

**John 3: 19-21; “Light Has Come”, Sermon # 19 in the series –
“That all May Honor the Son”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall,
on August 4th, 2013, in the Morning Worship Service.**

To be able to understand the metaphors and word pictures which the Lord Jesus is teaching here, is really essential to your being able to understand where you are in relation to knowing God. Do you understand the spiritual meaning of light and darkness? For Jesus says here that if you love the darkness rather than the light, your deeds are evil, and you stand condemned in the sight of God. These verses are saying that if you love the light you will practice the truth, and you will have nothing to hide; either now, or on the Day of Judgment when all the secrets of your heart will be revealed, and your praise will come from God. I trust that you have come here today to listen to this sermon, and to receive the truths that I am about to give you, because you do indeed want to think about your life in relation to the One who is pure and perfect Light; our Lord Jesus Christ. So let us think about the 3 major statements which Jesus gives to you concerning Himself, and concerning yourself. 1st of all – Light has come into the world. 2nd – Even though Light has come, men still love the darkness. And 3rd – Jesus says, the person who desires to have a straight and true heart will come to the Light.

1st of all – Light has come into the world.

Verse 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.” “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.” When Jesus says that light has come into the world, He is not simply saying that He as a man came into the world bringing the truth with Him, to convey to fallen and sinful men. He did do that. But He is saying that He Himself was then, and He is now, the spiritual Light of the whole world. He was and is, the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world”. He came into the world as the God-man, the Light of Life, the only pure, true, and spiritual light of all of Mankind. This was the glory of His Incarnation; that our Lord Jesus Christ was unique among men; He came into the world as the Light of God, Light of Light, personified. He was born of the Virgin Mary, and because of this, as a man, He was born without sin. But He came into the world as more than just sinless. He came into the world as the first positively righteous man since Adam. Christ’s being righteous is part of His being pure and perfect light. As we read the Bible, we see that He was much superior to Adam, because He, the perfect, eternal, holy, and wise God took to Himself a true human nature. In this amazing action, being sent by the Father, and mysteriously formed in the womb of Mary, He retained the Personhood of the 2nd Person of the Divine Trinity when He took upon Himself human flesh. There are not 2 personalities in Jesus; there is only the one Divine Personhood. In His Incarnation, therefore, He became for us the Image of the invisible God. He came into the world as God made manifest in the flesh, and yet how few understood what He had come to do. He came to manifest the truth about God to all the world, and yet He started out in the lowliest of positions; He humbled Himself to become a little babe in the manger at Bethlehem. There was no halo around Him. There were no beams of physical light shining forth from His tiny brow. There was no form or comeliness; when people saw Him; there was no beauty that they should desire Him. But as He grew up and became a man, His spiritual all-pervasive light began to shine. He was the Only-Begotten Son of His Father, and His Father dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. And even though He was the Son of God, He would have to learn obedience by the things which He suffered. But our Lord Jesus was up to the task. As He began His earthly ministry, the message which John heard from Him, which He declared to all of the apostles, was as he says in 1 John 1: 5 – “God is light and in Him is no darkness at

all.” The disciples began to realize that the Lord Jesus was the light of God to a sinful and dying world. And as He began to teach them, they could see that He was the only spiritual light. Even as the sun is the only light which illumines, warms, and sustains our whole world physically, the disciples began to realize that all other true light finds its source in Christ Jesus. They began to see that He was the fountain of life, and in His light they were seeing light. (Psalm 36: 9) The truth that He was teaching them, and the way He lived it out, proved to them that He was the Son of God.

And so, we as Christians, should understand that spiritual light is intrinsically found in our Lord Jesus Christ. And we can go further. Light is also used in the Scriptures as a word which pictures God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit’s conveyance of illuminating truth to all men in general, in common grace, and to God’s elect in particular, in saving grace. By the three Persons of the Divine Trinity shining forth the glory of what they have done in Christ and through Christ, shining into the darkness of the hearts and minds of many sinners, this is how people are saved. Light proceeds from God as a revelation of Himself in the preaching of the gospel; instructive heart-changing truth being conveyed to the minds of those who never really before thought about it. The truth of what Christ came to do, shining forth as the preacher preaches, and while the words land in the ears, and the mind begins to think them over, the powerful working of the Holy Spirit’s creating the faculty of spiritual sight sometimes takes place. The Holy Spirit who was sent by the Father and the Son after Jesus ascended to heaven, opens the eyes to see the light of truth, and the sinner understands and sees his need. The shining and the giving of this spiritual light is intended to bring to the minds of fallen sinners everywhere the most certain hope of obtaining eternal life. This Light, which was intrinsically personified in Jesus Christ, comes to reside in the hearts of God’s people. In the preaching of Bible, the preacher is using the means that God owns; the vehicle to convey spiritual Light. In and through the preaching of the gospel, the Holy Spirit is shining the glorious light of Christ. He alone can create the faculty of spiritual sight. Only He can so shine the light of Christ that the eyes and the minds of sinful people are opened to see the truth of their need of Him for salvation. This Light that I speaking of, which is now emanating from Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high, is now at work in this congregation, according to the sovereign working of God. And in conjunction with the powerful working of the Holy Spirit, this light of Christ is shining experientially for all who will exercise faith in Him. In the life of the Christian, light shines upon their path, the path of righteousness. And it will continue to shine brighter and brighter until the full day of eternity. (Proverbs 4: 12) What then, you ask, is the great problem with people coming to know the Lord? If the true light is already shining, then why don’t more people come to the light? Our text in verse 19 answers that question plainly. “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. The problem is not with God, or His sovereignty. God is well able to save a sinner from his sins through Jesus Christ our Lord. The problem is that light has come into the world, and there is still a sinful hesitancy in all people, apart from grace, to come to the Light. Listen to Proverbs 4: 18 and 19 – “But the path of the just is like the shining of the sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.” “The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.” This brings us to our 2nd statement of the Lord Jesus concerning Himself and yourself. And I want make it more personal than the way that I stated it at the beginning of this sermon.

2nd – Even though Christ has come as Light, yet you will still love the darkness unless something changes in your heart.

Verse 19 says – “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.” “For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” Even

though Christ has come as light into the world, and even though God has prepared all of these wonderful things for the salvation of sinners, and punished Christ in their place as a substitute for their sins, they still do not want Him, nor do they love Him as the Light of the World. They love the darkness. There is still a sinful hesitancy to trust in Christ, and give their heart to Him. They do not want their sinful deeds exposed to other men, but they do not realize that God always has them in His full view. Let me give you an illustration here. When you are comfortable in your sin, you are like a person who is sleeping in your bed, and you have been enjoying it immensely all night. The curtains are pulled and it is nice and dark in there. In the morning you do not want someone to come into the room where you are, and throw open the curtains, and say - "Arise sleeper, and let the light of Christ shine on you." No, you resist this, because you falsely think that to stay in the darkness is better than coming to see the light at that point. Darkness is the metaphorical picture of sin and ignorance. All people, by nature love the darkness; all people by nature want to stay in the darkness. They do not want to believe that they need Christ to be saved. They do not want to believe in the doctrine of Total Depravity; that because of Adam's sin, every part of their being has been affected, and so they are really unwilling to be saved by grace. They falsely think that if they want to be saved, they will be saved on their own terms, and according to their own supposed good works. Sin in their nature influences their thoughts, and words, and actions, because it resides in their mind, their heart, and their will. It even affects their conscience; so that their conscience will not condemn them when they justify themselves in their sin. They love the darkness because they know that the light of the Bible and the working of conviction by the Spirit condemns their justification of themselves in their sin. God's placing them under His judgment, they feel, is unjustified. They believe that God ought to accept them in their sin. It is their conviction that many sins are permissible; that there are particular sins, which in their own sight they believe are good and right for them to commit, and that the holy God Himself should be able to understand and accept that their sin is good and right. But they forget that God is the one has already given us His righteous and holy law. He has already defined for us what is right, by the light that He gives to us in His word. And He has defined for us how He is to be worshiped. He has shined in His common grace, and told us in the 10 commandments what sinful swearing is; and what day of the week we should honor Him in worship, and how it is that we should honor our parents. He has shined His light and told all men that they ought not to kill, or steal, or commit adultery, or bear false witness, or to covet what does not belong to them. God knows that these sins will destroy and ruin their lives. He knows that their continuing in them will keep them forever under His wrath.

Think of this from God's perspective. God knows better than any man, the total depravity of a man; that every part of his being has been affected by Adam's sin. He knows better than you do, my friend, that you have been deeply affected at the core of your being by Adam's sin. He has beheld you there in your heart, and in your actions, confirming your sinnership in many ways from your infancy on up to adulthood, and beyond. He has seen all this, and yet He has very graciously done something wonderful about your predicament. But you, by nature, do not care to lift a finger to change yourself to please Him unless He gives you grace, because by nature, in your sinful state, do not care to consider these all-important things. Your whole eternity is at stake, and yet you do not care. You say, "I am really a pretty good person, and I do care about what is right and wrong. This is good. But ask yourself this; do I only care about what is right and wrong only for selfish reasons, and how your conduct affects others around you? Or do you care because you have had God's light shined into your heart to show you how you have dishonored God by your sin? The reason that all men apart from Christ do not care, our text says, is because they love darkness. God so loved the world, that He gave His Son; that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And God did not send His

Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Christ might be saved. God has plainly declared in the gospel that the one believing in Jesus will not be condemned. And yet people still do not care; they love the darkness. They willfully and willingly want to remain ignorant of the gospel because they know that if they believe it, that they will have to change; they will have to tell all of their most cherished sins goodbye. Therefore they will not repent of them, and forsake them. Their heart and their mind are so deceived that they believe that it would be better for them to hold on to falsehoods about God and themselves. They want at all costs to maintain their personal independence from the Almighty telling them what they should do and what they need to do. They believe that they have freedom of will to choose in relation to these things, but then, as you look at them more closely, you see that they are still continually choosing to oppose the light of the gospel and the word of God, unless the grace of God intervenes.

This is why the person who does not believe is condemned already. It is because they have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God, which is the only way that God can, or will accept them. God is perfectly holy and the only way that He can accept you is if you trust in Christ's righteousness to become yours. You must have imputed and imparted righteousness. God must shine His glorious light into your heart so that you can behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Let it be known to everyone here today; God cannot accept any person in their sins, as they are, unrepentant and unconcerned, or self-righteous. He only accepts people by their exercising faith in His perfect, suffering Son. Would you hold to and practice even one sin? You should know then, that you hate the light. Everyone practicing evil hates the light. If your deeds are evil, you must repent; come to the light and learn the way of faith and righteous living. Learn this lesson from these verses this morning; God must condemn you if love the darkness and want to be joyfully ignorant and independent of what God has said upon this all-important matter of your salvation. This leads us then, finally, to -

The 3rd Major Statement which Jesus gives, which reveals more about Him and more about you, is this: – The person who desires to have a straight and true heart will come to the Light.

How does a person come to have a straight and true heart? Very simply, he comes to the light. He prays to God that he would be savingly taught the way to salvation and eternal life. "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God." Ah, this is a truth which will reveal very much about whether you are a true Christian or not. Have you come to the light, which is Jesus Christ our Lord? Have you asked Him for the forgiveness of your sins and a New Heart? Have you begun to practice the truth? Are you "doing the truth"? To practice the truth means that you live your life by faith in Christ, and pursue obedience to God's holy word. It means that you not only have come to the light in your conversion to Christ, but you are also now regularly praying that you will come to understand what it means to walk in the light, daily. The walk of the Christian is their taking steps of deliberate obedience to do the will of God as it is revealed in the Bible. Do you walk in the light, or are you still walking walk in the darkness? Sometimes it is hard to tell, unless, by faith, you are very decided about what you want. Do you want your works to be clearly seen as having been done "in God"? Listen to John Chapter 12, verse 46. Jesus says: "I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness." And John 8, verse 12 – "I am the light of the world." "He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." Looking to Jesus you have the light of life. I hope you see here, the strength and power that the Lord Jesus has, to bring you out of spiritual darkness and keep you from sin at every point of your walk with Him.

But let us ask ourselves now, what is my responsibility in this regard, in relation to walking with Christ in the light? It is that I would begin and continue to desire that all of my works

would be done in God; that they all would be wrought in God. To understand this better, turn with me to 1st John 1, verse 5. "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." "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in the 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 Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." There are a number of things which we should take notice of here. To walk in the light is an act of obedience. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another." This is something which we must consciously choose to do; to walk in the light with Christ, pursuing holiness and righteous living. To walk in the darkness is to sin, both for the unbeliever and the true Christian. The unbeliever has no power to walk in the light, but the Christian does. To walk in the light you must deliberately exercise faith in Christ, and deliberately go about to obey the truth of His word. When you do this, Christ will give you grace to keep you walking in the light.

Christ, as the good Shepherd, will be faithful to keep your soul. He will be faithful to give you a calm and sweet assurance of your salvation, as long as you confess your sins to Him, and pray for grace to do what pleases Him. It is unfortunately very true that many Christians do not realize that they have indwelling remaining corruption in their hearts which needs to be confessed and mortified daily every day in their heart and mind. And when they do not realize this, and do not take action, then they may indeed become discouraged and overwhelmed and wonder if the Lord is with them, or not. "If we say that we have no sin...(singular) we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." But if we confess these sins of our heart and mind that we find in ourselves, Christ is faithful and just to forgive our sins (plural) and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Oh, what blessed truth that this is. Confession of sin to God is good for the strengthening of the heart. Through this holy means Christ keeps us in the Light. But there is more. Look at Chapter 2, verse 3. "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." "He who say, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." "But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him." "By this we know that we are in Him." "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." How did Jesus walk? Verse 7 says: "Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning." "Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining." "He who say he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now." "He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him." "He who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes." Oh, how precious and powerful this is! Jesus walked in love for all men and laid down his life for God's sheep, His people; all of God's elect. To walk in the light is to walk in love to the brethren and keep God's commandments. Which ones, you ask. Every moral commandment found in the New Testament and all of which pertains to moral righteousness which can be found applicable, in the Old. Jesus says this: "You are the light of the world." "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden." "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it give light to all who are in the house." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is heaven" (Matthew 5: 14-16) Is the darkness passing away in you? Is the true light shining in you? Whoever keeps God's word, truly the love is perfected in him.

