



THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

A Worship Discussion Guide for Individuals, Groups & Families for the week of March 16, 2025

Read the Bible passage aloud in your group meeting. This is a worship discussion guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for your meeting, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

I Am the Light of the World

Jesus stands amidst of four torches as high as the walls of the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. This festival commemorated the long journey of the Israelites in the wilderness. The torches were lit each night and celebrated the great pillar of fire that led the people of Israel through the wilderness ([Exodus 13:21-22](#)). There was singing and dancing through the night and it is during this joyous celebration that Jesus declares, "I am the light of the world."

John 8:12-14 (emphasis added)

¹²Again 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." ¹³So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true." ¹⁴Jesus 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.

- Light is a theme repeated often throughout Scripture. Name other places in the Bible that come to mind where "light" is referenced.
- What promise does Jesus make for those who follow Him?
- When Jesus tells us that He is "light", what is He saying about His identity and His ministry? Read through these verses below for more insight:

I John 1:5-7. 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.

John 1:4-9. 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. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

Jesus declares that He is the light of the world in the middle of conflict between Jesus, the Pharisee, and believing & unbelieving Jews. Jesus makes a bold claim about His deity and ministry, and the Pharisees will not accept His statement as true-- an example of those "walking in darkness." It is easy to judge the Pharisees for preferring darkness over light, yet all of us are tempted in this way. Light exposes what has been hidden in darkness, including what is in our hearts.

- Why is darkness so attractive to us?
- What about the light of Christ is threatening to us? When does the light become attractive to us?

If you've ever walked in a completely dark, unfamiliar place, it is as if you are blind. In the next chapter of John, he tells the account of Jesus healing a man born blind ([John 9:1-41](#)). When the Pharisees question the now-seeing man, he says "one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see" (25).

- When we admit the darkness in our hearts, how does that change how we see spiritually?

It is a frightening and humbling experience to walk in total darkness without a way to get to the light. The Israelites in the wilderness were completely dependent on God's pillar of fire. The blind man was completely dependent on others to lead him, and Jesus to heal him. They could not find a way on their own, and neither can we. Jesus loves us in our need, and promises to be our Light-- guiding us, exposing our hearts, and leading us to life with His presence.

*"The God who made light to shine in the darkness was now doing this work in me. This work of breaking into and overcoming the blindness I was born embracing... Without asking my permission, a good God had come to my rescue."
--Jackie Hill Perry*

- Think of a time when Jesus delivered you from darkness into His light (exposing sin, showing you your need of Him, guiding you when you didn't know what to do). What was that like?
- Consider ways that you are tempted to walk in darkness (depending on yourself, hiding in shame, trusting in your ability to see clearly,). Ask Jesus for grace to see your sin, confess it to Him, and repent. He has promised that He is leading you His light.

Pray together in response to God's Word.

"Arise, shine: for your Light has come."

Heavenly Father, forgive us; we have lived as if the Light of the World had not overcome the darkness of our sin.

"And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

Lord Jesus Christ, redeem us; We confess that we sought our own glory as we grew impatient for Your coming.

"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."

Holy Spirit, renew us; We have often grown accustomed to darkness, and so hardened the true yearnings of our waiting hearts.

"And nations shall come to Your light, and kings to the brightness of Your rising."

Almighty God, You came to us in the fullness of time. Draw us to live in Your presence and grace. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Stories from the Church: Jesus Reveals Himself

Each Sunday in Lent we will hear testimonies of how Jesus is faithfully revealing Himself to His people.



This week, we heard from Kofi-Buaku Atsina in worship.

I grew up in Ghana where Christian religious belief is commonplace. When I was a child, my mother took us to a non-denominational church, which helped to lay the foundation of my Christian faith.

However, in my early years,

much of what I learnt and practiced about Christianity was formally through Catholic elementary school. At that time, I thought being a Christian meant being a good person. In my young mind, this translated into being obedient, following rules, and not getting into trouble at home or school. When I sinned against God, I would repeat the Lord's Prayer a number of times and say a number of "Hail Mary's" as penance. I thought I was a good person when I did these things.

From Catholic elementary and junior high school, I went to a Presbyterian senior high school. It was there that I for the first time began to have a substantive understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I was made to understand that to become a Christian, I not only need to show true repentance of my sins, but to accept God's free gift of Grace through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. So, in the second semester of my freshman year of senior high school, in an act of faith, I committed myself to Christ. In the years to come, I dedicated more time into reading the words of the Holy Scripture. I started to go to a nondenominational church that spur my curious mind into seeking better understanding of the Bible.

After high school, I was blessed with the opportunity to come to the US for college. Coming to the US was a culture shock. For the first time in my life, I was meeting people with religious backgrounds I had only read about or heard off on the radio or television. My roommates were a Hindu and an atheist. My floor mates were cultural and orthodox Jews, and self-proclaimed Agnostics. In this context, I wondered why many college students didn't believe in the existence of God, like it was back home. It felt hard to have the existence of God be a common ground for discussions on religion, culture or morality.

I joined a church and campus ministry in my second year of college. In that safe environment, I was encouraged and challenged to explore and ask probing questions about my own faith. Does God really exist? What is truth? Why is the essential message of Christianity true? Why is every other religion inadequate? Is Jesus Christ who he claimed to be? Is my faith in God irrational? Why is the Bible inerrant? Although, I believed that Christianity was true, there was a curiosity and a hunger to have these questions resolved in my mind, and in a manner that held ground to the non-believer in the marketplace of ideas. It was during these years that God showed me the importance of church community and how He uses it to transform our hearts individually and collectively. I grew in an awareness of the depth of my own sin and depravity, the nature of God's wrath, the costly price that Jesus Christ paid to save me from it, the depths of God's unmerited Grace and Mercy. More and more, I began to understand why the Cross of Jesus Christ: His death and resurrection is so central to the Christian faith and why without it, all hope is lost. As the Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:17-20 (NLT):

“And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.”

Since college, my journey with Jesus Christ has not been without its challenges. God has used seasons of trial and adversity to humble me, to challenge my sense of control, self-reliance and self-sufficiency. The illusion of control is much more apparent to me now as a parent of little children. Yet, God has and still does demonstrate his faithfulness to me. He re-assures me of His love, in times of worry and anxiety, in times of adversity, and when I have doubted His Goodness (2 Tim 2: 13). In Paul’s letter to the Romans 8:31-38 (NIV), he writes

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

I have learned to trust God with every circumstance. I rest secure in His promise “to never leave nor forsake” me (Hebrews 13:5). I seek the prompting of His Holy Spirit to enable me to pray frequently, to open my eyes to see God at work, to remember His Goodness, to trust Him with every decision big or small, and to rest on His sure promises, until Jesus Christ comes again.

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Worship Study Guides during Lent 2025 are coordinated with the I AM Statements from the Gospel of John sermon series and the Lent 2025 Churchwide Devotional



