

RUSH 2010
“The Jesus I Thought I Knew”
Part 4 – Sunday AM
“I AM the Light of the World”

Pastor Mike Penninga

Scripture Reading:

- Room dark
- Four people walk down back four aisles carrying lit candles
- Light candles at the front
- Read scriptures (8 total)
- They sit down, lights come up, Mike’s message

Intro:

- **John 8:12 (NIV)** “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
- There is power in the spoken word of Scripture.
- And what a great introduction to what we’re going to be unpacking today.

Light of the World – 2 Questions:

- This morning, we’re looking at Jesus’ claim to be the light of the world.
- Let’s stop for a moment and invite God to illuminate His word by His spirit in our lives.

Pray:

Afraid of the Dark:

- How many of you are afraid of the dark?
- I would put myself in that category.
- Growing up, baby-sitting, I would go around and turn on all the lights in the darkened, quiet house.

- I don't like walking through the dark, empty church. . . people jump out and scare me.
- Don't use that information for your advantage, there is no need to scare the pastor.

Mira – Darkness:

- Just this week, Mira woke up in the middle of the night and said
- “Dad, I am scared of the dark. I don't like the dark.”
- So I asked her what she preferred.
- Dad, I like the light in the morning.
- I do too.
- I like the light in the morning.
- I like long summer days.
- I like light.
- It affects my mood.
- It makes me feel happy!
- I think I'm normal.
- I think our human nature is drawn to light.
- Light feels good.

I AM Light

- Jesus looks at me and says, “Mike, I AM light of the world.”
- Of all the “I AM” statements of Jesus, this is the one that burned most deeply into John's mind.
- This idea of light played a big part in his writing.
- Of the 72 times that “phos”, the Greek word for “light” is found in the New Testament, just about half, 33 of them, are found in John's gospel.
- John uses “light” to describe the work of Jesus 16 times.
- And this idea that Jesus is the light of the world is spelled out specifically in three places, *John 8:12, 9:5, and 12:46.*

Bibles – John 8

- Invite you to open your Bibles to John 8 with me
- As you're turning there, want to give a bit of context to where we're at in this text.
- Jesus is again going head to head with the Pharisees, the religious leaders, over his claims to be the bread of life, the way, truth and the life, the resurrection and the life.
- Notice in each phrase, Jesus is claiming to be "life".
- *Let's read John 8:12-20.*

Temple – Candles:

- That last verse is very interesting, because it tells us where this took place.
- Jesus was speaking in the part of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem where the offerings were put, and where they always had candles burning.
- These candles symbolized the pillar of fire that led the people of Israel through the desert, from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land.
- They reminded people of God's presence, protection, and guidance in the pillar of fire.
- And now, Jesus stands beneath them and says so boldly, "You appreciate light so much? Well, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Light in our Lives:

- So why is that such a big statement?
- Because of the role light plays in our lives.
- Jesus is taking the very essence of life, bread, water, light, and saying their ultimate source, their ultimate fulfillment, is found in him.
- Now those would be very strange things to say if he was just a good man, as many people believe, or just a good teacher, or a prophet.

- If I stood before you today and said “I am the bread of life. . . he who comes to me will never be hungry.”
- “If anyone is thirsty, come to me and drink, and streams of living water will spill out from within you.”
- “I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness.”
- If I stood here today and said those things, you better run.
- Because I have no authority to say those things.
- I am just like you.

Liar / Lunatic / Lord:

- So why are people okay hearing Jesus say those things, and yet continuing to hold him as just a good teacher, or someone with wisdom.
- As C.S. Lewis said, either Jesus was a liar, a lunatic, or lord.
- Either he knew he was not telling the truth about these things, which makes him a liar, or he thought he was telling the truth but was deluded, which makes him a lunatic, or in fact, he was who he said he was, the light of the world, the bread of life.
- Those are questions you need to wrestle with in your own faith journey.
- You can’t just accept Jesus as a wise guy. . . he either is the savior of the world or a fraud.

Light in Scripture:

- Let’s come back to this image of light.
- The concept of light plays a big part in scripture from the very first chapter of Genesis to the very last chapter of Revelation.

Genesis 1:1-4 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 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. ³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and

there was morning—the first day.

Fast forward to *Revelation 22:5*, a picture of heaven, life with Christ; “There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

- What an incredible picture!
- What does light look like, light without sun or lamps?
- John 1 answers that for us.

- Flip back there in your Bible’s with me. . . this is key.

John 1:1-9 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. ⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

Jesus – God:

- Jesus Christ is not just a good teacher.
- He was with God in the beginning. He was God.
- He is the creator of life.
- And His life brings light to all who were created.

- When Jesus said “I Am the Light of the World, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness”, his audience that day, the Pharisees, knew what he was claiming.
- It was for these kind of statements that they wanted to arrest him, and for which they eventually killed him.

Feedback – Light’s Purpose

- Let’s unpack the metaphor of “light” a little bit.
- I’d like to get your feedback on this. . . . verbal feedback.
- What does light do?
- What is the purpose of light?
- What are the benefits of light?

Feedback

- Couple of key things I thought of.

Beacon – Attracts:

- First – light acts as a Beacon that Attracts
- I remember that great movie, “Bug’s Life” (show photo) where two mosquitoes are flying near a bug zapper. .. one starts flying towards it, as if in a trance.
- The other is like, “Harry, no! Don’t look at the light!
- He’s like “I can’t help it. . it’s so beautiful”
- And then you hear the zap.
- Light attracts attention.
- It’s hard to ignore.

Laser Lights:

- As a speaker, I became frustrated with these little contraptions.
- Laser lights. (*show example*)
- Kids would shine them on the wall behind me, or even on my face.
- And despite the fact the light is so small, you would watch every eye following it.

Burning Bush:

- It was the light of the burning bush which attracted Moses’ attention and brought him to that pivotal encounter with I AM, God.

- Watch yourself, and others, around a campfire this summer.
- There is a mesmerizing feature of light and fire that draws our attention.

Light Guides & Directs:

- Second – light acts as a Guide that Directs us.
- A couple years back, Michelle and I did a trip down the Oregon coast, and stopped in at several of these beautiful light houses. (show photo)
- The main function of a lighthouse was to help guide ships through treacherous waters.
- It helped them get their bearings when they got lost in the fog.

Star / Pillar

- In the Bible, we see the light of a star used to guide the wise men to the place where Jesus had been born.
- The pillar of fire guided the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt into the promised land.

Jesus' Meaning:

- So when Jesus said “I am the light of the world”, he was saying “I am here as a beacon pointing to God. . . I am here as a guide directing your path.”
- “whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Appealing?

- Sounds pretty appealing, doesn't it?
- I mean. . .it isn't fun to walk in darkness, is it?

Confession:

- I have a confession to make.
- Even though I know Jesus offers light, sometimes I like to live in darkness.
- Think about it.

- Why is it when we sin, we tend to sin in the dark?
Because we think what we do is not being seen.

John 3:

- That's what John 3 speaks about.
- Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a religious leader, who has become intrigued by Jesus, and has come to meet him "under the cover of darkness, at night" it says.

John 3:16-21 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ 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."

Light Exposes:

- Light attracts and light guides, but light also exposes, and sometimes, we don't want to be in the light because we don't like what the light exposes in our lives.
- A great writer and preacher, *Frederick Buechner*, once said "If there is a terror about darkness because we cannot see, there is also a terror about light because we can see. There is a terror about light because much of what we see in the light about ourselves and about our world we would rather not see."

Punished in the Light:

- Maybe part of our problem is that we think Jesus is trying to shine light on our lives so that he can expose us for our junk and then punish us.
- Maybe we have a wrong idea of what Jesus is about.

Gardom Lake – Mission Impossible:

- I remember when I hid from the light.
- I was a camper at Gardom Lake Bible Camp near Enderby, and we were playing the popular night game “Mission Impossible”.
- The goal of this game, which is played in the pitch black of night, is to make it to a big box without being caught by snipers, who walk around with flashlights, and ultimately the main dude on the box, who has this mega watt powerful light.
- The rules were he had to turn it off every few seconds, and it was then that we made our move.
- But when the light was on, we stayed still.
- We didn’t want to get caught.
- Some people even wore camouflage clothing and make-up.
- Because we knew if the light caught us, we were in trouble.
- We had to go back to the start.

Hand Slapped:

- Maybe that’s how we approach this verse where Jesus says “I am the light of the world. He who follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
- We try to avoid the light because we don’t want our hand slapped.
- We don’t want to be exposed for who we really are.

Better Way:

- Friends. We don’t have a God who is waiting to smack us for the wrongs in our lives.
- We have a God who wants to show us a better way.

- We have a God who has moved heaven and earth to move us from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, because He knows that's what we are made for.

Ephesians 5:8-14 ⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for it is light that makes everything visible

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."

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. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷ 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."

- Darkness hides
- Light illuminates
- Sin lives in darkness
- Christ works in the light

Can't Stay in Darkness:

- We can't stay in darkness.
- It isn't what we're made for.
- There is healing and wholeness in the light.
- There is forgiveness in the light.
- There is restoration in the light.

Shine Bright:

- And there is a benefit to others when we choose to live in the light.
- Because Jesus says you and I are to not only choose light for ourselves, but to shine bright in the world around us.

Matthew 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Not the Source – Reflectors:

- We are not the source of light.
- But we are reflectors of it, like the moon reflects the sun.
- Jesus has chosen to reflect his light through us, his followers, to the world around us.

Austrian Mirrors:

- I heard a cool story about a town in Austria which was located on the backside of the massive mountain.
- For four months every year, November to February, the city received absolutely no sun.
- But new technology is changing that.
- For just 2.4 million dollars, the government is installing 30 massive mirrors (show picture) on the mountainside.
- These mirrors will grab light and shine it into the town.
- That’s what God wants to use us for.
- He wants us to live in the light, and to reflect it into the lives of those around us.

Been In The Light – Impression:

- The great thing is, when you have been in the light, people around you can tell.
- You know when you say to somebody, “Man, you’ve been outside this week, haven’t you?”
- And they say, “Yes, I have.”
- How can you tell?
- Because their skin reflects it.
- They are burned, or tanned.
- Light has left an impression on them.

Moses – Glowed:

- In the same way, when you have been with the son (pardon the pun), people notice it.
- Moses, after being with God on the mountainside, was glowing so brightly that the people couldn’t look at him, he had to cover his face with a veil.
- I don’t know about you, but I love being around people who glow.
- I want to be a person who glows.
- Because when we glow, we attract attention for the one who causes us to glow.

Discover Your Source?

- Question – do you live your life in such a way that when people see you, they are intrigued that they want to discover your source?
- That’s what light does. . . it draws people to its source.
- Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will not be drawn to you, but will praise your heavenly father.

Reflectors of Light:

- You and I are reflectors of the light, like the moon is a reflector of the sun.
- But as reflectors, we shine, and Jesus says “Shine bright!”

Philippians 2:15 (NLT) “You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of crooked and perverse people. *Let your lives shine brightly before them.*”

World Needs Light:

- We live in a dark world that is desperately in need of true light.
- And it’s not about them finding and admiring us.
- It’s about them seeing something in us that points them to Jesus.

Difference in the Darkness:

- I like what Haddon Robinson says about this.
- “Jesus did not call us to be magnificent chandeliers for people to admire. He called us to be a single bulb in a back hall to keep people from breaking their necks when they go to the bathroom in the middle of the night. He called us to make a difference in the darkness.” Haddon Robinson.

Shine for All to See:

- Jesus says we are to be lights glowing for all to see.
- Our lives are to be a constant testimony of His light in us.
- We are not meant to cover this light.
- The world needs it, especially the dark places!

Your Dark Places:

- And some of you are living in dark places here where God’s light needs to be seen.
- Your workplace, classroom, neighborhood, family.
- One of the greatest things about light is it makes the biggest difference in the darkest places.
- If I turned another light on here, it would be nice, but we wouldn’t notice a huge difference.
- But if this place was pitch black, one light makes a big difference.

How to Shine?

- So how do we let our light shine?
- Jesus says in verse 16 “let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”
- The life of a shining Christ-follower is meant to be a life of good deeds.
- A life of service
- Love in action
- Compassion & Caring

Good Deeds Draw People:

- Because that is what will draw people to Christ.
- It is as his disciples, us Christ-followers, take seriously the call to shine our lives in the darkness, to let our lives be lived as lives of goodness, that people will see us and be drawn to Him.

Against vs. For:

- Why is it Christians are known more for what they’re against than for what they’re for?
- Why is it Christians are quick to picket, but slow to serve?
- Why is it Christians are quick to condemn but slow to offer a helping hand?
- Without good works, our gospel loses its credibility and our God his honor.

Impact on Okanagan:

- What does that mean for us living here in the Okanagan?
- No matter how dark it is, you are called to shine bright.
- You are called to live lives of good deeds, in service of the king.
- You are called to reflect the light of the world into a world of darkness.
- And you can only do that as you come close to the light.
- You only reflect that which you are near.

Response:

- As we close this weekend, some of you need to bring your lives back in step with the light of the world.
- Invite you to do that in these coming moments.
- Others need to move away from a “survivor” mindset to an “influencer” one.
- As a symbolic representation of that, I’m going to invite you to leave your seats, to come to the front, and grab one of these tea-lights.
- Light it, and then stand somewhere in this room, and offer your life to be used by God.
- And as you stand, look at the impact light has on a room, and imagine what that might look like in your city, your community, your school, your workplace, your neighborhood, your family.

My Passion:

- I don’t know about you, but I want to be a beacon of light that attracts people to Christ.
- I want to be a mirror that reflects Christ’s light into dark places.
- I want to choose light, and to shine it bright.
- Is that your desire as well?
- I hope and pray it is.

Conclusion:

- I’m going to ask we turn the lights off now.
- The team are going to sing one last song, “Go Light Your World” by Chris Rice
- As they do, invite you to leave your seats, and come get a candle.
- Represent the light we take with us.
- When you have your candle, just find a place to stand.
- We’ll see the power of multiple lights shining bright.

Pray.

Benediction:

Matthew 5:14-16 (NLT) ““You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”

“I AM the Light of the World”

Personal Reflection Notes

Making It Personal:

- Why is the imagery of light so captivating?
- What is it about darkness that frightens people?
- Why do people commit crimes and evil acts under the cover of darkness?
- Despite the power & draw of light, why do people choose darkness?
- In what ways is Jesus “the” light of the world?
- How has Jesus become the light in your personal world?
- What type of darkness did he rescue you from?
- What does it mean to walk in the light? (1 John 1:5-7, Revelation 21:22-7)
- In what ways, have you chosen to be in the light vs. darkness?
- What does it mean to let your light shine? (Matthew 5:14-16)
- Chew on this quote by C.S. Lewis. What is he really saying? “I believe in Christianity as I believe the Sun has risen, not only because I see it but because by it I see everything else.”

Digging Deeper:

- What do these passages teach us about the power of light and the importance of living in the light?
 - 1 John 1:5-7
 - Psalm 119:105
 - Luke 2:28-32
 - Romans 13:11-13
 - Philippians 2:14-16

Living it Out:

1. What practical steps can you take this week to walk in the light?
2. What areas of darkness in your own life do you need to bring into the light of Christ?
3. What dark places do you know that need Christ’s light to shine bright in?

1 John 1:5-7 “This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. ⁶ So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. ⁷ But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.”

Psalm 119:105 “Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.”

Luke 2:30-32 “I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!”

Matthew 5:14-16

You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

Revelation 21:22-24

I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. ²⁴ The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the world will enter the city in all their glory.

Philippians 2:14-16

Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. ¹⁶ Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ’s return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless.