideon's response to being called: “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.” And the Lord said to him, “But I will be with you...” [Judges 6:15-16]
 - He whittled his men down from 32,000 to 300! [When the Lord's in control, victory is assured, regardless of what we think we need]
 - God may use thousands upon thousands of people to help accomplish His will, but He'll also use what few are willing.
 - David vs. Goliath... Samson vs. Philistines... and now Gideon and his army of 300 vs. 135,000 Midianites!

Judges 7:9-21, [verse 9-11] “That same night the Lord said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand. But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant. And you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.” [summarize dream and interpretation; barley bread vs. tent]... [verse 15] As soon as Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, *he worshiped*. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, “Arise, for the Lord has given the host of Midian into your hand.” And he divided the 300 men into three companies and put trumpets into

the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars. And he said to them, "Look at me, and do likewise. When I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do. When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp and shout, 'For the Lord and for Gideon.'" So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch [midnight], when they had just set the watch. And they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands. Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars. They held in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow. And they cried out, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" Every man stood in his place around the camp, and all the army ran. They cried out and fled."

- After settling on 300 soldiers, God sent Gideon and his army against the Midianites.
- 3 companies of 100 soldiers surround 135,000 soldiers, each with a trumpet, jar, and torch.
- At the proper time, all they needed to do was sound the trumpet, break the jar, and reveal the light... and God would do the rest!
 - This is about obedience & faith when we have fear of the unknown and/or the outcome of uncertain future circumstances.
 - Allow God to encourage you by His promises of future glory, and in the example of Gideon, worship Him *prior* to the outcome!
- **QUOTE:** "God must bring His servant to a moment when all human confidence is stripped away, he sits silently in humble adoration of his God as the One who is totally sufficient against all odds to accomplish His divine will. Then and only then is he ready to move forward to taste God's victory, though that victory is no more secure or certain than before." [J. Paul Tanner]
- **QUESTION:** What are you battling today, that the light & presence of God can *not* overcome?
 - Every day we step into the battlefield. Take with you the essentials of what you need. Nothing more. [Ephesians 6]
 - Belt of truth = Who is the truth? Jesus
 - Breastplate of righteousness = Only those redeemed by the blood of Jesus
 - Shoes, gospel of peace = peace that only Jesus can give.
 - Shield of faith, in Jesus, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one
 - Helmet of salvation = gift of God, through his Son Jesus
 - Sword of the Spirit = the word of God, which is Jesus.

Remain Ready & Waiting [Matthew 25:1-13]

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying,

'Lord, Lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

- We are the bride, and Christ is the groom.
 - In that day, there were multiple aspects to the marriage ceremony.
 - In this case, the bride and groom have already been betrothed to be married, the wedding has taken place, and now the groom will return to the bride's house to bring her to his house for a wedding feast.
- 5 of the virgins represent 'wise believers', and the other 5 represent 'foolish believers' or 'unbelievers'.
 - The 5 wise ones knew that the groom was coming soon, and would remain as ready as possible for his return.
 - The oil for their lamp can symbolize the Holy Spirit.
 - The 5 foolish ones did not bring what they needed for preparation.
 - **KEY:** it's not that they necessarily fell asleep. But that when the time came, they didn't have what they needed to find their way in the darkness.
 - The light of Christ and the Holy Spirit to guide them.
- We are not guaranteed anything in this world, except what God promises us.
 - In this case, Jesus *is* returning. But it's not for us to know when. Rather, be prepared, watchful, alert, and ready.
 - **Ephesians 5:18**, "...be filled with the Spirit,"
- **QUOTE:** "The church has known for 2,000 years that Jesus is coming again, and yet many believers have become lethargic and drowsy. They are no longer excited about the soon-coming of the Lord... the church should be holding forth the word of life in this dark and wicked world." [Warren Wiersbe]
 - **Psalms 119:105, 130**, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path... The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple."
 - **Revelation 3:11**, "I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown."
- **QUESTION:** What do you do in order to keep the fire burning? Think through this past year. What changes can you make now in preparation for the upcoming New Year?

The value of what's inside

- **2 Corinthians 4:5-7**, "For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."
- Our value is determined by what's inside [the light of the gospel & the wisdom of God]
 - **Matthew 13:44**, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
 - Here we see the beauty of Christ's love for us.
 - The field is the world, and we are the hidden treasure.

- Jesus purchased the whole world, what he found valuable, through His sacrifice on the cross.
 - **1 Corinthians 6:20/7:23**, “for you were bought with a price.”
- We are the subjects of God’s kingdom. God sent his Son into the world to purchase our lives through His atoning sacrifice.
- Without Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, we have no hope of forgiveness and salvation. He purchased our life through the shedding of His blood.
- We need to accept His free gift of salvation. His purchase. Our reward.
- **Matthew 13:45-46**, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”
- Yet, we are to sacrifice a great deal in humble submission to Christ’s lordship over our life.
 - It costs us everything we thought had value in this world to surrender to the glorious riches of Heaven.
 - **Matthew 6:21**, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” [“But we have this treasure in jars of clay”]
- This is why the Apostle Paul charged Timothy with these words:
 - **2 Timothy 1:6-7, 14**, “For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, *which is in you* through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control... By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.”
 - How was the Holy Spirit visually present when he filled the disciples in Acts 2? *The enveloping sound of wind from heaven and flames of fire.*
 - **QUOTE:** “General Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, once sent this message to those under him: ‘The tendency of fire is to go out; watch the fire on the altar of your heart.’ Anyone who has tended a fireplace fire knows that it needs to be stirred up occasionally.” [Ralph Earle]

Conclusion

1. *Be battle ready* to step on the battlefield with the light of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit in you.
2. *Remain ready.* Like the solar light, place yourself in the presence of Jesus every day, so that your light/flame is ready to burn at any given moment in this dark world.
3. *Understand the importance [value] of how God sees you*, right here, right now.
 - He loves you so much He purchased you with the blood of His Son, AND places His Spirit in you.
 - **2 Corinthians 4:5-7**, “For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.”
 - **John 1:3-5**, “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”
 - **Matthew 5:14-16**, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 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.”