

## "Light It Up!" – Pr Jim Sprengle – Advent Midweek 1 – December 1, 2021

- I. **Ephesians 5:13** - <sup>13</sup> But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible
- II. **I like to watch crime shows.**
  - a. I admit it.
  - b. I don't mean Hill Street Blues or Law and Order, I mean real life, crime solving shows like Forensic Files and Dateline, among others.
  - c. It's not that I enjoy the awful crimes, but watching how investigators solve them and bring people to justice is gratifying.
  - d. One of the many crime solving techniques is using a black light to expose things that cannot be seen by the naked eye.
    - i. For example, if the chemical luminol is sprayed on blood, it will light up brightly when black light is on it – even if it's years old.
      1. It's almost as if a whole story is all there, but just needs the right kind of light to shine on it.
- III. **St. Paul is helping the Christians in Ephesus to be light in the darkness.**
  - a. Of course, he isn't talking about a black light or any other worldly light – he is talking about the light of God's Word.
    - i. Paul knows Jesus Christ is God's Word who dwelt among us – as it says in John 1:1; 14 ("the Word was God; And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...")
    - ii. And so the Word of God, Jesus Christ, has come into the world as a light (John 3:19) which shines on the darkness and evil.
  - b. Those things that are not necessarily visible to the naked eye are exposed and brought out by the pure light of God's presence.
    - i. In fact, Paul says that before we knew Jesus by faith, we were darkness.
      1. Not living in darkness, but we ourselves were darkness!
      2. The light of Jesus, the Word, had not yet transformed us to light.
  - c. You see, Jesus comes into our lives and first exposes, then convicts, then converts<sup>1</sup> us to be light in the world.
  - d. When light shines on the dark sins of our lives – exposes them – we are not always aware that we have things that need to be shown for what they are...
    - i. The room looks fine until the light shows all the glowing stains of sin
    - ii. Our selfishness – our lack of love for others – our trust in our own power and control – our unwillingness to be light in the dark – our getting caught up in worldly matters rather than God's will.
    - iii. Maybe each of us have experienced a time when a sin is made clear and we get defensive and angry, but it's been exposed.

- e. Usually exposing our sins convicts us to reject that way of life.
  - i. Now that these ugly stains are out in the open, we feel terrible.
  - ii. Sometimes they make us physically ill, or repulsed, or very sad
  - iii. In desperation, a response follows... "What shall we do?" And the answer is, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:37-38)
  - iv. After we see that there is nowhere else to turn – we are open to the work of the Holy Spirit who raises us to life and light by grace through faith. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- f. As the light shines into places we would rather keep in darkness, God has other plans to restore us by way of His Son, Jesus Christ.

IV. **The Light, Jesus Christ, has come into the world.**

- a. The whole season of Advent is a preparation for the coming of Jesus – not only the first time as we celebrate on Christmas Day, but also the return on the Last Day.
- b. Lights in the world come and go – Christmas lights, LED lights, candle lights – they all burn out and cannot possibly replace the eternal light of Christ.
- c. As much as we appreciate and enjoy the lights of the season, they should only remind us of a greater light – the reason we celebrate – Jesus
  - i. The Christ Child was, and still is, the only thing that can cut through the darkness of the world – and especially our own darkness
  - ii. Lest we forget, Jesus did not stay a baby, but grew to be a man, carrying out a ministry of reconciliation and life, and ultimately bled and died on a cross.
    - 1. In that wonderful gift of redemption, His blood was visible to the eyes of all who were present at His torture and execution...
    - 2. And even today, His blood is still visible in the gift of the Lord's Supper.
    - 3. Rather than needing a special light to expose it, the blood of Christ shines brightly into our lives to strengthen our faith and forgive us always.
- d. In a miraculous way, each of us have gone from being darkness to being light... to showing forth the glory of our Lord.

V. **As light, we open the door for others to see the Light, Jesus.**

- a. One of the challenges we face during this season of Advent is the huge difference between what the Church sees and what the world sees.
  - i. In other words, we are focusing on Jesus and why He had to come – because of our sins.

- ii. On the other hand, the world is blasting Christmas music, opening stores at 3am for incredible sales, promoting and commercializing Christmas for profit, and ultimately losing sight of Jesus.
  - iii. We get caught up in these things all the time, but remember, we are light.
- b. What a witness we can be for the people around us!
  - i. Rather than jumping into the worldly side of the season, we can remind people of why we celebrate Christmas.
  - ii. Rather than emphasizing our own family and serving ourselves, we can serve our Lord during Advent and Christmas with our time, talents, and treasures.
  - iii. Rather than going into debt over parties and Christmas presents, we can celebrate in the presence of others.
- c. Whenever we take the time to focus on Jesus (which naturally means we focus on others because that is His desire for us) then we are light.
- d. So let's build our anticipation in a better way... not a worldly anticipation of the commercial Christmas... but a Christ-centered anticipation.
- e. By God's grace we have each been made into light – so go out there and light it up! Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Winger, T. M. (2015). *Ephesians*. (D. O. Wenthe & C. P. Giese, Eds.) (p. 566). Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.