

GOOD MORNING! I hope and pray you all are well and that the Lord blesses each of you this morning. Today and every day, let us never forget that this day is a gift. Yesterday is gone.

Today is here. Praise God for another day! Not only that, but God has authored the creation of a country such as this one that we may come worship, pray and give Him glory! That is so worthy of praise. Thank you Jesus! Lord God, please remind us each day that we are blessed with the gift of this day. May we shine your light Jesus. This day and every day going forward that we are blessed to receive. Amen!

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Today's message is titled Christmas in July!

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**TODAY'S TEXT IS 1 John 1:5 -10**

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**PLEASE STAND AS WE SHOW HONOR TO OUR CREATOR FOR HIS PRECIOUS WORD.**

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**<sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**

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## **THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD!**

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**LET'S PRAY!**

### **Introduction:**

**Seven months are now behind us in 2023. August is here on Tuesday. Where does the time go? While I enjoy preparing for these messages, I also struggle with weight of it. Simply put, I am humbled. It re-kindles my faith every time. It re-energizes my soul as the Lord reveals truth. I pray the Lord does the same for you today.**

**One solid truth Jesus continuously taught was that we must abide in Him in that He can abide in us. Each week but especially on the last Sunday of the month, the Shine message will bring that point to bear for all of us. I pray it offers each of you a re-set of sorts. A re-set of your intentional focus on the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in your life. I pray you are moved to draw closer to Jesus. That through this experience, you will produce fruit in your spiritual life. Never forget, the Lord is with you!**

**I believe it is beneficial for each of us to take a closer, faithful look at our intentions. We ought to seek to have the Lord show us blind spots in our lives in our walk with Him. Trust me, we all have them. I don't know about you, but it is just when believe I am in a good place in my walk that the Lord reveals another blind spot. These places we miss because we are going through life in a comfortable almost complacent way.**

**Or maybe you are going through so much right now that you believe it is impossible for you to deal with anything else outside of what is right in front of you. I know that many of you are at your wits' end. You feel overwhelmed for various reasons. Please allow me to encourage you today. No matter what you are dealing with, the Lord is with you! He will see you through. It is in those moments where we know He is at work. We don't often see or feel Him at work, but He is. He promises to never leave us nor forsake us. Seek His guidance. Be intentional and sincere. Stop and listen. He will reveal Himself to you.**

To be sure, it is a misconception that the Lord will not give you more than you can handle. As a matter of fact, at times, He will allow you to encounter much more than you can handle so that you will realize that He is waiting for you to fully trust and rest in Him.

**1 Corinthians 10:12-13-**

<sup>12</sup> Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. <sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Often, when we believe we are in control of the events in our lives, we get bogged down. We struggle with trying harder. We say, “If I just pray a little harder.” “If I do this or if I do that,” I will be in a better place. Frankly, it is exhausting.

It is here that we must recognize that God wants us. All of us. He doesn’t want us to try harder to know Him. He wants us to submit. To commit. To bow down and trust Him. The natural outflow of this trust is knowing the heart of God. That is so good!

Letting go is not in our DNA no matter what age we are. You see, we learn at a young age to be independent. To figure things out on our own. Sure, some of us are more willing to rely on others for help, but ultimately, we often believe we must make our own decisions independent of God. This becomes an obstacle for each of us.

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Today’s title for the message is Christmas in July! You are probably as surprised as I am. It has nothing to do with retail sales or Santa Claus. You see the verses for today speak of walking in the light and Jesus being the light. Many of you know that I often connect my study to music. From time to time, I will share a verse from a song that moves me one way or another in preparation for the sermon message. Well, guess what? The Lord brought the title to me as I listened to music related to Jesus being the light. Many of the songs focus on Jesus as the Light of the World. That makes sense.

**The first song was Light of the World by Lauren Daigle and the second song was Light of the World by Chris Tomlin. Both of those songs are played almost exclusively during Christmas season. The Lord was revealing something to me in this time. He wanted me to share with you that this entire series on Shine goes back directly to that event. The precious baby who came into the world, Emmanuel, God with us, The Light of the World is the foundation of every Shine message, and as we pass the half-way point in the year, may we never forget the Christmas story which is where the Light we shine comes from.**

**So many of us love the Christmas season for so many different reasons, but I think it's safe to say in here today that the notion of our Savior appearing as a baby is at the top of the list. We know the end of the story. We know that Jesus came to save the world from sin and death. We know that wonderful story and all the miracles that occurred.**

**Jesus, the Light of the World came down from His heavenly throne willingly to save us from sin. As believers, it never gets old. The Bible tells us that, long before the birth of Jesus Christ, selfishness first showed itself when Adam and Eve decided to disobey God who had created them. They broke the relationship with God and the effects of sin have impacted our world ever since. The human race was now destined to be separated from The Creator.**

**Things needed to be restored, but how? Enter Jesus! As believers, we see Christmas as the beginning of God's answer to eternal separation. We cannot make peace with God by ourselves.**

**So God sent his Son to do the job instead. In the familiar Christmas story, angels appeared to shepherds on the night of Jesus' birth and declared, "Peace on earth, goodwill toward men." This is not the peace that ends all wars between nations and individuals. It is the peace that means people and God no longer need to be separated from each other. It is an offer of true peace that lasts forever. God has offered the solution to our human problem – to our sin – because we can never fix it ourselves. It is how it is possible for us to walk in the light.**

**By entering the world as a helpless baby, Jesus, God's Son, stepped into this broken world to give everyone the chance to be back in relationship with God. Rather than us having to try to claw our way back into God's favor, God freely offered the way back by stepping down to our level in order to lift us back to himself.**

**The arrival of Jesus into the world brought with it his plan to live a perfect life on earth, to show us the way back to God the Father, and ultimately to die in order to pay the price for all of our sin, selfishness, pride, and wrongdoing. He made the way for our failure to be wiped away and for all those who are dying to live again – forever. Amen!**

**That is what Christians celebrate at Christmas: The arrival of real peace on earth and the goodwill of God himself toward people that were, by their own choice, his enemy. The arrival of Jesus showed us that God loves us more than we can imagine, and He made a way for us to get right again and live forever with him.**

**The true message of Christmas then is that, because Jesus came to save people from their sins, all those who put their trust in Him can be made right with God. The result is that believers will walk in the light of Jesus. Again, I say Amen!**

**And for those that do not believe, most celebrate Christmas even if it is for the different reasons. There is hope that they too will accept the truth that the God of all Creation came as a baby, grew to be a man, suffered a horrendous death, rose again and is now seated back on the throne of God.**

**John 8: 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.**

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**We have studied the Shine theme each month and sought to connect the Light of the World to our lives. We have studied the calling we have to be the light as Jesus explained in Matthew 5:14.**

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**Matthew 5:14 - You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that<sup>a</sup> they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.**

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**This is the connection. The Light of the World came to save, and He imparted truth to His apostles which was spread throughout the world. This message has made its way here today. This is a message within the Christmas message. Praise the Lord!**

### **CONTEXT-**

**The text for today takes place during John's ministry. It is believed that John writes this epistle approximately 70-100AD. He was believed to have moved from Palestine to Ephesus which is where he is believed to have written this epistle. It is not completely clear as to who he was writing to, but many scholars believe he was writing to believers in modern day Turkey which is where Ephesus is located.**

**John explains clearly why he was writing this epistle Chapter 5.**

### **1 John 5:13- 15 :**

**I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. <sup>14</sup> And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him.**

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**John is pointing out that there are different groups when he is writing this epistle. There are different categories of individuals. On one hand, there are those who have been influenced by outside forces other than God. Primarily Gnostics. Gnosticism was prevalent. Gnosis – knowledge. They were seeking secret wisdom. They believed essentially that there are two worlds. A spiritual world and a physical world. They believed Jesus was indeed a spirit. They also believed that the physical world is evil so there is no way Jesus as a spirit would be walking around in the filthy, physical world. God would never come in human, sinful form.**

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**John is pointing out this false doctrine in this epistle. He writes about the character of believers as compared to non-believers. He is writing about the way we carry ourselves as individuals. Who we are! He is not writing about what might happen in our lives. He is writing about our character. He is writing about true believers who are characterized by obedience to Jesus and the Word or the alternative, disobedience. He is writing about the way we “walk.” This does not sound like a Christmas message, but I believe, God willing when we are finished today, it will.**

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**Now, the Shine Memory verse for this month is verse 7 which reads, 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.**

**But let’s not get ahead of ourselves just yet. Let’s look at verse 5 to begin this study.**

**Verse 5 – 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.**

**John is writing very clearly here. He is pointing out that God is light. God is Holy. And in His holiness there is no darkness at all.**

**You see there is a subtle point John makes here. He is pointing out that clearly there is a God! You see if he writing to believers in Turkey, he is making sure they know that there is a God. This is the starting point for believers is it not? Let us never take that for granted.**

**If God is where we start, then can you begin to see where Christmas comes into play?**

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**God came down. Fully human with all the physical characteristics of man while being fully God. As believers, we believe that Jesus is God; one person of three in the God Head with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He was there in Genesis 1. He was there throughout the Old Testament. He came to earth to save the world from sin.**

**When we try to define character and righteousness, where do we begin? With God! God is the starting point. We don't measure character and righteousness against others. God and The Word are the standards. God is the standard. We are not measured by others or against others but the standard of the Word of God. It begins with the existence of God, and we are not Him. Isn't that what the Gnostics were trying to do in the first place? Establish themselves as God on earth.**

**Sadly, there is a form of Gnosticism today. There are many who hold to Cultural Relativism and Post Modernism. These are the many people who believe we all have our own truth. There is no absolute truth. They believe that each person is God and the creator of their own destiny. If you believe it, you can achieve it. This is modern day Gnosticism. It is infecting our world drastically, and this message of Jesus and the Good News of the Gospel is as important today as the message John was writing in his epistle in 1<sup>st</sup> John.**



Just as a clear reminder we look to the Gospel of John.

**John 1:4-10** - In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. <sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

God is life. God is light. God is Holy and there is no darkness in Him. Jesus is the true light for everyone. The Christmas Child has come!

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As we move on to verse 6, we see a clear distinction that John is making. He is essentially clarifying that there are two categories or camps.

**Verse 6** - If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

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Those who follow Jesus are characterized by light. John writes that our walk with the Lord i.e., our lifestyles, need to match what we say or else we are in darkness. Otherwise, I am a liar, and I do not belong to the Kingdom of light. The way that we live is key. This is the fruit we produce once we trust our lives to Jesus. **John is not talking about a dark moment where we sin. He is not talking about a stumble or fall down moment. He is talking about how we are characterized and how we are known by God.**

Again, who are we? Do we belong to Jesus? Do we belong to the darkness? How are we living? Do our lives look like Light or Darkness?

**Psalms 36:9** - For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.

**Daniel 2:22** - he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.

**Revisit - John 8:12- 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.**

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**Back to our Shine memory verse for this month.**

**Verse 7 - 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.**

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**This is a critical point in this message. This is not a word problem “if/then” statement. John is not saying that your good works bring you to fellowship with others and Jesus. He is saying that you walk in the light because the blood of Jesus has cleansed you. Not the other way around. We walk in the light after we have trusted Jesus with our lives. When we bow down to Jesus, Our King, it is right then that we are cleansed and washed clean by the blood of Jesus. Our character is now that of a believer. One who walks in the light. Amen!**

**We are in fellowship with one another. The Holy Spirit is with us and is in fellowship with us. We are not bouncing back and forth and in and out of fellowship with God and believers. If we walk in Jesus, who is the light, then we are spiritually connected with other Christians. We all belong to each other because we belong to Him. We are forgiven of all sin. It does not go back and forth.**

**We find fellowship with other believers-others who have been washed in the blood. We believers have all been cleansed from all sin. That is why this is a Christmas message! Amen! That is why Jesus came. He came to save us from our sin. When we trust Him with our lives, we have life! We are a new creation!**

**2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has**

passed away; behold, the new has come.

**John 12:35**- So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going.

**John 9:5**- As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

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Our lives are now characterized by unity with one another; We are characterized by the fact we are washed by the blood of Jesus; we are cleansed. This is why we walk in the light. We are now walking in the light. That is who we are! So, walk in the light; believe in the light that you may become Sons of light. Believe! Have Faith! We are moved to walk in the light. Every day is a new day as a new creation! Amen!

We, as believers, are characterized by walking in the light by the cleansing power of Jesus. Sin is no longer who I am. As we walk and are sanctified, we have less and less of a desire for those sinful things. That is Great news! The blood of Jesus has washed us and cleansed us and propels us to walk in the light. Amen!

**Revelation 21:23** - And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

Jesus is our light. We walk in His light.

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**Verse 8** - If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

John is talking about the Gnostics here. The people of this day that are essentially denying

**sin. Those who believe they are God. Today, we would say that Post Modernists or Cultural Relativists would say this. Those who rely on their own true nature. Those who purposely indulge in sin. These people are deceived. This verse is written about unbelievers. They believe one can be fully sanctified here on earth. They are denying the truth- the absolute truth the Jesus saves. John is not writing about a Christian who falls down. We have been forgiven- past tense. Jesus was clear in some of His last words on the cross. “It is finished.”**

**However, there are consequences for those who reject the truth of the Gospel.**

**John 3:19-21 – And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.**

**John 3:36 – Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him**

**Isaiah 9:2 -**

**The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
on them has light shone.**

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**How do we know if someone believes or cleansed? They walk in the light.**

**Those who walk in darkness do not usually want to be exposed by the light. They hide.**

**They do not want to be in fellowship with others especially believers. But there is hope in Jesus.**

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**Verse 9 - If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

**I have read and even meditated on the scripture covered in this message; however, it was not until I dove into this study that I realized how controversial this one verse has become. This was probably the most eye-opening part of what God revealed preparing for this message.**

**There are many who will tell you that this verse represents an act that must take place before full forgiveness can be accomplished. There are some denominations which believe that if the last act of a human being, even a person that claims to be a Christian, is a sin, then that person could not confess that sin before death would not be saved into Heaven. Some believe that one cannot receive forgiveness for such a sin because one could not confess it.**

**This is not what this verse means! That is a works-based theology. That is saying that what Jesus did on the cross was not enough. Earlier I mentioned bouncing back and forth. That is what I meant. If you believe that every time you sin, you must ask for new forgiveness to remain saved, with all due respect, you are mistaken. Trust me there are many sins we have not confessed because we did not even realize it was a sin. Not only that, but we sin so often, we likely forget many of them. To think that salvation in Heaven is based upon the confession of your last bad act before death is not sound doctrine.**

**We are saved by the blood of Jesus! This is why Jesus came and was born in a manger. He**

came to save us from sin because of His great love for us. When we confess our sin and repent from sin that first time, it is finished! We are now known to be a Christian saved and cleansed by the blood of Jesus. There is not some “other act” that must take place for us to ensure salvation.

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If we commit a sin, we do not lose our salvation. We have been freed. We are now known in our character by our salvation as a child of God. We have met God’s requirement of sinlessness because it has been imputed to us through the righteousness of Christ. We are justified.

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*Remember this: The devil knows your name but calls you by your sin, but God knows your sin and calls you by your name- Ricardo Sanchez.*

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You see, God does not have some long list of all the sins we forgot to confess before death. They have all been covered by the blood of Jesus, and when we acknowledge that we are sinners and confess, we are pardoned for all sins- past, present and future. It is only through Jesus’ sacrifice that is possible. That is salvation!

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Verse 9 does not teach that a true believer has to go through another step of confession. Should we continue to confess when we sin? Yes.

This does not mean we should sin recklessly. No. As Paul said in Romans 5:20, by no means are we to abuse grace. When we sin. Stop doing it. Turn from it. Praise the Lord for the forgiveness already in place. God says you’re now a slave to righteousness. We have to be careful not to deny the finished work of Jesus. Again, it is finished!

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**Romans 6:13 - Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness,**

**but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.**

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**We realize that sin grieves God. We are humbled and we want to confess it because we recognize it. It is not a condition of salvation.**

**When we sin, as believers, we confess sin because we have been washed clean by the blood of Christ. Our confession marks us sincere, intentional, true believers.**

**God is light! You are not in darkness. You are in the light. You may sin, but it is in the light. Because of Jesus we have permanent fellowship and we are spiritually connected with God and each other. We are totally forgiven and cleansed because of Jesus.**

**That is the why Jesus came. We celebrate the Lamb of God who has taken away our sins.**

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**Verse 10 - If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**

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**As believers, we are characterized as those who continue to confess often and as much as possible. As mentioned, we should not abuse the grace of God. Clearly, though, confession should not be a work added to salvation. Our character is now reflected in how we live in the light of Jesus. We are not sinless, and we should not be callous towards sin either. We should never take lightly what Jesus did for us. He granted us a pardon from death row by His precious blood. Our sin should grieve us because we know it grieves God, but we can know that our sin is forgiven. Holy Spirit move in us that the desire to sin is removed from our fleshly minds and bodies. That we may shine the light of Jesus and walk in it daily.**

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**Applications:**

- How are you known by God? Are you walking in light or darkness?
- What is your attitude toward sin? Are you callous towards sin? Does sin grieve you?
- Do you see yourself as truly saved?
- Does the life of Christ reside in you?

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The answers will be reflected in how you live. Walk in the light.

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The truth of this Christmas message is that the only way to walk in the light is by the cleansing work of Jesus Christ the Son of the living God.

The greatest gift of all mankind was that Jesus came to take away the sins of the world. Jesus is the light, and this simple message today brings us to a place of remembering why Jesus came. It is meant to encourage us to seek Him daily. To walk and be characterized by that great gift of Jesus and His blood.

**James 1:17**- every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

**Psalm 84:11**- For the LORD God is a sun and shield;  
the LORD bestows favor and honor.

No good thing does he withhold  
from those who walk uprightly.

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*Don't shine so that others can see you. Shine so others can see Him!*

Lord bless you all!