

Boot Camp 4 the Soul: Redefined - Seeing The Light

Today we are going to talk about light and we want to redefine this from a physical meaning to a spiritual meaning. Let's not look at it as something that illuminates a room. For example:

An elderly man named John went to his annual checkup. The doctor asked him if he was still getting up in the middle of the night and going to the bathroom. He replied, "Yes But the lord has made it much better for me, He turns on the light when I go and He turns off the light when I am done". The doctor replied, "Really"!!!

The doctor waited about an hour and called John's wife and said: He looks fine. But he said that the Lord is making it better for him, when he gets up and goes to the bathroom during the night. The Lord turns on and off the light. She replied, "that old man, he has been going to the bathroom in the refrigerator again".

The light we want to talk about is spiritual light. Light is a common metaphor in the Bible. [Proverbs 4:18](#) symbolizes righteousness as the "morning sun." [Philippians 2:15](#) compares God's children who are "blameless and pure" to shining stars in the sky. Jesus used light as a picture of good works: "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds" ([Matthew 5:16](#)).

The fact that God is light sets up a natural contrast with darkness. If light is a metaphor for righteousness and goodness, then darkness signifies evil and sin. [First John 1:6](#) says that "if we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth."

Verse 5 says, "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all." Note that we are not told that God is a light but that God is light. Light is part of God's essence, as is love ([1 John 4:8](#)).

If we do not have the light, we do not know God. Those who know God, who walk with God, are of the light and walk in the light. God is light, and so is God's Son. Jesus said, "I am the [light of the world](#). Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" ([John 8:12](#)).

Light exposes that which is hidden in darkness; it shows things as they really are. Light not only saves but it reveals the truth.

Here we are in John 9. If we understand John to be happening chronologically, the following things have already happened: The calling of the disciples, the wedding at Cana, Nicodemus visiting Jesus at night, Jesus meeting the woman at the well in Samaria, Jesus feeding the 5,000, Jesus walking on water, Jesus dealing with the situation involving the woman who was accused of committing adultery and was about to be stoned, and Jesus causing chapter after chapter of division and trouble among his disciples and among religious leaders. His teachings were hard and often hard to understand without further investigation and he certainly was not afraid of being called a heretic.

He wasn't trying to make friends or start a revolution. Jesus was doing the work of God and inviting people to take a risk and follow him. After all of this, the question that the Pharisees wanted answered was **"Surely we are not blind are we?"**

The Pharisees could see quite well in a physical sense. But their problem was that they absolutely did not have a clue when it came to seeing God's activity in their midst.

They could see... but they were blind to everything God was doing. On the other hand, the gospel reading tells about a man who was blind from birth and received his sight from Jesus. In the end, he gained much more than physical sight, when he gained his sight in a spiritual way -- for the very first time.

This tells us that it is possible to be sighted physically, while at the same time being blind to spiritual things. The religious professionals of the day illustrate the fact that one can have physical eyesight and still live in an inner world filled with darkness. Jesus had to penetrate a lot of density before it dawned on his adversaries that he was talking about them.

"Surely we are not blind are we?" [Well yeah...you are!]

There is an amazing story in the gospel of John the 8th chapter where a woman had been walking around in the darkness of her life. It is the story of the woman caught in adultery. Once again the story has the religious authorities in conflict with Jesus. They gather to see if he will enforce the death penalty against the woman. Yet, instead of condemnation, he offers an opportunity for new living. Jesus uses the woman's situation as a mirror which he holds up to the crowd. "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." [John 8:7] As it turns out, all of them, including the outwardly religious are walking about in spiritual darkness.

Jesus says to the gathered crowd and especially to the Pharisees, **"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."** [John 8:12] Light not only illuminates the path we tread - it is life itself. "Follow me," Jesus says, "And you will have the life you were designed to live."

To follow Christ is to develop clarity about who we are and who we are meant to be. The first letter of John chapter 1 verse 6 says "God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true..." Once we truly see the light of Christ, walking in darkness is no longer an unfortunate circumstance. It is a choice:

During these Lenten days we draw closer to the day of greatest darkness - the day when darkness covered Jerusalem and the "Light of the World" was briefly extinguished. Yet, as John's gospel says, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

God's good purposes for our lives are that we have light for living and a deep sense of knowing why we are here. We need the light of Christ that leads us out of darkness. I Samuel goes to the heart of this kind of darkness -- the darkness of mistaken perception. If we are too locked on to outward appearances, we are vulnerable to this blindness.

Even Samuel, the great servant of God found himself mistaking the apparent for the real. The story fits well with the Pharisees who didn't get the point with the healing of the blind man. Where people can take what is gospel, mix it with interpretation, personal preconceived ideas and cultural prejudice and shut the door to any new insight from God.

Samuel was grieving over the fact that God was going to take the throne away from Saul. Samuel's attachment to Saul and his clinging to what he wanted instead of what God wanted brought about a kind of darkness to his spirit. When God sent him to the home of Jesse in Bethlehem to anoint the next king of Israel, something surprising happened.

As it turns out, you can't judge a book by its cover - or another way to put it - outward appearances can be deceiving. God had told Samuel that he would show him which son of Jesse would become king and when Samuel laid eyes on the impressive Eliab, he thought, "This is the new king for sure!"

God's response to Samuel is classic. It addresses a key factor in spiritual blindness. It is something every one of us can take to heart and use to do a quick analysis of our own way of looking at the world. "... the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but **the LORD looks on the heart.**" [v.7]

God does not see things the way we see things! We often miss the significance of a person to God because they are not significant to the world around us. We miss the joy of a child's capacity for play and laughter because we are engrossed in grownup "important" things. We watch the evening news and read the newspaper and somehow do not see the abject poverty and desperate conditions of much of the human family.

And what of Christ? It is altogether fitting that we ask ourselves whether we are really and truly seeing the Savior who came to bring us light. Is it possible that we grow so accustomed to the prayers and hymns and words of scripture that we miss the blazing truth of his coming to us? **What a wonderful thing it would be if this Lenten season would be a time when we opened up our spirits to see the life changing, world transforming power of the fact that Christ came to take the darkness of this world upon himself. And as the darkness is taken into the light of Christ it becomes no darkness at all.**

Jesus uses a miracle involving physical sight to teach about spiritual sight. He turns the wisdom of the time on its ear, as Jesus often does. To those who refused to consider the greatness of God or the possibility that God could be working here and now, Jesus says: When you were blind, you were without sin. But now that you can see, and still choose to reject me, your sin remains. The Pharisees, the neighbors, the man's parents: they were so concerned about their understanding, their own place, their own teachings that they missed seeing the light of Christ.

They missed a miracle! What about us? Do we ever do that?

When we close our eyes and hold onto our viewpoints and affiliations, we miss seeing God at work. When we put other people into columns and categories, we do the same to God. When we would rather be right than ask questions or seek answers when we don't know, we miss the chance for God to mold us.

Our Scriptures teach that you and I are created in God's own image...yet sometimes it seems like we're trying to make God in our image. Like this man's teachers, neighbors and family, we miss the point. We miss the miracle.

As we understand and embrace this truth we might even come close to the experience of the man in John's gospel who, though born blind was able to see. His healing was a cause of rejoicing for him and his family and for the ordinary people who had known him. However, it was just another occasion for the deepening of darkness for the religious officials. Rather than rejoicing in the work God was doing, they actually threw the man out of the temple.

The amazing thing is that the man who was born blind didn't lose a thing - except for his physical blindness and the darkness of the religious community that could not see. Having gained his physical sight, he came to see something far more valuable.

The man who was blind from birth saw the light of Christ - for the very first time!

What did you see today? Has Christ shined into the darkness of your life, bringing light and hope and peace? Has He revealed himself to you, leading you to respond in faith and praise?

Or, have you heard the truth, seen miracles, asked questions — and still walked away, not healed, not set free, not delivered?

May God give us the grace to so open our hearts and minds to the life changing light of Christ that we too may renew our vision and worship the one who came to give us light that cannot be overcome by darkness. When Christ truly dwells within us and our lives are open to his life changing presence, darkness cannot dwell in us because there is no darkness where Christ is!

Amen

***CHARGE & BENEDICTION**

⁸ *For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—* ⁹ *for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.*

Ephesians 5:8-9

Go into the world, carrying the light of Christ into the darkness! Go with hearts full and eyes open!