**LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE**

by

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Scripture – I John 1:1-2:2

Science has taught us a lot about light:

-Light travels at an incredible speed: 186,291 miles per second. When we look at a star, the light we see was emitted thousands of years before we see it. It takes that long to reach earth traveling at the speed of light.

-Light is a form of electromagnetic radiation.

-The light we see with our eyes is only a small part of the whole spectrum of light. The part we see is called visible light. Other areas of the light spectrum include infrared and ultraviolet.

-Ultraviolet light causes tanning, sun burning and skin cancer.

-Different wavelengths of light gives off different colors including red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet. The presence of all colors of light gives off white light and the absence of all color is seen as black.

There are at least 65 references to light in the Bible. About half in the Old Testament and half in the New Testament.

Many of them are very familiar to us.

From the Old Testament comes Gen 1:3 which says "And God said, let there be light. And there was light. God saw that the light was good and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day" and the darkness he called "night". And there was evening and there was morning, the first day."

Immediately, the First Day, there is a separation of light from darkness. Immediately we are told in the Scriptures the importance of this separation by God's actions. Light and darkness have not coexisted from the very beginning.

God is associated with the light. During the journeys of the Hebrews out of Egypt to the Promised Land, God leads them at night with a pillar of fire. Exodus 13:20-22 says "After leaving Succoth they [the Hebrews] camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. By day the Lord went ahead of them in pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people."

Notice the text says the Pillar of Fire did not leave its place in front of the people. **God has always been in front of God’s people.**  The Creator has always and will always be there for you and me. If we open our eyes, we will see God and let God’s light lead us. When we fall, it is not because God’s light has not been there for us but instead it has been because we have closed our eyes to it and have not perceived it. Instead, we have decided we preferred the darkness. Notice the importance of our eyes in perceiving God's light. Remember that for we will come to that again when Jesus talks about our bodies being a lamp of light.

Then in the New Testament, we also have these familiar words found in-John 1:4-9 which says "In him [Jesus] was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all persons 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 person was coming into the world."

John the Baptist was the one, according to the Scriptures, who came to witness concerning the "light" of humankind, Jesus Christ. Jesus was the true light of humankind. He was the Promised One of God and expressed God's true nature. He came so that all humankind could see God's light in a clearer way. So, humankind could understand God's love and be led by God’s light. As with the pillar of fire for the Hebrews on their journey to the Promised Land, God sent the True light, Jesus Christ, to lead us to the promised place that Jesus went to prepare for us in heaven. If we keep Jesus in front of us, we will then be led by the true light of God to life eternal.

In our text today in I John 1:5-7 we are told, "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in God, there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with God yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, the Christ, purifies us from all sin."

If we claim to have Jesus in our lives and do not walk a life that is in the light, then we deceive ourselves and are truly walking in darkness. For darkness is the absence of God's light. Remember the colors of light that science has taught us. All colors of the spectrum are white representing the presence of Jesus purity. But the absence of all spectrums of light is black representative of the darkness of Satan and absence of God's light. If we truly are walking in Jesus’ light, we will fellowship with one another and love our neighbor as ourselves. If we do not love our neighbor, all people regardless of gender expression, nationality, station in life, or creed, we are not truly walking in the light.

Our text in I John 1:5-7 says, “This is the message we have heard from Jesus and proclaim to you, that God is light and in God there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with God while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, the Christ, cleanses us from all sin.”

**If we then walk in the light then God's light in us will shine to others**. They will know God through our works.

Another well-known light Scripture is from Luke 11:33-36. It says "No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead, he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. See to it then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you."

Jesus is saying in Luke 11 that our eyes are the lamp of our bodies. He says through our eyes God's light can be seen. I remember being told as a child that one's eyes are the way to a person's soul. If someone were to look into our eyes, would they see God's light and Jesus? Or would they see a person who is confused and consumed with the burdens of the world?

As Christians we need to be constantly looking at ourselves in the mirror. We need to be evaluating where we are in our Christian walk and in what areas we are weak so we can seek God's help in improving.

Some questions to ponder:

-How bright does our light shine?

-When was the last time a non-Christian asked any of us where we went to church?

-Can people tell we are a Christian by our life without us telling them verbally?

-If we were brought before a judge and accused of being a Christian, is there enough evidence to convict us?

-Does our light shine brightly enough that others can see it or is it just a flicker and can't really be seen?

Jesus is God's true light. Jesus died for our sins and when we accept Him as our Savior, He puts his seal on us, that is, He puts the Holy Spirit in us. That Holy Spirit is His light. As God's people and messengers to the world, we need to let our light shine:

-We need to lovingly serve people in Jesus’ Name.

-We need to lovingly look upon people with Jesus’ love in our eyes.

I remember an incident in my life that occurred when I was evaluating whether I was going to go into ministry. I was in a Chinese Restaurant with friends. We had been seated and were waiting for the waiter to come and take our drink order before we went to the line to get our food. The buffet was over against the far wall. As I looked at the buffet a strange thing happened. God let me see the people in the line as God sees them. In other words, I felt each of their burdens and fears. I became overwhelmed with their pain and started to cry. My friends asked me if I was okay and I said yes as I didn’t think they would understand what I had just experienced. Only when we see people as God sees them will be able to reach out to them with the love of Jesus.

-We need to not hide that light God gave us under a bowl or basket. Let us this day go forth boldly and let God's light shine from within us.

Thank you, Jesus, for saving us and putting your light within us! Help us to let that light shine within us so that others may see it and come to know you through us.

In Jesus Name. Amen.