

INTRODUCTION

¹²*Again 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.”*

It is with these words that we begin today’s reflection on the person and character of Jesus Christ. But not only that; we are drawn by Jesus into a conflict that has been painted from one end of the Biblical tapestry all the way to the other: the battle between the Light and the Darkness.

If we are honest with ourselves, we all know that our technological, philosophical, and political advancements have not and will not cure the darkness we know exists. The darkness out there—as well as the darkness within us—doesn’t merely *exist*; it perpetuates evil of all kinds. Human sex trafficking is more prevalent today than ever, and there are more humans bartered as slaves today than ever. On the scales of justice, black lives weigh less than others. Millions of unborn children lose their chance at life before their first breath, and students are shot in their classrooms. Meanwhile, the church seems confused, disunified, and lacking a compelling testimony.

When Jesus refers to himself as the LIGHT OF THE WORLD in this passage, we will see he is referring to how he is our only hope to emerge from the darkness that suffocates us and perpetuates evil in this world. We will also see how he is calling us to fulfill our duty to be bearers of his light. We need to know those truths, now more than ever. When we are faced with doubt, fear, tragedy, and all manners of spiritual warfare, we need to be reminded of the reality of the dominion of darkness, of the Kingdom for which we are ambassadors, and of the King for whom we fight.

As we examine Jesus’ words today, we’re going to do so in four parts:

(1) **THE CONFUSION**, (2) **THE DARKNESS**, (3) **THE LIGHT**, and (4) **THE CHALLENGE**.

I. THE CONFUSION

As we turn to John 8:12, we must begin by examining what has occurred between now and his teaching to the crowds in John 6. Indeed, the context of our passage can be summarized by examining four groups confused about Jesus: his followers, his family, his people, and his enemies.

His Followers | John 6:22-59: After Jesus feeds thousands of his followers with five loaves and two fish, and after he walks on water to save his closet disciples from a storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus teaches that he is the Bread of Life. *“I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst” (6:35)*. Jesus shows how he alone can provide what his followers need to *truly* live. But many interpret Jesus’ words literally—that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood (6:53-55, 60). Jesus rebukes them, announcing *“no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the father” (6:65)*. After many of Jesus’ followers leave, only “the Twelve” remain (6:66). Peter famously states: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (6:66).

His Family | John 7:1-9: In the very next chapter, Jesus’ words and behavior confound another group: his brothers. They urge him to prove his divinity by performing miracles in Galilee during the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2-4). They—like Jesus—presumably know the danger of doing so (7:1). And yet they urge him to take the risk of arrest and persecution, perhaps in part because even they, *his own family*, did not believe Jesus was God (7:5). Jesus explains to his brothers that it was not yet his time, and that he is hated not because he teaches heresy, but because he testifies against the works of evil in the world (7:9).

His People | John 7:10-44: Eventually, Jesus discretely joins the Jewish attendees at the Feast of Tabernacles (7:10). There, the people are divided in their opinions about Jesus’ ministry (7:11-13). Jesus steps out from the shadows, proceeds to challenge the people, and to defend his healing of a paralyzed man on the Sabbath (5:1-29). The people are astonished at Jesus’ wisdom and mastery of the scriptures (7:15). They think the Pharisees may consider Jesus to be the Messiah because they have yet to condemn him (7:26).

His Enemies | John 7:45-8:11: The Pharisees become aware of the people’s “mutterings” and send their own henchmen to arrest Jesus (7:32). Yet Jesus continues to teach, and when the officers return to the Pharisees without him, they explain they did not arrest Jesus because they had never heard anyone teach like him (7:45). Nicodemus, a Pharisee whom Jesus famously taught under the cover of night (**John 3:1-20**) urges the Pharisees to hear Jesus before judging him. Instead—and presuming that **John 7:53-8:11** does follow¹—the Pharisees confront Jesus with a woman caught in adultery. Jesus does not wither; he exposes the hypocrisy and sin of the Pharisees and humiliates them in public (8:7-9).

It is after Jesus has interacted with these groups, and after he has encountered their confusion, that he declares himself to be the LIGHT OF THE WORLD. And I think it is helpful to emphasize how these different groups were confused leading up to this statement, not because Jesus’ declaration resolves all their confusion—although many do appear to come to a saving belief in Jesus shortly afterwards (8:30)—but because their confusion illustrates the very darkness Jesus’ light invades.

II. THE DARKNESS

By declaring himself to be the LIGHT OF THE WORLD, Jesus is drawing an explicit link between himself and the Old Testament prophecies and themes regarding light, YHWH, and the Messiah. But before we get there, we must understand the *darkness* that Jesus’ light invades. As Jesus said himself, “whoever follows me will not walk in darkness” (8:12). And when John opens his gospel, he does so by introducing the theme of a cosmic war between the light and the dark:

¹ As may be noted in your own Bible, John 7:53-8:11 is not included in some early New Testament manuscripts. Some scholars believe church leaders were concerned that the passage would lead early believers to conclude adultery was acceptable. Personally, I am persuaded the passage is authentic due, at least in part, to the presence literary techniques uniquely common to John’s gospel. See Michael Card, *John: The Gospel of Wisdom*, Intervarsity Press (2014), p.104.

¹*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* ²*He was in the beginning with God.* ³*All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.* ⁴*In him was life, and the life was the light of men.* ⁵***The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.***

Light and darkness are metaphors which define John’s gospel, from front to back. And if we want to understand the light, we must first think deeply about our need for it in the very first place. To do that, we must consider both dimensions: the darkness *outside* of us, and the darkness *inside* us.

A. The Darkness *Outside* of Us

By the darkness *outside* of us, I am speaking about the default state of the world. That is the “darkness” Jesus speaks of here, that the Bible speaks of repeatedly. As we will see when we study the Light, darkness is *assumed* whenever Old and New Testament passages speak of God’s light. In both John and in Genesis, darkness is associated with disorder, confusion, and emptiness (**Genesis 1:2**). In the Bible, darkness refers to the very atmosphere we live in. Darkness is an *environment*, one where you cannot see your way, where you have no idea where you’re going (**Proverbs 4:20, Isaiah 59:10**). It is like entering a deep cave without a lantern, where you cannot even see your own hand as you wave it before your face. Jesus is saying here—in a spiritual sense—that is what is happening in our world all the time.

In other words, we are *surrounded* by forces of evil and sin, and if we are honest, we are all conscious of this. Ask yourself; is it ever easy to walk straight? To be pure and chaste? Is it easy to control your own mind? Your lusts of the flesh and the eyes? Your very *thoughts*? No, it is for all intents and purposes impossible! Why? Because we live in an atmosphere that fights us, binds us, burdens us. This dark and evil atmosphere is overseen by Satan, the “ruler of the power of the air” (**Ephesians 2:2**), the “god of this age” (**2 Corinthians 4:4**). He has been given a sort of dominion over this world. Even in this gospel of John, Jesus refers to Satan as the ruler of this world three different times (**12:31, 14:30, 16:11**).

This spiritual reality is something our politicians, professors, and Ted Talkers often know little about when triaging the social and political problems of our day. They do not recognize that Satan, the ruler of this world, manages unseen spiritual powers, powers which poison every facet and institution and culture-making aspect of our societies. That is why, despite all our efforts, our organizing, our peacemaking, and our do-gooding, hundreds of Syrians can be murdered by their own government. And why black Americans can be incarcerated at unjust rates. And why Flint’s families remain without clean water. And why students are killed in their own classrooms.

Just as Jesus’ time was, so to our world is dominated by darkness. Men and women succumb to it all the time, living—as Paul says—lives of shame (**Ephesians 5**). Consider for a moment the kind of life lived by many of those who have no interest in the ways of Jesus. The foul things they do, they often do under the cover of night. They would be ashamed to be seen doing them. They cheat and lie and steal and indulge. We should be grieved to our very core to see Satan’s lies so effective;

we should be eager to see our neighbors removed from this darkness and adopted into the family of God. Instead, we are desensitized at best, and apathetic or even approving at worst. By their deeds, these people reveal themselves to be enemies of Jesus, destined for eternal judgment.

Harsh words? Perhaps. But the apostle Paul refuses to pull punches on this subject.

¹⁸ For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.

As Paul says, these men and women glory in their shame (**Philippians 3:18-19**) In Ephesians, Paul speaks of these people's deeds as "unfruitful works of darkness" (**Ephesians 5:11**). After all, what can be truly gained from these deeds? What is their return on investment? When someone gives in to drunkenness, or substance abuse, or the indulgence of wealth, or extramarital sex, what has he gained? Is there anything noble? Uplifting? Adding to the value of your life? Has he left a legacy that will last from generation to generation? Of course not. Those deeds are *unfruitful* works of darkness. And the men and women who spend their lives in this manner inflame their lusts, awake the next day, and find themselves with both a headache and a soul-ache to show for it.

But let me be clear, it is not only those deeds done in the dark which have fouled and polluted our world. You may believe yourself to be very "decent," but decency should not be confused with the light. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (**1 John 1:8**)! You may say you have never gotten drunk, or committed a crime, or cheated on your spouse, or done those sorts of "dark" things. But many others live for things so small, so petty, that their lives have become *microscopic*. They derive their joy and purpose from cleanliness and order, from safety, from financial stability, from respectability, from *a house*. We in this community ought to know how foolish it is to stake our identity on a house. How small to live for such things! How ugly. How dark. These people have no horizon before them; the smallness of their life is tragic.

In 2005, 60 Minutes interviewed² NFL Quarterback Tom Brady. By the time of the interview Brady had transformed himself from a 6th-round draft pick to a three-time Super Bowl champion in less than five years. Many sports analysts had begun to consider Brady among the greatest quarterbacks in history. But during his interview, Brady made several surprising statements, including this one:

Tom Brady: "Why do I have three Super Bowl rings and still think there is something greater out there for me? Maybe other people would say this is what it is. I reached my goal, my dream, my life...but to me, I think, *God, there's got to be more than this!*"

60 Minutes: "What's the answer?"

² See the interview at <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/tom-brady-the-winner/>.

Brady: “I wish I knew!”

What a tragedy! This man who has everything he ever wanted is unfulfilled. That is the world we live in. We are surrounded by values and forces that are nothing but empty promises. They betray us. Consider the things which define our society, the supposedly marvelous and thrilling things, the things headlined in the newspapers and profiled in the television shows and discussed on podcasts and social media. More often than not, what good are these things? If we are honest, we know they do not address the grand questions of life. Instead, they leave us staggering, dissatisfied, confused, and lost. *Stumbling around in the darkness.*

B. The Darkness Inside of Us

But darkness is not just outside of us. It is not just our atmosphere. It is also within. It is the virus corrupting our very nature as humans. We are *all* polluted by the darkness of the world.

The Bible says we are conceived in sin (**Psalm 51:5**), that we are born into iniquity. Our nature is perverted, corrupted, and with that corrupted nature comes sin and death (**Romans 5:12**). We hate the light and love the darkness (**John 3:20**). *That is true of everyone single one of us.*

Everyone born into this world is cursed with a tragic love for darkness, coupled with a hatred for the light. Those two attitudes stem from a spirit of rebellion which draws us like a magnet to what is wrong even when we know how to live right. How else do we explain why we behave so inconsistently? There is something inside of us stronger than our mind, reason, and logic: our *lusts*. Down in the elemental depths of our human nature, our lusts govern and control us. They manifest not only in sex and drunkenness but in greed, covetousness, and ambition.³ Your heart and mine is “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (**Jeremiah 17:9**).

Observe how Paul uses his own inconsistencies to illustrate the condition of our inner darkness:

¹⁵ *For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.* ¹⁶ *Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good.* ¹⁷ *So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.* ¹⁸ *For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.* ¹⁹ *For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.*

With his mind, Paul wants to serve the Lord, but he says he finds another law guiding his thoughts and actions (**Romans 7:15-25**). Another law that leads him to be captive to sin and death. He has the desire to do good, yet he does not do it. His mind speaks clearly, yet Paul finds himself doing the other thing. The wrong thing. Why? Who shall deliver him? Who shall deliver us? When we

³ Do not be deceived; ambition may be the worst of all. I’ve seen it in my own life. Ambition can be the alibi that justifies trampling over every colleague and friend and neighbor just to achieve some empty, worldly goal.

pause our busy lives, and reflect, and truly examine ourselves, we know—just like Paul—we lack anything remotely close to complete self-control. We know there is a power greater than our mind and logic and reason, and we are *captive* to it. And after indulging in our sin, and capitulating to our lusts, we have the head-aches and the soul-aches to show for it.

Man, by his very nature, is in a state of utter confusion. Our reason and our lusts battle, and the confusion leaves us upside down. Lost. *Stumbling in the darkness*. And what we are seeing here in John 8 is that there is no other solution to this confusion than what can be found in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus stands before us and says “I, and I alone, am the LIGHT OF THE WORLD.”

III. THE LIGHT

So, what does we need? How can we escape from the darkness outside and within? Jesus has answered that question. He has shown what we need: the light, the very light brought to this world at its creation, the light granted to God’s people, the light God promises to those trust in him.

What is the very first thing that is spoken of at the beginning of creation? Light! “And God said, ‘Let there be light!’ and there was light” (**Genesis 1:3**). As God reveals himself to his people, he does so primarily by way of his glorious light (**Exodus 27:20, Psalm 104:1-2, Ezekiel 1:27-28**). God’s promise to never flood the earth again is sealed and secured by the light of the Rainbow (**Genesis 9:13**), and God reveals himself to Moses by the light of the Burning Bush (**Exodus 3:1-15**). He guides the Hebrew people out of slavery, through the wilderness, and into the Promised Land by the light of a Pillar of Fire by night (**Exodus 13:21**). The prophets spoke of how the Messiah would be a light both to the Hebrews (**Isaiah 60:1-3**) and the Gentiles (**Isaiah 42:6**). And when Jesus was born, his birth was announced by the light of a prophesied star (**Numbers 24:17**). The Light of God’s Word guides his people’s steps (**Psalm 119:101**). And when Jesus returns, his light shall be so magnificent that neither the sun nor moon will be missed (**Revelation 21:23**).

Now, let us listen to Jesus’s words. “He who follows me shall not walk in darkness *but shall have the light of life*” (**8:12**). He is speaking of his light, a light that doesn’t just shine outside, but a light that gives you and me *life*. This is a wonderful promise. Jesus isn’t merely shining a light so that I can see; Jesus is giving me his own light, his own life. “The wages of sin is death,” Paul says, “but the gift of God is eternal life, through Christ Jesus our Lord” (**Romans 6:23**).

Are you feeling hopeless? Discouraged? Have you said to yourself recently, either this morning or elsewhere, “I am exhausted. I am trying to be pure, I am trying do what is right. But I feel like the whole world is against me!” Well, as we have learned this morning, it turns out you are right. You are opposed on every front by the schemes of the Devil. But there is good news! The gospel is not that a light will illuminate your path, or that you should gather your courage and face the darkness. No, the gospel is that those who follow Jesus *shall themselves be given the light of life*.

So let me be crystal clear: the gospel is something *God does to you*, in your soul, in the very depths of your being. Jesus says he will give you the light of life. You will undergo an operation of God through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit to your very soul. This is not a change to your environment,

but a change to *you*. The central message of the gospel is that God is doing something to us, *not* that we are doing something for him. It is not about what men and women can do; it is about what God can do, has done, and will do in the end. Jesus came to crucify the corruption of human nature to himself so that we might receive his Holy Spirit. That is what the Bible calls regeneration, what it calls becoming a “new creation” (**Romans 12:1-2**). When Jesus takes hold of your heart, the world may not have changed, but you have. You have a new nature, a new attitude, a new heart. Satan may have come to destroy, but Christ has come so you may have abundant life (**John 10:10**)!

Now, instead of hating the light and loving the darkness, you will begin to love the light and hate the darkness. Those uncontrollable passions are now challenged by a new desire, a greater desire, a “hunger and thirst for righteousness” (**Matthew 5:6**). We become like newborn babies, craving spiritual milk, seeking a rich understanding of the Word of God (**1 Peter 2:2**). And when God works this mighty, miraculous operation on our souls, he sets us free from the dominion of sin in our life. The law of the Spirit in Christ Jesus “sets us free from the law of sin and death” (**Romans 8:2**). That means when we receive God’s forgiveness, he transfers us from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of his pure son (**Colossians 1:13**). Yes, indeed, we are rescued from the dominion of the Devil and into the province of the Prince of Peace.

This new freedom gives you a new life trajectory, a new set of goals, a new outlook, a new attitude about *everything*. When this new disposition is planted in your soul, it grows and flowers into a whole new outlook about God, his purposes, and the world. You will feel the mercy of God as you thank him for never wiping your sinful self off the face of the earth. You will begin to see his grace and compassion, and your supreme desire will be to know God and to serve him for all your days, and to lead others to do the same. Now, your life will be dedicated—every resource, every energy, every tactic—to his purposes. You will recognize all the stuff we wear and use and hoard is momentary, and that we are to use it all for inviting others into the Kingdom of God.

IV. THE CHALLENGE

But that is not the end. It is not enough to recognize the darkness outside and within us, and it is not enough to have knowledge of God’s light. Importantly, this “I AM” statement is the only one of the seven which links back to God’s people directly. Jesus himself describes his disciples as “the light of the world” (**Matthew 5:14-16**).

*¹⁴ “You are **the light of the world**. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says in his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount⁴ that Jesus’s claims in John 8 and his teaching here in Matthew 5 should never be separated. After all, Israel was tasked

⁴ Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, Eerdmans Pub Co (1984). I cannot recommend this book highly enough. It contains some of the most foundational, convicting truths of the Christian life.

by God to be the world's true light, but by the time of Jesus' ministry, it had all but ceased to be that light.⁵ Today the church is the body of Christ, his hands and feet in this world (**1 Corinthians 12:27**). And when it comes to this world's darkness, we—the church—are to be ambassadors of the light. We are called to succeed where Israel failed, to model to the world what light and life can look like. Yet I fear we risk failure as well, and I want to leave us with two challenges.

1. Light Cannot Compromise with Darkness

For some today, you have not yet joined the family of God. But I pray this message has stirred your soul to action so that your status might change. Maybe you knew already, or maybe you know now more fully than ever, just how hopeless we all are to combat the darkness on our own. You also now know of a light that exists: Jesus Christ, the LIGHT OF THE WORLD. Perhaps you, like the Centurion who stood at the foot of Jesus' cross, have been struck by the power of Jesus' life and are willing to testify today "truly, this man was the Son of God." (**Matthew 27:54**).

My friend, Jesus stands ready to receive you, to transfer you from the Kingdom of Darkness to his Kingdom of Light. All you need do is pray, and confess your need for him, your need for open-soul surgery to cure the diseases of darkness which plagues you. If you ask, he *will* answer. If you knock, he *will* open (**Matthew 7:7**). And this body of believers stands ready to walk with you, side by side, shoulder to shoulder, dedicating our lives to following in the footsteps of Jesus.

Don't stumble one more day in the darkness. Don't try to live in both the darkness and the light. The light will not compromise. Let today be your first day experiencing the light of life.

2. Light Exists to Dispel the Darkness

For those of us who do believe, and who have undergone the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, who have committed to putting sin to death in our lives (**Romans 8:12-13**). We ought not pass up this obvious opportunity to evaluate our record and practice as ambassadors of the light of life.

Consider the metaphor we have been using all morning: **LIGHT**. What is its principal purpose? *To dispel darkness*. Certainly, light has other secondary benefits. It can provide warmth, beauty, decorative expression. But at its basic, most fundamental use, light *illuminates*. It engages and displaces darkness. That is its principal purpose. And if we agree to that, then I wonder if you will share the same fear as me: far too often, Christians—as the light of the world—fail in our *own* principal purpose.

Has anyone been to Home Depot recently? Or Lowes? At this church, I imagine many of us have! Well, there is a *lighting* section in the back of the store. It is full of bulbs and fans and porch lights and all kinds of lighting fixtures. And it is very easy to find, because most of the time hundreds of lights are turned on all at once. It is an especially bright area of the store. That doesn't seem silly, though, given that the rest of the store is well-lit by massive overhead fluorescent lights. But what if that weren't the case? What if those overhead lights all went out suddenly, and only a handful

⁵ N.T. Wright, *John for Everyone: Part 1 – Chapters 1-10*, The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (2004).

of dim lights were on throughout the store? Would it not then be absurd for Home Depot to concentrate all those light fixtures, all that light, in one space? Wouldn't the store have a duty, an obligation, a responsibility, to spread its lights all around the store to ensure the customers and employees stumbling around in the dark could see? Of course!

Family, I *fear* we may at times be guilty of looking just like that imagined, well-lit lighting section surrounded by a darkened store. I fear that we—both here, and the American church in general—are in danger of perpetuating the same fragmentation that is affecting society at large. Think about it: our nation is increasingly segregated by race in our schools, our neighborhoods, and our churches. We are increasingly segregated by our politics, whether in the news media we consume, or the social media algorithms used to build our online echo chambers. Our nation is *polarized* because we are separated from one another. And as we remain separated, we lack shared experiences, experiences which may have otherwise cultivated empathy and understanding across difference.

Here at MACC, we take many intentional steps to break down many of those barriers. But that does not mean we have arrived. Not even close. I challenge all of us: take an account of where you spend your time, and with whom you spend your time. Take an inventory of how much time you spend in our community. Ask yourself: how many actual hours in a day, a week, a month do you spend in our schools and on our sidewalks and at our parks and among our neighbors. These are places where there is a need for ambassadors of the light of the world, the light of life.

After all, just about every one of us here at MACC live in this 48214 community intentionally. Some moved here from far away, others moved here from another neighborhood in the city, some chose to stay when they could have left long ago, and others chose to return to this community despite all kinds of reasons to never come back. And I think that characteristic, that intentionality, makes our church *compelling*. It is a shared sacrifice that binds us together in an incredible way. But I ask, family, why did we all make those decisions? For what purpose? Was it not to be good neighbors? To be *present* in this community? To be ambassadors of the light on our blocks? If we take stock of our time and energy, and where it all is spent, I fear we may see that as much as our mailing addresses are located in this zip code, our hearts may not be.

Consider the time and energy you spend at your job, with your networks, at your gym, in your studies, the location of your kids' activities and sports teams, and the frequency of your travels and vacations. How often are those things here, in our community? Shoulder to shoulder with our neighbors?⁶ Now hear me: there is freedom in Christ to do all these things! Of course. I would never stand here and say the Bible commands a specific schedule or routine. That would be

⁶ As I have wrestled with this issue myself, three scenarios immediately come to mind. First, even before my knee injury in the summer of 2017, I cannot recall the last time I played basketball at Pingree Park. I love playing, and I use to play there somewhat regularly, but I probably have not joined a game at the park in two years. Why? A mix of pride and priorities. Second, I recently attended a Pingree Park community meeting for the first time in almost two years. The attendees treated me like I was attending my 10-year high school reunion! How unfortunate that I, a former Executive Director at MACC Development, did not make those meetings a priority. Third, as Martyn grows older, Laura and I will need to decide what activities he joins, where he goes to school, etc. What will guide those decisions?

Pharisaical! But, family, I will not—and we must not—allow the fear of pharisaical religiosity to stop us from *questioning every single expenditure of our lives*, and to measure how we live against our principal purpose as ambassadors of the light of life, which is to dispel darkness in this community.

CONCLUSION

The reality of Jesus as the Light of the World, and our response to that reality, is sobering for both the non-believer and the believer. I want to make sure we have time to pause and consider what we have examined today. So, please join me in a reflective exercise that I hope will illustrate the truths we have encountered. In a moment, I will turn off all the lights in our sanctuary. I will then begin a time where members of our congregation will read selected passages from both the Old and New Testament which speak to the battle between the light and the darkness. As each person reads, they will light and hold a candle until the entire perimeter of the sanctuary has been lit.

While they read, take time to reflect on the powerful truth found in claim: “I am the Light of the World.” If you have never chosen to follow Jesus, use this time to pray to him, and to ask him to save you from the darkness which surrounding and stifles you. And if you have chosen to follow Jesus, use this time to reflect on the truth of God’s word, to remind yourself of your calling as a believer, and reinvigorate your passion to be a bearer of light dedicated to invading the darkness.