

John 12: 34-36; “The Glory of Christ as Light”, Sermon # 67 in the series – “That All May Honor the Son”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on December 12th, 2021, in the Morning Worship Service.

It is very sad to see how great the spiritual blindness was, of so many of the Jewish people at this time of Christ’s going to the cross. Those people who were standing around, listening to Jesus say these things, are a good example of what the majority of the people of Israel were like in those days. When Jesus made this profound statement of how He would, by means of His going to the cross, draw all peoples to Himself, they immediately piped up and said – We have heard from the law that the Christ is to remain forever. They were implying that if those statements in the law which they were thinking of, were true, then how could He say that He was the Son of Man, the One who would have to die?

Who is this Son of Man, they asked? Now, I hope that you can see that they wanted Jesus to tell them plainly that He was the Christ. They wanted Him to explain to them why, if He was indeed the Christ, that He had to die. But you will notice, that in response to their questions, Jesus does not give them the answers that they wanted to hear. Instead He gave them 3 truths about Himself and spiritual light. He knew that they had already seen enough of His miracles and heard enough of His teaching, to be able to conclude that He was the Christ. And so, He gave them these truths, which He knew, if they believed them, they would find eternal life.

These truths are also very pertinent to us today. Let me give them to you now. 1st of all – The truth that the light is with you. 2nd – The truth that you should walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. 3rd – The truth that while you have the light, you should become sons of the light.

1st of all – The truth that the light is with you.

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘A little while longer the light is with you.’ He is saying to them that as the Light of the world, He would only be with them a little while longer; that is, in bodily and physical form, as a Man. He was going to be leaving them through His dying on the cross. He would leave them, He would die, He would be buried in the ground as a seed, and He would rise again on the 3rd day. And by this means He would bear much fruit. Many billions of people would be ransomed from sin by His fulfilling His Father’s purpose. Then after 40 days, He would ascend to heaven, where He now sits, at the right hand of the Father, interceding for all who see their need of Him.

He was saying to them that the light of all truth was with them; that is, in Himself. And, He was telling them what they needed to see if they would be saved. They needed to behold His glory and believe in Him. When they said to Jesus that the Christ would live forever, they were thinking of Scriptures like Psalm 89, verses 36 and 37 – “His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me; it shall be established forever like the moon, even like the faithful witness in the sky.” Or Psalm 110, verse 4 – “The Lord has sworn and will not repent, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’” But the light of the truth of the gospel had been shared with them for 3 and a half years now, at this point.

The Gospel of faith in Him had been preached to them. They should already have believed in Him. The truth was, that they had stumbled over what they did not understand; that is, that the Christ was to remain forever. They did not realize that according to the Scriptures He had to suffer and die. He first had to accomplish redemption for all sinners who would believe in Him. And then He would be raised from the dead. And when this took place it would confirm that He had been sent by God to bring this great salvation to them personally. They should have been able to think through this truth Biblically, and to weigh the evidence as they looked at Jesus. The truth which they did not know, but which they should have suspected, was that He was both

God and Man in His two natures. He actually had said this to them many times. I and My Father are One.

But, still, in His body He would have to suffer and die according to the Scriptures. But as God He would never die. As a Man His soul and His body would be separated for a time. But as God He would even be able to raise Himself from the dead after He died. They should have believed the evidence of the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, and then believed in Him. Instead they were confounded by it, and believed in the Pharisees false accusations and conclusions. So now it was because of their unbelief that they were now rejecting Jesus. It was because they were not receiving all of the Scriptures concerning Him; only some, even those which they would pick and choose.

Certainly they should have considered other Scriptures, such as Isaiah chapter 6, verse 9. "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders." "And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." His eternal Godhead was most certainly displayed in all the miracles that He did. He did them by His own power, which was equal to the Father's. He did all of His miracles in submission to His Father's will. His being the Christ had been demonstrated to them by His wonderful teaching about grace.

He told them that He had come to fulfill the Law, by all of His righteous actions and the good deeds that He did. But they had stumbled over the fact that it was necessary that He, the Christ, would also have to seal His obedience with His suffering in the place of sinners like themselves. He would have to lay down His life by His being lifted up on the cross, before He would be glorified to rule forever over all men. They should have remembered Isaiah 53, verses 4 and 5. "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted." "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."

Truly Jesus exhibited in every way that He was the Christ, their Promised Messiah. And here they were now, ready to reject Him, and keep walking on, in the darkness. But even though this was true of them, let us always remember the truth of the glory of Christ as light. John chapter 1, verses 1-4 – "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "He was in the beginning with God." "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." And then John says in verse 5 – "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

The wonderful truth is, that the Lord Jesus who is the light of the world, spiritually speaking, is always shining in the darkness. He was shining then, and He is shining now. Christ was the light, shining in the darkness, to all Israel, at that very time. These unbelieving Jews were not only in the darkness of sin and ignorance of who He was, but they were, in themselves, darkness itself; the darkness that did not comprehend the His light. To speak plainly, these people did not comprehend the greatness and the glory of Christ, either in His blessed Person, or in the work that He came to do, on behalf of sinners like themselves.

But even so, He would keep on shining the glory of His spiritual light; even through the time of His greatest oppositions, and His greatest sufferings. The light of the sun keeps shining above the clouds that may block it from our view. Even so, the light of Christ continually shines in the darkness today, no matter how wicked men become, no matter how much they want to speak against the glory of His Person, or the glory of His name, or the glory of His works of grace in the heart of a person who believes in Him. This is because no one and nothing can stop that shining, now that He is raised from the dead. He is, and He always will be, God's gift of Light to all generations.

He is shining in the darkness of this world, even now. And the people who sit in spiritual darkness, they still do not comprehend it. Unless a further work of shining by the Holy Spirit takes place, His shining into the darkness of the sinner's heart, the gospel is veiled. The god of this age blinds them and he pulls the wool over the eyes of their heart. But when God commands light to shine in their heart, in accordance with the gospel preached to them, they will see the glory of Christ; the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Dear Christian, will you not remember this blessed truth? That the light of Christ is always shining in connection with His gospel being preached. Take heart, God can dispel the darkness which exists in the darkest heart.

How did He save Saul on the road to Damascus? It was by shining upon him a brilliant overpowering light, so that he fell down to the ground and cried out – Lord, who are you? And the Lord said to him – Saul, Saul, is it hard for you to kick against the goads? I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. It ought to give to every Christian who wants to see their loved ones and friends saved, great hope that the Lord can, in sovereign mercy, shine forth into the darkest heart and reveal Himself to them.

But as we remember this, we should also remember that that this saving shining light will only be with all men a little longer. That is, until each of us dies. Therefore, there is a very important reason why it is, that when you hear the gospel of Christ, dear sinner, that you should believe it. Indeed it is your solemn responsibility. It is the solemn responsibility of every person here, to believe in Christ. The question of questions is that since you will only have the light with you a little longer, will you believe in the light?

2nd – There is the truth here, that you should walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you.

What does this statement of Jesus' mean when He says – Walk while you have the light? He is saying to these Jews here that they ought to walk; that is to live their life, realizing that He, the Christ, had been walking among them. And He had shown them by His words, His miracles, and His deeds, the way of salvation and the way of life. They were being instructed to learn from Him the way to live and to please God. The darkness would overtake them if they did not live their life in this way. If they walked in darkness it would mean that they would not know where they were going. That is, that they would not realize that they were being deceived by the Pharisees and others into thinking that they were going to heaven, when actually they were not, if they did not believe in Jesus.

Those who thought of themselves as their teachers, when they taught against Christ, they were teaching the false doctrine of a works righteousness as being the way to please God. If they heeded the words of the Pharisees they would not realize that they were actually trusting in something that could not save them from their sins. They were believing something which would eventually lead them to be condemned by God and sent to everlasting punishment. They would be trusting in their own righteousness. And they would not know where they were going if they walked in the darkness of sin and false doctrine, and if they rejected Christ, the light.

How many people are in the same position today? Our Lord Jesus Christ has always been the Light of the world, the Light shining in the darkness, the Sun of Righteousness who has arisen with healing in His wings. And yet many people in our day, do not understand. They do not want to understand, and so they do not realize where they are going. They are walking on the broad road to destruction. They do not want to enter at the narrow gate of Christ, when He says – I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except by Me.

Jesus says in John chapter 8, verses 12-18 – “I am the light of the world.” “He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” “The Pharisees therefore said to Him, ‘You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.’” “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I

am going; but you do not where I come from and where I am going.” “You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.” “And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.” “It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.” “I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.” “Then they said to Him, Where is Your Father?” “Jesus answered, ‘You know neither Me nor My Father.’ “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.”

So, these verses here, stand in relation to the ones that we are studying in John 12. These men were walking in the darkness of their own understanding of the Scriptures apart from Jesus who was the light of the world, the light of life. He was standing right in front of them telling them that they needed to follow Him, and that if they did, they would not walk in darkness. But they were judging things according to the flesh; that is, according to their own fallen human reasoning, trying to be religious, trying to be righteous on their own. They were justifying their own efforts at keeping God’s law to be enough to please God, and to find acceptance with Him.

Jesus knew that it was not only not enough, but that they were deceiving many other people to think the way that they thought, and to walk in the same hypocritical way that they walked. They had a zeal for God, but it was not according to knowledge. They were ignorant of God’s righteousness, Jesus Christ, who standing in front of them, and they were going about to establish their own righteousness. They would not submit to Christ, that His righteousness was a perfect righteousness, and their was very imperfect. They needed to walk in His light, but they had deceived themselves concerning what it meant to know God and walk with God.

There are many people who are living life in this very way today. But they need not. If you believe that Jesus is the light of the world, you will be walking in His light. You will believe in your need of His wisdom to really understand the Scriptures. You will be constantly be believing in your need of His grace in order to keep God’s commandments. You will not consciously be walking according to your own thoughts, or doing your own thing. And you will not neglect the study of the light of the Scriptures in relation to the light of life which is Jesus. You will see Him as your all-in-all. If you say that you are a Christian you will then walk in the light of truth, even as He is the light of truth personified. And you will love Him for what He has done for you, and for what He is teaching you; how to live a righteous, a holy, and a godly life. You will not be satisfied with a worldly life. You will not want to continue in your sins that grace might abound to you.

You will not think that your own fallen reasoning is sufficient to live your life to God, as these people did. You will embrace the fact that it is only in His light, in Christ’s light, that you will see light. You will search the Scriptures and you will ask the Lord Himself to spiritually teach you to understand the truth about the things that you should do, in living your life to God. And you will love Christ preeminently above every person and any other thing of importance in your life. You will not consciously walk in the darkness of error or false doctrine. And this leads to our 3rd truth which is so important to believe –

3rd – While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light. (verses 36 and 37)

“While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” “These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.” So Jesus gave them this good instruction, of the very best thing that they could do, if they would know God. And then He departed and hid from them. You might ask, why would He do this? He did this so that they would think more deeply about what He had just said to them here, that the light of truth is something that needs to be acted upon immediately if no eternal danger is to come to the soul. The issue is particularly important in relation to what you think about Christ Himself.

Many of these people were taking a wait and see attitude concerning Christ, and He was saying to them that this was a most dangerous thing to do if they wanted to be saved. He was

telling them that He was going to be lifted up; He was going away, very soon, to the cross. There would be no more time for discussion and questions and talk. Those listening to Him must make up their minds about Him, whether He was the Christ. They had to decide whether they were going to follow Him and learn the New and Living Way; of how to please God, and how to walk with God. And so He told them this and then it says in verse 36 that after He spoke and departed, He was hidden from them.

His hiding is well explained for us in Luke chapter 19, verses 41-44. It says there – “Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace!’” “But now they are hidden from your eyes.” “For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

So, when Christ visits you, as He did with these people; when He warns you that there is only so much time that you have in relation to His visiting you with the light of truth; you must during that time, believe in Him. You must believe in everything that He has said to you in His word. If He perceives that your soul is drawing back from Him, then He will hide, even as He did here with these people. While you have the light of the truth of the gospel concerning the greatness and glory of Christ, and this light is shining upon you now, you must believe if you would become a son of light, a child of Christ as a Father. The Father is the Father of lights with whom there is no shifting of shadow. But Christ is the Everlasting Father as it says in Isaiah 9: 6.

And we should understand from this that the person believing Jesus becomes a son or daughter of light when they believe in Him. They have union with Him by faith. They once were darkness, but now they are light in the Lord. May those in this place that do not know themselves to be a son or a daughter of Christ, the Light of the world, come now and find life and light. This was the end of Jesus’ public ministry. He would no more teach the people of the Jews publicly and strive with them to understand. He would hide Himself from them. And they would see Him lifted up on the cross, and some would even say – Crucify Him, Crucify Him. But you should know that in being lifted up to die there, He went to the cross so that you would come to Him for life, and come to Him for light. Come now.