

12-9-07 – Jesus Brings Light to a World in Darkness
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene
Advent Transformation Series
John 1:1-14

This advent season we are doing a series on transformation – the transforming power of God through Jesus Christ whose birth we celebrate at Christmas.

Pastor Jerry introduced the series by speaking about The Wonder of Christmas. He introduced us to the three aspects of Jesus transforming power that we will be looking at over the remainder of the Advent Sundays. He mentioned that Jesus Brings: Light to a World of Darkness; Love to a World of Hatred; and Life to a World of Death.

Today I want to address the first aspect of our transformation series – Jesus Brings Light into a World of Darkness and we will be looking at John's Gospel as our text – pretty much the same text as last week, but from the NIV for a little mix in the wording.

READ: John 1:1-14

Light and darkness are very significant terms with a lot of symbolism in Scripture. I'd like to look at both the Old Testament and the New Testament and the significance of Light and Darkness. First of all we know that these are natural phenomena associated with day and night, which was established by God in the beginning of creation. The first thing God spoke into existence and established for us was light – Let there be light! Before that, there was only darkness and the turbulent sea – chaos and the dread of darkness. God brings order to the chaos by first creating light. God saw that Light was good and then separated the light from the darkness. If light was good, then we can deduce that darkness was not so good to God from the beginning. This separation of light from darkness remains forever and will eventually be permanent as we will see later.

Let's look at darkness in the Old Testament – sign of judgment and distress:

Darkness was a plague from God:

Ex 10:21-23 - *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt--darkness that can be felt." So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. No one could see anyone else or leave his place for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.*

Darkness was a sign of God's displeasure:

1 Sam 2:9 - *He will guard the feet of his saints, but the wicked will be silenced in darkness.*

Darkness was set for the Day of the Lord – a final tribulation judgment:

Joel 2:1-2 - *Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand - a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness.*

Before there was light, God was OK with darkness. Darkness is only negative to humanity who has been given light. The Psalmist declared:

Ps 139:11-12 - *If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.*

God intervenes for His people he created – to do something about the darkness...

Is. 9:2 – I read this for our Advent candle lighting - *The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*

Ps 18:28 - *You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.*

Now let's look at Light in the Old Testament -

God created the sun and moon and stars to give light to the earth, so we wouldn't be without light, because light is good and darkness is not.

Gen 1:14-16 - *And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so.*

God introduces Himself as Light that we need...

Ps 27:1 - *The LORD is my light and my salvation--whom shall I fear?*

We are commanded in the O.T. to walk in His light – just like Jesus commanded in N.T.

Isa 2:5 - *Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD.*

It is God who is our true light and in whom we are to function...

Isa 60:19 - *The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.*

Darkness and Light in Greek Thought –

As we move into the New Testament time period, we recognize the Greek cultural influence in all that is written and conveyed.

Darkness is associated with ignorance, with doing sinful things, and with humankind's fear of death – death was the realm of darkness.

Light is life and anything opposite of darkness. - Happiness.

Sunlight and good and healing – illumination of one's thoughts.

Scripture tells us that God is Lord of both darkness and the light.

Darkness in the New Testament – moral symbolism – sin – sinful acts – sinful lifestyles

Believers are to put aside the “deeds of darkness” (Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:11).

(1 Thess. 5:5) – we do not “belong to the night or to the darkness”

Darkness to us (those who have been enlightened) – is an evil power (Col. 1:13).

We once wrestled with the inner evil and turned away from God's light – to embrace darkness rather than light (John 3:19).

There is only one hope for those in the grip of darkness (evil) – the Light provided by Jesus (Jn. 1:5) – Only He can release us from the power of the darkness of sin (Jn. 8:12).

1 Peter 2:9 - *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Light in the New Testament – holiness, illumination, (characterizes Jesus)

- Jesus is the light of the world (Jn. 8:12)
- He is the Light that shines in the darkness, bringing life (Jn. 1:4-5)
- Only through Jesus can people recognize their lost state, come to God (Jn. 14:1, 2 Cor. 4:4), and find their way to a righteous life (Eph. 5:8,9).
- Believers who respond to Jesus are “rescued” from the realm of darkness to become children of the Light (Eph. 5:8).
- We share a place in God’s kingdom of light (Col. 1:12)
- We are even lights in this dark world to others (Mt. 5:14-16)

Scriptures that give a theological perspective to light and darkness:

Eph 5:8-11 - *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.*

If we have been transformed from darkness into light, we are expected to live as “children of the light.” Paul tells us we are to find out what pleases the Lord. How can we do that? Study His Word – God speaking to us – and pray. We have a responsibility in all this too. We are to walk as children of the light, find out what pleases the Lord and have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness.

1 John 1:5-7 - *This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by 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, purifies us from all sin.*

We are to walk in God’s light – the light that Jesus brought into the world. If we are in Christ, we have been transformed from a perspective of darkness to light. His light illuminates us into the Truth. The Truth is that we are not perfect yet, so we need forgiveness all the time. We walk in Truth – now knowing when we blow it and then come to God for cleansing and forgiveness – in confession and repentance – provided by the blood of Jesus who came to give his life for this very purpose.

John 1:4,5,9 - *In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it...*

9 *The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*

His Name is JESUS – He came just like predicted – sent by God and He brings light into this world of the darkness of sin and death. He is our hope – He is our Savior – He is Emmanuel (God with us), and He came that you might have the light of life.

Jesus is the true light – His coming in to the world puts all creation in perspective.

Through Jesus:

Our mind (soul) is transformed - enlightened, so we can know who God is

Our spirit is transformed, so we can walk in light rather than darkness.

Our body is transformed, so we no longer fear the darkness of death, but rather live in the hope of the resurrection and life eternal.

John 3:19-21 - *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.*

Even though God sent the remedy in the person of Jesus Christ, humanity continues to move into darkness (by choice). Human sinfulness is demonstrated by a love of darkness rather than light. This is the verdict – or judgment – like in court. Everyone who does evil hates the light. Light exposes sin. Only those who trust in Jesus will be saved or not condemned with those in darkness.

John 8:12 - *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."*

Only through Jesus, the light of the world, can people be transformed from the darkness of death to the light of life – eternal life – heaven – eternity in the presence of God.

2 Cor 4:4,6 - *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God... 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

Satan – the prince of darkness – blinds the spiritual eyes of the lost so they cannot see the light of the gospel of Christ. They don't recognize Jesus for who He really is. God has to declare and is declaring to the hearts of humanity – as in the beginning of creation – “Let light shine out of darkness” – “Let there be light.” It is only then that “the light will go on” for an individual so that they may believe this Jesus whose birth we celebrate every Christmas.

You don't have to remain in darkness. Jesus can transform your life. Christ came to bring light to a world in darkness. You can choose today to walk as children of the light.

Everyone may experience this realization in different ways. God touches us personally when he declare to us – Let there be light and we realize we are really in darkness and need the light of Christ. Gene Tarver is going to come now and share his testimony of how Jesus transformed him from darkness to light – then I will come to close our service.

Gene Tarver – personal testimony.

Rev. 21: 22-27 - God's original intent in creation was to be our light where we would live in constant unhindered fellowship and relationship with Him. It will one day return back to God's desired environment as recorded in the Revelation. However, only those who have been transformed by the light of Christ will given access to the Kingdom of God – heaven.