

The Light Has Come – John 12:27-36a

John 12:27-36. Becky and I talk about light in our house quite a bit. A recurring topic. Usually centered on one of two issues. How many lights are left *on* in the house, or how dim the light is in the living room while we're watching a Hallmark movie. Becky likes the equivalent of sunshine on the screen, and I like to see the screen.

And at Christmas, the light conversations multiply. Especially this year; because we put up those year-round lights that you can program, and change colors, and do everything but butter your bread. **Photo 1** – This is me ready to go. **Photo 2** – This is me on a boom lift 12 hours later. **Photo 3** – This is the final result. The light has come!

But it pales in comparison to the greatest light. The light of Christmas. The light of life. The Light of the World. *That* light has come.

But it's all for naught if you don't see it. If you don't walk in it. If you're not part of it. If you don't *believe* in the light. That's the point here. And the point of Christmas in general. That we would believe.

And if you do, I hope this lights you up all the more. But if you don't, if you don't believe in the Light of Christmas, I hope you listen. And by the time we're done I hope that you too shine. Because the light has come, and the light is here. Right now.

Look at v35 – *The light is among you*, Jesus says. Referring to himself. True then and true now. *“Where two or three are gathered in my name [Jesus said], there am I among them.”* (Matthew 18:20; ESV) The light is here.

And then he says in v36 – *While you have the light, believe in the light*. Believe in Jesus. So that you have him personally. That's the bottom line here.

But let's start where he starts in v27 – *“Now is my soul troubled*. [Jesus says. Troubled by what lay ahead.] *And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’?* [It's tempting.] *But for this purpose I have come to this hour*. (ESV) What purpose? What hour? The hour of his death.

Jesus came to die for our sins (v27)

He came at Christmas to die at Easter. The *light* of the world, *died* for the world. On a cross. That's what he means in v32 when he says – *I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself*. [33] *He said this* [John adds] *to show by what kind of death he was going to die*. He would be lifted up on a cross. Snuffed out like a Christmas candle.

Why? To pay the price for our sins; our offense against God. That's the *ultimate* purpose he had in mind. That's the *primary* reason for the season. Everything else is preparation.

And if you get that right, that Jesus came at Christmas to die for our sins at Easter, 33 years later, chances are you'll get everything else right. But if you get it wrong, if you miss it, if you ignore the reason he came, all is lost.

The light has come, and he came to die.

Then he says in v28 – *Father, glorify your name*.” In other words, “I'm here, I've come to

this hour, now use me to exalt yourself. Use me and my name to magnify you and yours. The name that describes *you*. Yahweh. The ever-present one. All-eternal one. Sovereign-holy one. Use me to glorify you.” That's the idea. And the second reason Jesus *came*. To glorify God the Father.

Jesus came to glorify the Father (v27b-30)

It's not only the implication *here*, but his explicit prayer later on; in **John 17:1** just before his death. [1b] *“Father, the hour has come [he said]; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you*.” Lift up your Son, that your Son may lift you up. So Jesus came to die, and Jesus came to glorify. To exalt the one who sent him. *****

And lo and behold, God responded audibly! Jesus said [28] *“Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”*

How so? How has God glorified his name in the past? How about creating the world in the first place? And then promising a way for us to be saved when Adam and Eve sinned. And preserving a remnant through signs and wonders. And sending his Son in the fullness of time. That's how he had *already* glorified his name.

And he'd do it again, he said. This time by *sacrificing* his Son, to save those who believe in his Son. Save us from the *consequences* of our sin through the *forgiveness* of sin; forgiveness and eternal life. He *will* glorify himself he said, and he is. In *new* creations. The lives of men and women just like you and me.

And before we're done, I'm going to give you an opportunity to be a part of that. An opportunity to be *saved* by God, for the *glory* of God. His glory and your good.

But first, there's a test. A hearing test. V29 – *The crowd that stood there and heard it [heard the voice from heaven] said that it had thundered*. Others said, *“An angel has spoken to him.”* Instead of listening, instead of hearing, they explained it away.

How about you? How's *your* hearing? Do *you* tend to explain the supernatural things of God away? Attributing his orchestration of events and divine appointments to something else? His abundant blessings to some-*one* else?

How about his written word? His supernatural voice now. Sharper than any two-edged sword that divides soul and spirit. Do you hear that? Do you hear what I hear? And countless others before us? Or do you dismiss this book as the mindless ramblings of over-zealous men? A bunch of stories for fragile people who need a crutch.

I hope not. Because the test remains, and you can't afford to fail. God still speaks, and he speaks to us.

That's why – [30] *Jesus answered* [in v30], *“This voice [the voice from heaven] has come for your sake, not mine*. Our sake. Why? That we may hear, and believe. Hear, and give credit where credit is due. Hear, and glorify our Father in heaven. Just like Jesus. The light has come, and God still speaks.

Then Jesus moves a little quicker and gives us three *more* reasons he came and died. V31 – *Now is the judgment of this world* [he says]; *now will the ruler of this world be cast out*.

[32] And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” [33] He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

Jesus came to die for our sins, and . . .

Jesus came to seal the world’s judgment (v31a)

Judgement, as in the consequences of eternal torment for those who *don’t* believe. Those who reject Jesus. *Now is the judgment of this world*, he said in v31. Meaning now is the time when those things are determined. The time when consequences are finalized. Future consequences for present unbelief. Fail to believe in Jesus, and your judgment is sealed.

But it’s *not* by his death on the cross. It’s by his words preceding it. Like he says a little later in v47 – *If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.* [48] *The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.*

The *death* of Jesus doesn’t judge the world, his words do. The truth he spoke. The warnings he gave. The call they ignore.

If that’s you, make no mistake. The light has come and judgment is certain.

Fourth . . .

Jesus came to defeat Satan (v31b)

As in, conquer and vanquish him. Remove him. V31b – *Now will the ruler of this world be cast out.* Not that Satan was banished from the earth the *moment* Jesus died and rose again, but that his death *guarantees* his banishment. Guarantees his defeat. To be completed later when Jesus returns. In the meantime, he writhes and thrashes about like a dying serpent.

The light has come, and Satan has lost.

Fifth . . .

Jesus came to save the world (v32)

He not only came to judge the world, but save the world. To *draw all people* to himself, v32. Not that all will come, but that all would.

Five reasons, five purposes, that the Light has come.

But, as we’ve seen before in the Gospel of John, the crowd didn’t get it. And didn’t *want* to get it. Like so many in our day, they were living in denial. Maybe even you.

[34] *So the crowd answered him* [v34], “*We have heard from the Law [the Old Testament] that the Christ [another term for Messiah] remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up?*

“How can you say he will die? *Daniel 7* says that his dominion will *never* end. And Isaiah 9 says that one of his names is *Everlasting* Father. So *how can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up?* (34b) They were genuinely puzzled, I think.

But based on their next question, they were also living in denial. Or at the very least,

stubbornly slow to accept the truth. Asking in v34c – *Who is this Son of Man?*” The first question was legit, but second one smacks of denial. Because they knew.

He just said in v23 that *the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified*, and then said in v27 – *for this purpose I have come to this hour.* He *identifies* himself as the Son of Man. Straight up. But they didn’t even need that. They knew from all his miracles and teachings up to that point.

And yet they asked anyway. Indicating a grudging acceptance at best, or a stubborn denial at worst. Because their answer was right in front of them. Just like he is now.

That’s why Jesus cuts to the chase in v35-36. Like he often did. He *knew* they knew, and wanted to get to the bottom line as quickly as possible. Focusing less on ground that had already been covered, and more on their response.

[35] *So Jesus said to them, “The light [the Son of Man; the Savior] is among you for a little while longer.* [A few days longer at that point. At least a few days in the flesh.] *Walk while you have the light,* [as in, conduct your life in the radiance of his glory; the radiance of his righteousness] *lest darkness overtake you.* Un-righteousness. Sin. And those who promote it; seen *and* unseen.

Live in the righteousness of *Christ*, he says, *my* righteousness, lest the darkness of sin gets the best of you. And it will.

Because – [35b] *The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going.* What’s true physically is true spiritually. The one who’s blind to his sin, or living in denial about it, gropes about with no *clue* to the danger. No clue there’s a cliff ahead. No clue there’s a drop-off on either side.

What’s worse, he doesn’t even know where he’s headed. He lacks purpose in life, he lacks fulfillment, and he lacks direction. Am I close? Is your life all about you? Just a bunch of hedonism and self-promotion? Aimless wandering and trouble? Darkness and hopelessness?

If so, the light still shines. One *more* reason for the purpose of that hour.

Jesus came to shine the light of life (v35)

Saying in v35 – *The light is among you.* The light has come. Not some nebulous light. Not some feel-good imaginary light. But Jesus himself. God’s *Son* is the light that shines. The light that *offers* life, and gives life, and sustains life.

Because all the way back in chapter 1, John said – [4] *In him was life, and the life was the light of men.* In other words, Jesus came to *shine* the light of life, and *give* us the light of life. Saving us from the darkness of hell and granting us the brightness of heaven. With a clear purpose and sure path to get there.

Which makes Jesus the source of our vitality, the radiance of our heart, and the hope of our existence. *That* light is among us. That light has come. The one that *shines in the darkness* of this world and the darkness of your heart, and is not overcome. (John 1:5)

But you have to believe in him (v36)

You have to put your faith in him. You have to entrust your life to him. You have to join him. Like he said in v36 – *While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.*”

Sons of light, as in *part* of the light. Part of his *righteousness*. Just like a child becomes part of a family, a believer becomes part of the light. The light of Christ. The light of glory. The light of truth.

But you have to believe in him. Believe and keep believing. Trust and keep trusting. Instead of stumbling about in life – seeing, but through a veil; living, but only for yourself; walking, but only in darkness; trying, but full of sin – instead of all that, believe in Jesus.

And do so . . .

- **While you still can**

[36] *While you have the light*, v36. Believe while his offer still stands. While his light still shines. Not physically of course, but spiritually. Believe while the forgiveness he grants and the righteousness he gives are still available.

We may not have Jesus in the flesh to shine on our lives, but we have the Spirit. The one *sent* by Jesus. (John 15:26) The one who bears *witness* to the light.

But even *he* won’t do so forever. There’s an end date to all this shining. Nobody knows when, but a day is coming when the light is withdrawn. A day when it’s too late to believe. A day of judgment.

So by all means believe while you can. Entrust your life to Jesus now. Walk in the light today and everyday hereafter. Because the Light has come. The greatest light.

Prayer – God, thank you for opening eyes to the light of your Son, the light of life. Give us a rock-solid confidence that your light now shines within, never to flicker; and give us a Spirit-filled conviction to walk in it. For your glory and our good.

You Are Loved