

Sermon Scriptures and Notes
Sermon Title: "Jesus: The Light of Life"
January 28, 2018: Evensong Service
Robbie Pruitt

Sermon Scriptures: Psalm 119:105-112; Isaiah 59:20-60:3; and John 8:12-18

Psalm 119:105-112: English Standard Version (ESV): Nun:

- ¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.
- ¹⁰⁶ I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,
to keep your righteous rules.
- ¹⁰⁷ I am severely afflicted;
give me life, O Lord, according to your word!
- ¹⁰⁸ Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O Lord,
and teach me your rules.
- ¹⁰⁹ I hold my life in my hand continually,
but I do not forget your law.
- ¹¹⁰ The wicked have laid a snare for me,
but I do not stray from your precepts.
- ¹¹¹ Your testimonies are my heritage forever,
for they are the joy of my heart.
- ¹¹² I incline my heart to perform your statutes
forever, to the end.^[a]

Isaiah 59:20-60:3: English Standard Version (ESV)

20 "And a Redeemer will come to Zion,
to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the Lord.

21 "And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the Lord: "My Spirit that is upon you,
and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the
mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the Lord, "from
this time forth and forevermore."

60 Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

2 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.

3 And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.

John 8:12-18: English Standard Version (ESV): I Am the Light of the World

12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." 13 So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true." 14 Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. 16 Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. 17 In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. 18 I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me."

Opening Prayer: Would you pray with me this evening.

"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts be acceptable to you, oh Lord, our rock and our redeemer." Amen!

Introduction:

What I want to explore with you this evening is: Jesus is the light of life.

Our focal verse, printed on the card inside your leaflet, is John 8:12, "Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'"

Stump House Tunnels in Walhalla, SC...

When I was in High School, my friends and I would go camping in the foothills of South Carolina, in the north western part of the state. There was an old abandoned railroad tunnel that was dynamited into the mountain, but was never finished. It is called the "Stump House Tunnel." The tunnel was deep and dark. The deeper you walked into the darkness, the more the light faded. At the end of the tunnel, there was no light at all. We had a lot of fun exploring this tunnel and pranking other visitors in the dark. We would get quiet in the end of the tunnel and turn out our lights, and when people would get close, we would turn on our lights and yell suddenly. We would yell something ridiculous. It probably wasn't the best of ideas and it for sure did not make us any new friends.

Many of us hide in the darkness in our lives. In our sinfulness we hide in the shadows, seeking our own desires.

In 1 John 1:5-7, The Apostle John writes, “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 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 cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:5-7, ESV).

Tripping in the night over furniture and baby toys...

Having gotten older, and having children of my own, my kids have returned the pranks in the darkness, and the jokes have come full circle. Sometimes I will try and navigate my house at night with the lights out, getting up for a cup of water or a snack. Do you do this? Well it does not work well. See, my kids leave their toys in the most unexpected places and it has caused me to trip and fall, or stump my toe, many times. There is a certain folly to walking around in the darkness. Yet, we do it anyway don't we? And isn't this exactly what sin is; walking in the darkness?

In John 11:9-10, “Jesus answered [his disciples], ‘Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.’” (John 11:9-10, ESV).

Glow sticks bearing witness of the trail...

My wife Irene and I used to do a lot of backpacking. On our first week-long backpacking trip in the George Washington National Forest, we came across glow sticks tied in the trees along the trail one afternoon. We were confused by this. But later that night, we heard people running along the trail, one right after the other, all through the night. Later that next day, as we hiked down from the ridgeline, we discovered there was a cross country race and runners were well into a journey of over 100 miles, lasting several days.

In our Psalm reading from this evening, Psalm 119:105, it says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” God’s light bears witness to Himself, the Light, and to the path before us.

As **C.S. Lewis said**, “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.” (C. S. Lewis). Light bears witness to itself and to everything else around it.

Light was God’s first act in creation on day one.

Genesis 1:1-5 says, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” (Genesis 1:1-2).

“And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.” (Genesis 1:3-5).

John echoes The Light of Creation, The Light of Life, Jesus, in John 1:2-5, when he says, “He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:2-5, ESV).

Jesus’s claim to be the light of the world, the light of life, in John 8:12, is a direct proclamation that He is God.

Warren W. Wiersbe, in his “The BE Series” commentary says,

[Jesus saying, “I am The Light of the World”] ...means He was once again claiming to be God, for to the Jew, the sun was a symbol of Jehovah God (Ps. 84:11; Mal. 4:2). There is, for our galaxy, only one sun, and it is the center and the source of life. So there is but one God who is the center of all and the source of all life (John 1:4). “God is light” (1 John 1:5), and wherever the light shines, it reveals humanity’s wickedness (Eph. 5:8–14).

The light reveals itself and the light reveals our true selves, and our true sinful condition. Light bears witness to who God is and to who we are. We need God's light to have life and to live. We need His Light to draw near to God and to bring to light all that is within us. We need God's light to cast out the shadows of sin in our lives.

Wiersbe continues:

Our Lord's "I am" statement [that He is the Light] was also related to the Feast of Tabernacles, during which the huge candelabra were lit in the temple at night to remind the people of the pillar of fire that had guided Israel in its wilderness journey. [much like those glow sticks on the trail I mentioned earlier] In fact, John has combined three "wilderness images" [in his gospel account]: the manna (John 6), the water from the rock (John 7), and the pillar of fire (John 8). (Wiersbe, Warren W.. The BE Series).

We need God's provision of light in this wilderness journey of life. We need his light to guide and sustain us and to help us to see our way. We need light to celebrate the joy of Jesus and to worship Him in Joy.

D.A. Carson, in his "The Gospel According to John" commentary says that Jesus's words, "I am the Light of the world", comes in the context of The Feast of the Tabernacles, he writes:

'He who has not seen the joy of the place of water-drawing [a part of the festal celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles] has never in his life seen joy': this extravagant claim stands just before the description of the lighting of the four huge lamps in the temple court of women and of the exuberant celebration that took place under their light (Mishnah Sukkah 5:1-4). 'Men of piety and good works danced through the night, holding burning torches in their hands and singing songs and praises. The Levitical orchestras cut loose, and some sources attest that this went on every night of the feast of the tabernacles, with the light from the temple area shedding its glow all over Jerusalem. In this context Jesus declares to the people, "I am the light of the world."' (D.A. Carson, p. 337).

And what about us? Is our life marked with celebratory and joyful dancing in the Light of Life, or are we stumbling around in the darkness of self-seeking selfishness and sin? Wouldn't you love to be a part of this scene just described of singing songs and praises and dancing unto the Lord through the night of this life?

In her children's book of theological truths, "**Thoughts That Make Your Heart Sing,**" in the chapter titled, "**Leap Into Light,**" Sally Lloyd Jones writes:

Faith is believing what God says.

Some people think faith is like taking a leap in the dark, that faith is blind.

But the Bible says it's the opposite. Away from God we are in the dark. That's when we are blind, stumbling around.

She then tells the story of John Newton: John Newton was a notorious slave trader—but coming to know Jesus changed him forever. He spent the rest of his life working to free slaves and wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace": "I once was blind," he sang, "but now I see!"

When we come home to God it is not a leap into darkness.

It is a magnificent leap into light—the light of God's love for us!

"Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'" –John 8:12, ESV

Led Zeppelin, one of my favorite classic rock bands, has a song called "In the Light," off of their double album set, Physical Graffiti. **This Led Zeppelin classic, "In the Light"** sums up what we have been talking about this evening pretty well. Lead singer Robert Plant wrote this hopeful song about two years before his son died, I cannot help but think he may have taken comfort from these words.

And if you feel that you can't go on ...And your will's sinkin' low
Just believe and you can't go wrongIn the light you will find the road
(You will find the road).In the light ...Everybody needs the light ...In the
light, in the light, in the light....

Closing Benediction:

May we fully experience Jesus as the light of our lives! May “Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light!” In the bright and glorious name of Jesus, who is the light of life. Amen!

Let us pray together:

Closing Prayer: A Prayer for the Second Sunday after the Epiphany

“Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; **[stop]** through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 215).

“Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 215).

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Prayer: Second Sunday after the Epiphany

"Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen." (Book of Common Prayer, p. 215).

Prayer: First Sunday of Advent

"Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer, p. 211).

Resources:

- Book of Common Prayer, Online
- Carson, D.A. "The Gospel According to John"
- C.S. Lewis
- Lloyd Jones, Sally. "Thoughts That Make Your Heart Sing," "Leap Into Light," © 2016
- Plant, Robert. Led Zeppelin, In The Light, from Physical Graffiti
- Wiersbe, Warren W.. The BE Series Bundle: The Gospels: Be Loyal, Be Diligent, Be Compassionate, Be Courageous, Be Alive, and Be Transformed (The BE Series Commentary) (Kindle Locations 12795-12797). David C. Cook. Kindle Edition.