

John 1:1-5, 14 - The Light of the World Christmas Lights – Part 2

Good morning we are in week 2 of our Christmas Series – Called Christmas Lights

A) Every year people all over the country put on extravagant light shows at their homes.

B) Financial news site 24/7 Wall St. compiled a list of the neighborhoods in each state with the “most outrageous Christmas lights.”

C) The winner in Illinois’ was a Landscaper named Brian Larsen who lives in suburban Elburn, 45 miles west of Chicago

Every year he puts on a Christmas light display known as The “Larsen’s Light Show,”

A) This year’s display featured over a 1 million lights programmed to dozens of holiday songs.

B) Here is a taste of what you could see at his house.

C) Now the common reaction from people who came to see his show

1) Great show – **So glad I am not your neighbor**

ABC TV has a contest – best Christmas lights in the country winner gets \$50K televised

A) This year the \$50K went to a Mill owner in Ohio – Clifton Mill his display **used over 4million lights**

B) Some people really get into the Christmas light display thing

C) There were Christmas lights involved during the first Christmas

We began our series last week looking at the strand of Lights – form of prophecies – God displayed

A) Over 300 prophecies – concerning the Birth death and Resurrection of Jesus –

B) Light a Christmas light strand – all the bulbs have to work – all the prophecies had to be fulfilled

C) We noted last week how Isaiah prophesied over **700 yrs before the birth of Jesus**

1) that those living in the land of Israel/ those dwelling in Darkness – Would see a great light!

There was light involved in the birth of Jesus –

A) We learn from Matthew’s gospel how the Wise Men were guided by a light –

B) A Star that brought them 1500 miles from the area of Persia to a little city in Bethlehem.

C) Luke in his gospel account tells us about the Angelic host that appeared to the shepherds in the field outside of Bethlehem

1) Lighting up the sky.

D) But at the birth of Jesus the LIGHT was just a flicker/ born in a stable – a cave really – **MAYBE A small torch or Lantern**

1) The light was seen by only a few – shepherds –

I asked you to turn to the gospel of John Ch 1

A) Because at Christmas time we tend to focus on Luke’s account of the Christmas story – the most detailed

Aa) Or maybe even Matthew’s account that gives us insight – into the visit from the Wise Men

B) But John’s version though brief is maybe the most Unique

C) John gives us the Christmas story from Heaven’s view point

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” V.14

John goes back to the beginning – before there was man before there was time – there was God

A) In the beginning was the Word – The Logos

B) Now, the Greeks talked much about the Logos.

1) And according to Greek philosophy, everything pre-existed in a thought.

C)Anything that you see existed in thought before it became form.

Take, this pulpit here: It began with a thought.

A)Some craftsman had in his mind a design, an idea for a podium.

B)And so, he drew it out on a piece of paper, but it was the expression of his thought.

1)And so, before anything exists, it has pre-existed in a thought. So, to the Greek philosopher, the thought itself was the origin of things.

C)That is what they called the Logos

The Greek Philosophers described the Logos in the Abstract –

A) as the Perfect thought responsible for everything in the Universe. **Very ABSTRACT**

B)The Jewish teachers made it Personal – **behind every Perfect thought there is a Perfect Thinker**

1) That is the Logos – The Logos is God!

Jesus is eternal. "in the beginning was the Word.

A)The 2nd person of the triune Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit 3 beings but 1 person

B)Sometimes that confuses us – $1+1+1 = 3$ – But $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.

V.14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

C)Jesus stepped out of heaven – **stepped into our darkness!**

S.D.Gordon noted, *“Jesus is God spelling Himself out in language that men can understand!”*

D)The Miracle of Christmas is this the Eternal God stepped into the human world as a human himself –

1)Because of his love for man – he lowered himself to become one of us –

Jesus is the Creator

V.3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

A)Creator of Time / space & everything that was made.

B)Jesus is the author of all spiritual life as well

4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

C)The ancient Greek word translated life is zoe, which means **"the life principle,"** not bios, which is mere biological life.

1)zoe focuses on the theological meaning rather than on the biological.

D)Zoe "is used to designate the life which God gives to the believing sinner,

1)a vital, spiritual dynamic which first transforms his inner being AND then as a result, his outward behavior."

So In V.4 John is giving us the reason why Jesus came into the world – to give Spiritual life

A)Sin had caused a separation – Dead in our trespasses and sin Jesus was coming to bridge the gap – to tear down the wall

B)But notice the sad note of V.5 *And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."*

Bethlehem ignored the Light

A)The Shepherds who came to see the baby Jesus in the stable – afterwards it says – “Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.”

B)But no one paid much attention to them – because they were shepherds and they were the most trusted in society

1)Sort of the bottom of the social chain

C)On that first Christmas - Everyone in Bethlehem went about their life – business as usual.

Sort of like us today!

A)There was a woman – last minute shopping 2 days before Christmas –

B)the store was crowded and she lost track of her 4 year old son.

1) She quickly backtracked and found her son staring at a Nativity set there in the store. She says – THERE YOU ARE

C) The little boy says – LOOK MOMMY IT IS THE BABY JESUS!

1) She grabbed him by the hand and said: come on mommy doesn't have time for that She needs to go home and get ready for Christmas.

D) That is the sentiment of many this year – I don't have time for that – I am trying to get ready for Christmas!

E) Christmas is about the Birth of Jesus

Reminded in the wonderful Carols we hear at this time of the year

A) But unfortunately those Songs often get drowned out by these sounds

B) Sounds of the Crashing of Shopping Carts - / the Honking of Horns / sounds of Yelling & Screaming – Parents at Kids / People at each other

C) Far too often those are the Prominent sounds of the season : Why is that ?

- 1) One Word – **PRESSURE**: Season of Purchases / Packages / Presents – all of which amounts to great Pressure

D) But God the father wants to Know that this season is meant to remind us that we can NOW experience his PLEASURE –

1) Because the PRESSURE was on his son!

E) JESUS CAME TO make a way for SINNERS to be made right with God!

1) Don't forget that – help others not forget that - Happy Holidays – I respond Merry Christmas

So Bethlehem ignored the Light

A) Herod tried to Kill the Light – all the babies in Bethlehem 2yrs old and younger

B) The Shepherds seem to have forgot about the light 1) The baby in the stable is really not heard from again for 30 yrs

C) For 30 yrs the Light lived in obscurity – in Nazareth – small village

1) it was the kind of place that you passed by on your way to somewhere else – like Beaumont or Rainbow

After 30 yrs the Light steps out of obscurity – and begins to Shine for all men to see

A) In the eighth Chapter of John's gospel – Jesus makes a radical statement.

B) It happens during the annual feast of Tabernacles - 8 Day celebration - Commemorate 40 yrswandering in the wilderness

1) Family Camping – TENTS

C) Ritual each night the priest – Holy Place of the temple **Light giant Menorahs – golden Candlelabras**

1) Symbolized – Pillar of Fire- God's presence with Israel during their 40 yrs of pilgrimage

D) Jesus is in the temple courtyard people are around – the religious leaders are there – He says this!

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." John 8:14

Jesus was boldly proclaiming for all to hear

A) The light that led you through the wilderness is here! It is me

Aa) They understood what he was saying –

1) The religious leaders responded by saying – you testify of yourself – testimony is not true

B) **Isaiah – prophesied** – Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

C) Call his name Immanuel – God is with us!

D) The Logos – took on flesh and blood –

1) The Light came to shine in our darkness

Consider what light does

Light Illuminates

A) Ever got dressed in the dark? - Step out into the light – nothing matches. WOW! – Disaster.

B) Stripes with plaids – two different colored socks – two different shoes –

1) Step into the light – DISASTER IS EXPOSED

C) Light has a way of exposing OUR flaws – things are brought into the light and you see them for what they are.

D) X Ray – Shines a light – see what is going on in your body – Where there is a PROBLEM!

1) So Light exposes things

One of the problems I have with high end Restaurants – Lights are always dim. – “Ambience”

A) But I always wonder What are they TRYING TO HIDE.- Lights are so low can't see what eating

B) LIGHTS EXPOSE and illuminate in a positive way too! **Diamond or precious Gem?**

1) Put it on Black Velvet – shine a light – Illuminates the brilliance of the Diamond

Jesus came into this dark world to illuminate the heart of God!

A) Love for mankind – his compassion for our struggle

B) God had not given up on man – God wasn't removed from Man

1) God's heart broke for man in his struggle with sin – Broke so much – provide a way for man to be RESCUED

C) Jesus came to illuminate the **HEART OF GOD – THE plan of God to save lost man.**

1) BUT **THE PLAN** would require him to Give his only beloved Son

Nancy Jones and her family were traveling to her parents home for Christmas.

A) It was Christmas eve day and they stopped at a diner for lunch

B) While they were eating their – 2 yr. Old son Eric became enamored w/ a man sitting at the counter –

1) the man looked homeless in his tattered clothes

C) Ragged coat - greasy & worn / Hair unwashed - uncombed - face unshaven

D) And He was Barely sober

1) but he was loudly making faces at little Eric & Eric was Loving every minute of it !!!!! – Laughing

Nancy tried to distract Erik - w/ food & by turning - his high chair, away from the man

A) But it was no use the man had baited her son into a friendly game of peek a poo

B) Eric & the old man were creating quite a Nuisance / so Eric's parents decided it was time to get back on the road.

C) Nancy's Husband rose to pay the Check & told her to wait for him outside - she had to walk by the man to get to the door –

1) She was hoping that she could get by w/out having to deal w/ the man

She prayed silently *Lord Let me out of here before he speaks to me or to Erik*

D) But As she was leaving - Erik couldn't get his eyes off of his New friend -

1) And right when she was walking past where the man was Erik's arms were outstretched reaching out to his new buddy –

It was then that Nancy's eyes met the eyes of the old man

A) Then the man said to her - *Would you let me hold your baby –*

B) There was no Chance to answer because Erik had propelled himself from **her arms into the mans arms**

1) And immediately laid his head on the mans ragged shoulder

C) The mans eyes closed & tears began to run down his cheeks –

1) and w/ his aged & ragged - dirty hands he cradled Erik & Gently stroked his back.

D) After a Moment he opened his eyes and look squarely into the eyes of Nancy - and said - *you take care of this baby - she responded I will*

E) Then He pried Erik from his chest & gave him back to Nancy & said *thank you maam You've given me my Christmas present !!!!*

Now I love that story because I think we can all relate to how uncomfortable that would be -

A) But I want you think about that story for a minute – picture Little Eric in the arms of that dirty smelly man

B) And then think about what God did for us - He Gave His son - born as a little baby - to mankind

C) And we didn't cradle his son & carress His son/

C) But mankind - rejected his son & killed His Son - yet God knew they would
1) That was the plan –

E) it was the only way in which - man would be able to be restored
1) (and have the Chance to experience His forgiveness

So He gave His son - willingly and freely –

A) And thru that gift of His son - God was able to offer another - gift - eternal life to anyone believe

B) To everyone who would put their trust in the finished work of Christ
1) Which He accomplished on the cross !!!

C) Jesus came to illuminate the HEART of God and the PLAN of God and the WAY to God –
1) through his Sacrifice

Light illuminates Light pierces the Darkness.

A) A little girl who was camping described what her dad was doing as he walked toward them with a flashlight – in the dark

B) “Look Daddy is poking holes in the darkness!”

C) That is a good description of what Light does – It pokes holes in the darkness – it pierces the darkness

D) There was plenty of darkness in the world when Jesus arrived.

Darkness of religion: Artificial light –

A) Left men still longing for intimacy with God and to be right with God

B) The religion of the Jews like most today primarily focused on cleaning up the outward man

1) Problem the heart was still dark and dirty

C) Jesus came to pierce the darkness of religion
1) Came to shine his light on the real problem
HEART PROBLEM.

Darkness of sin – Moral depravity

A) Jesus shined his light on that area as well

B) See Jesus Revealed that sin wasn't just about our actions – but also our attitudes –

C) Law Adultery – But I say Look w/ lust

1) Angry – Covetous –

D) The heart of the Problem is a heart problem

Darkness may be more pervasive, but light is more powerful.

A) We turn on the lights; we don't “turn on the darks” if the room is too bright!

B) The only way for darkness to prevail is the light has to be turned off.

Satan is spoken of in Scripture as the Prince of Darkness,

A) But JESUS Light of the World conquers that darkness!

B) And there is no darkness in your life that HIS Light cannot overcome!

A little boy heard his Sunday school teacher – talking about how Jesus shines in the darkness

A) Responded – “ I wish He would come and shine at my house – it is dark over there.

B) When the Light of who Jesus is – shines in a home – it exposes the darkness –

1) Reveals exactly what needs to Change –

C) But He can also brighten up that home and make it a place where His love is predominant

Problem is People don't like it when light pierces their darkness

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

¹⁸ “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that **the light** has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For **everyone practicing** evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

REALLY ONLY TWO RESPONSES – RECEIVE THE LIGHT OR REJECT THE LIGHT

A) Jesus the light of the world shines on the darkness of your heart today – reveals – the hypocrisy – pretending

B) He reveals – what is out of order – He reveals the mess

1) Reveals the evil thoughts – reveals – the brokenness

C) He says – I paid the price for all of that – I can forgive you – **I can heal you, I can transform you**

1) **My light can CHASE AWAY THE DARKNESS**

Light brings warmth.

A) Did you know that one small candle, properly reflected, can raise the temperature of an igloo from below freezing to over 45 degrees Fahrenheit?

B) Light gives warmth.

C) Jesus the Light of the world can bring Warmth and comfort to the darkest of hearts –

1) When we open our hearts to him

D) Warmth of knowing God – Your purpose!

1) Knowing you belong

“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, **but have the light of life.**” John 8:12

The Light of life – Purpose – meaning -

There’s a bar in Florida known as *Scotty’s Pub*, and outside *Scotty’s* is a huge sign that reads, “Free beer tomorrow!”...

Now understand I'm not an advocate visiting bars, but I appreciate a clever advertising campaign...

And this qualifies. For over a decade the sign has been hanging in front of Scotty’s Pub, and not a single ounce of free beer has ever been poured.

Obviously, the sign communicates a promise that never gets proven.

Free anything tomorrow is a hollow promise.

That’s why Jesus doesn’t just promise us a better life tomorrow.

A) He’ll do it today!

He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

B) Ready to come out of the DARK - Right now is God’s acceptable time to act

Walking in the Light = Connects us to God and to each other

- This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice 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 Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” 1 John 1:5-7

Walk in the Light and we are to share the Light

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16