

LESSON 6 Jesus, the Light of the World

Have you ever walked in the dark and wished for a light so you could see? You did not know what dangers might be on either side of you or in the path ahead. Maybe you even doubted whether you were going in the right direction. It is so easy to get lost in the dark.

Or perhaps you have spent a night in fear of some enemy, known or unknown. You might have imagined terrible things happening. How different everything seemed the next day in the bright sunshine! The fears of the night faded as the light grew stronger.

You can easily understand why the Bible often uses darkness as a symbol of evil, error, uncertainty, trouble, and death. These are the kinds of things that cause us to be fearful and confused.

In contrast, the Bible uses light as a symbol of life, joy, truth, and all that is good. It tells us that Jesus is the Light of the world. What a powerful and descriptive name for the Son of God!

The Plan

- A. The World Needs Light
- B. What the Light Does
- C. How People React to the Light

The Goals

1. Explain why Jesus came to be the Light of the world.
2. Describe how the life of Jesus is spiritual light for people.
3. List the ways people react to the Light of the world

A. THE WORLD NEEDS LIGHT

Goal 1. Explain why Jesus came to be the Light of the world.

Sin Brought Darkness

Darkness is the absence of light. The world was plunged into spiritual darkness the instant that sin separated the first human beings, Adam and Eve, from God. Why? Because God is the source of light. Without Him, we can only wander in the dark—lost, not knowing where we are going. In the Old Testament, we read about the darkness that separation brings. God sent the prophet Isaiah to the disobedient people of Israel with this message:

“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.” (Isaiah 59:2)

Speaking then from the perspective of the people:

“So justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like men without eyes. At midday we

stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead.” (Isaiah 59:9–10)

What a vivid picture of misery! The New Testament also speaks of the darkness of sin.

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. (Ephesians 4:17–18)

But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him. (1 John 2:11)

Application

1 According to the Bible, spiritual darkness has come over the world because of

- a)** fate.
- b)** ignorance.
- c)** sin.



Light Was Promised

God is Light—the source of all light. People are in spiritual darkness until they receive revelation of the light of God. That is why Jesus became the Light of the world; He came to give us God’s light—to reveal to us God’s love and His will for us.

John writes of Jesus, “In him was life, and that life was the light of men” (1:4). Then, later, “This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).

Listen to Jesus' words about himself:

“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)

“While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” (John 9:5)

It should not have surprised the people to hear Jesus call himself “the light of the world.” The prophet Isaiah had predicted that the Messiah would come as the Light of God. Matthew quoted this Old Testament prophecy and said that it came true in Jesus:

“Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.” (Isaiah 50:10)

“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.” (Isaiah 60:19)

“The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” (Matthew 4:16)

Application

2 Memorize John 8:12.

3 Jesus came to be the Light of the world because people are living in

- a)** financial poverty.
- b)** spiritual darkness.
- c)** unhealthy environments.



B. WHAT THE LIGHT DOES

Goal 2. Describe how the life of Jesus is spiritual light for people.

Light Dispels Darkness

Jesus, the Light, drives out darkness. His presence in the heart drives out sin, guilt, and fear. His love drives out hatred. His light brings hope, assurance, comfort, and strength to the soul.

The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)

Light is stronger than darkness. All the darkness in the world cannot put out a single candle. If you have Jesus in your life, the powers of evil around you and the dark experiences of life cannot put out His light. D. L. Moody reportedly told of a Christian woman who had been sick for months and was unable to leave her bed. But this woman was always cheerful.

Someone asked her how she could be so happy when she could not even get outside to see the sun. She said, “My room is dark but I have the Son in my heart.” Jesus was her inner source of spiritual light that drove away the gloom. He flooded her soul with His light and presence.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out. (John 1:5)

Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be my light. (Micah 7:8)

Application

4 The darkness of fear, guilt, sin, hatred, and resentment can be driven out of a person’s heart by

- a)** good education.
- b)** positive thinking.
- c)** rules for right attitudes.
- d)** the presence of Jesus.

5 Are there any dark places in your heart that need the light of Jesus? Pray now and ask Him to drive the darkness out.

Light Reveals

Light makes it possible for us to see things as they are. The only way we can know spiritual truth is with the spiritual light that comes from God. We find this light in God's written Word—the Bible—and in God's living Word—Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Revealer and Interpreter of life. He helps us understand God's Word and shows us God's way for us. He, himself, is the Way.

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

Jesus helps us to see ourselves as we really are. In His perfect life and teachings, we see how far short we come of God's standards for us. We see our sins, our pride, self-centeredness, and hidden motives. Jesus shows us our need of the forgiveness and new life that He offers us.

Jesus shows us what God is like and how He will meet our needs. In Jesus we see God's love for us, His patience with us, and His provision for our salvation. He shows us how to receive God into our lives and enjoy His light forever:

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. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. (Hebrews 1:3)

Application

6 Suppose someone were to tell you this: “I don’t need to become a Christian. I’m a decent person. I haven’t murdered anybody or done anything that is terribly wrong.” How can the light of Jesus help this person see his or her spiritual need?

Light Is Energy

Light is radiant energy. Scientists are learning more and more about the power of light radiating from the sun. Its energy is a tremendous source of power for human use. People can use it to heat their homes and to operate their machines. But greatest of all is its effect on life and health. Many plants will not grow in the shade. Sunlight kills many germs and contributes to our health and strength. Think of earth without the sun. No warmth. No life. No force to hold it in orbit. A frozen ball lost in a black sky, on its way to destruction.

What the sun is to the earth, Jesus is to us. He brings us life, warmth, health, energy, and power. He holds us close to himself by His love. He heals our bodies and spirits. The light of life that Jesus gives His followers is stronger than death. Nothing, not even the grave, will be able to hold us back when He returns. Like plants, bursting from their seeds and pushing up into the sunlight, we will rise to meet Him. The apostle Paul writes,

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17)

Application

7 In the comparison you have studied, the sun is to the plants on earth what Jesus is to

- a)** His Father.
 - b)** His followers.
 - c)** the angels.
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Light Is Impartial

Light is for everybody, everywhere. Just as the sun shines on the hilltop and in the valley, on the rich and the poor, on the wise and on fools; so the light of Jesus shines for all the world, on both good and bad. Some people thought the Savior would be just for their nation. But God makes it plain that His light of salvation is for all the world. The Gospels record,

The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. (John 1:9)

“Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.” (Luke 1:78–79)

A blind man who sat by the roadside begging heard a crowd coming. He learned that Jesus was passing by and that the crowd was with Him. The beggar had heard about Jesus’ power to heal, so he cried out with a loud voice: “‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’” (Luke 18:38). The people scolded him and told him to be quiet. They did not think Jesus had time to help a beggar. But Jesus has time to help everyone who calls to Him. The beggar kept calling. Jesus stopped and had the beggar brought to Him. Then, Jesus healed him.

At once he was able to see, and he followed Jesus, giving thanks to God. (Luke 18:43)

Life took on new meaning and new direction after the beggar met Jesus. His world of darkness turned to day. It did not matter what he had been, where he had sat begging, how he had stumbled in the dark. Now he walked in the light—no longer a blind beggar but a follower of Jesus, the Light of the world!

Application

8 You have learned four ways Jesus shines as the Light of the world. Write the number for the way Jesus shines (right) beside the phrase that describes the kind of error or problem it solves (left).

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|---|------------------------|
| ... a Christianity is only for the uneducated. | 1) Drives out darkness |
| ... b Death is the end of everything. | 2) Reveals |
| ... c I can't understand the Bible. | 3) Is energy |
| ... d I don't think God loves me. | 4) Is impartial |
| ... e My heart is full of hatred and fear. | |



C. HOW PEOPLE REACT TO THE LIGHT

Goal 3. List the ways people react to the Light of the world.

Rejection

Some people do not like Jesus and refuse to accept His light. They want to live like they want to, have their own way, and not do what Jesus tells them to do. When Jesus was on earth, some people hated Him because His teaching showed them what sinners they were. They wanted to put out the light, to kill Him. They fought against the gospel. Jesus let them know that He had brought salvation for everyone. Whoever accepts Him will be saved. But those who refuse His light are condemning themselves to live and die in darkness.

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (John 3:19–20)

Acceptance

Jesus promised, “Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). When you accept Jesus, you have His light as your possession. You also continue to have His light as an experience each day. Jesus is the Light. To have Him is to have the light of life and all that light brings. Having the Light of the world is more than knowledge, more than willpower, more than belonging to a certain religion. It is more than knowing about Jesus or knowing His teachings. It is having Jesus himself as a radiant, energetic, revealing force in your life.

To have the light of God we must follow Jesus, walk in His light. God reveals himself and His truth to those who are willing to accept the truth and follow Him. He guides us day by day.

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. (1 John 1:7)

The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. (Proverbs 4:18)

Do you want to follow Jesus and have the light of life? Welcome Him into every area of your life now. Let His bright presence drive all darkness away. Follow His light and share it with those around you. Turn your life over to Him so that He can fill it with His light.

Prayer: Jesus, please come into my life. Forgive my sins, and drive away all the darkness in my heart. Change me into the kind of person You

want me to be. Make me radiant with Your light.
Help me follow You every day. Thank You for
Your light.

Application

- 9** To accept Jesus in your life as the light of the world means to
- a)** agree that Christianity is a good religion.
 - b)** decide to become a better person.
 - c)** have His actual presence in and with you.

10 If you have not already accepted Jesus, will you accept Him now? You may use the prayer in this lesson or pray in your own words. If you have accepted Him, thank Him for the light He has brought into your life.



Check Your Answers

- 6** Your answer: You have learned that the life of Jesus is like a light that helps us see ourselves as we really are. If this person were to compare his life to the perfect life of Jesus, he would find many differences. The comparison could help him see his spiritual need.
- 1 c)** sin.
- 7 b)** His followers.
- 3 b)** spiritual darkness.
- 8** These answers match what is said in the lesson. However, other answers are also possible.
- a** 4) Is impartial
 - b** 3) Is energy
 - c** 2) Reveals
 - d** 2) Reveals
 - e** 1) Drives out darkness
- 4 d)** the presence of Jesus.
- 9 c)** have His actual presence in and with you.