

Light

Isaiah 52:7-10; John 1:1-14

John 1:4-5 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

John 1:9 "That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

Sunday, January 1, 2023 at The First Congregational Church of Marshalltown, Iowa

- Introduction

In our passage in John, we learn about Jesus as the "true light which gives light to every man in the world." (verse 9). The value of that statement is that we are given the privilege to perceive people's hearts, the heart of God and the value and nature of life, and of eternal life. CS Lewis was right when he said that he believed in light not because he could see light, but because by it he could see everything else. There is a part of the Christian life that involves watching with perception granted by the Holy Spirit into the plan of God. Isaiah demonstrated that when he spoke of the redemption of Israel from 70 years of bondage before the 70 years of bondage even began. He could see the plan into the future and it serves as an example for us to watch, to pray and ask for insight into what is the Lord doing now in our community.

- Set the stage
- Main Point: Light is the power to live today, and to live eternally today-the darkness cannot comprehend it

Let's look at what "light" means in this passage. There is a spiritual light that Christ is and provides. The light is something that a faithful Christian is (not just has) and is demonstrated by attitude, word and action. A person of light will flee certain activities and find matters of righteousness, godliness, faith love, patience and gentleness to be attractive, to even have a certain hunger for those qualities. The darkness is demonstrated in rampant self justification that sometimes masquerades as righteousness. The Apostle Paul wrote that Satan can make himself look like an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). The good news in this passage is that the darkness cannot comprehend the light. It cannot figure it out, nor can it overcome it. For all the times that evil, and darkness seem to gain the upper hand, the light cannot be defeated. The same is true for natural light. If you're in a dark room and you open the door to a well-lit room, light enters the darkened room. If you are in a well-lit room and you open the door to a darkened room, the dark does not invade the well-lit room. Light wins.

the light of Divine truth, spiritual illumination

Light is also notable in that it makes things manifest. Just like sunlight or electrical light allows our eyes to discern what is around us in detail, the light that is Christ makes us discern who we are and who God is in a manner impossible without Him. For example, the Christian church in the days of St. Peter was facing persecution and rejection by the population at large. While growing, they were looked down upon and considered not of great value. Even the Apostle Paul noted that not many people of social standing or of high reputation were in the early church. Yet Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote this to the insignificant, bothersome, illegal movement called the church: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;... (1 Peter 2:9). Most of all, the light provides vision; vision that sees a fledgling church and calls them the people of God, that can see one humble life and speak forth its significance as that person lives out Micah 6:8 and does justice, loves mercy and walks humbly with

his God. Because of this vision the great prophet Isaiah could look at the impending disaster of the Babylonian overthrow of Jerusalem and still prophesied their return from exile 70 years later. This vision sees the darkness not overcoming or understanding the light. It wins lots of battles, but will inevitably lose the war.

- Application
 - a. evil cannot ultimately win

I see at first glance, a couple of applications. The first is that evil-darkness-wins many battles. Even Habakkuk in the Old Testament complained about the prosperity of the immoral and the selfish. Mark Twain also wrote about how the worst people he knew as a boy became some of the most prosperous people in his hometown once they became adults, and they were even worse as adults than they were as children. Yet darkness cannot win the war. Evil, for all its malice, is a doomed foe. Light wins in the end.

- b. you have authority to grow into your destiny

The second is to ask the Lord for a vision of your own life and a vision for the church, not as it might be, but as it is right now but as God sees it. Light reveals and makes manifest and the significance of even the most humble life given to Christ is beyond human reckoning. The same is true of the most humble gathering of Christians. Later in this same passage in John we are told that we are given the right to become children of God, an eternal God with eternal children dwelling in light now and forever. Light makes manifest. Ask for vision

- Conclusion

Sometimes, we tend to look at our lives and wonder about the significance of it. People will look at their small churches and wonder the same. But with the birth of Jesus we have the light of God and that light cannot be overcome. Darkness-evil, greed and pride-wins battles but will not win the war, and light gives vision. It gave Isaiah vision to see the restoration of Israel at the verge of her destruction. Light can give us vision for the significance Christ holds for our lives today, just as they are now, and for our church today, just as we are right now. This light means that we can be watchers over our community, and to be a people that prays for a vision for what the Holy Spirit is doing now in our community and for insight into how we are a part of that. All that, and more, comes from Christ being the Light.