

CCC JESUS CAME TO LIGHT UP YOUR LIFE

Christmas Series 2008 Part 4

One of the things I love about Christmas season is all the lights. It's just so amazing. Christmas lights up the world in the darkest seasons here in the Northern Hemisphere, when everything gets darkest all of a sudden the world lights up, because of Christmas. I love this. First the lights come on in all of the stores. Then they come on in all of the cities. Then all of the houses put up their lights. This week the Raley's got up their tree and lights. I love every minute of Christmas... it lights up the world.

Did you know that "light" is a major theme of the Bible? The Bible says "*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*" The Bible says that the first act of creation was "*Let there be light.*" Jesus said, "*I am the light of the world.*"

On Christmas, the very first Christmas, light played a major role. The angels put on a spectacular light show for the shepherds when they announced, "*Behold born this day in the city of David is a Savior, Christ, the Lord.*"

When the wise men followed the star, were not sure just what it was, but it was some kind of bright star that led them from the east to the west to find Jesus. Light played a major role because Christmas is a celebration of God's light entering our world. It split history into A.D. and B.C. the single most important event in history when God came to earth in human form, Emanuel, God with us.

What does it mean when it talks about God sending Jesus to be the light of the world? John 1 the Bible says "*Before anything else existed there was Christ with God. He has always been alive and is Himself God. He created everything.* [Did you know that? That Jesus Christ

created everything.] *Eternal life was in Him and this life gives light to all mankind. His light is the light that shines through the darkness and the darkness can never extinguish it.*” What does that mean? That Jesus Christ is the light to light up all mankind, what does mean, His light cannot be hidden, It Cannot be extinguished, Jesus wants to light up all the darkness? See Darkness is not something; it is actually the absence of something. You can have low light, normal light, bright light, flashing light, but if you have no light constantly you have nothing and it's called darkness, isn't it? That's the meaning being used to define the word.' 'In reality, darkness isn't something. If it were, you would be able to make darkness darker, wouldn't you?' But you can't the only way you can make things darker is by with drawling more light. God's word, the Bible says, Jesus came to light up all the world. When I'm

separated from God, when I'm trying to do my own thing, I'm in spiritual darkness. When you are separated from God and you're trying to do your own thing, you are in spiritual darkness. It's why things don't make sense to you, why you can't figure it out. You say to yourself, “Why is this happening to me, or what's going on” because you're in spiritual darkness at that point.

For some of you the year 2008 was a very dark year. You're looking forward in hope that 2009 will be a better year. Some of you, you lost your job this year. You were laid off. Some of you had major financial problems. Some of you had relational crises with your husband or your wife or your children or your boyfriend or girlfriend. Some of you went through a divorce. Some of you had a death of a loved one. Maybe you went through cancer treatment or you had a disease. There are a lot of different things.

Maybe you went through a conflict. And it's been a tough year.

Let me share something special with you today. God's wants to light up your world. He's brought you here today for a reason. I want to make you a guarantee. If you will listen for the next few minutes and you'll think about what we're talking about, what the Bible says. If you'll open your life up to the light of God's love, I guarantee you will enter 2009 with a new level of brightness and clarity and understanding that you didn't think possible, if you'll just let God have His life in you... If you will allow Him to bring light into your world

I realize that each of us came to Calvary church this morning for different reasons. Some of you came out of tradition. Some of you came out of habit. Some of you are a regular part of our church family and you're here. Some

of you came because you were begged by your girlfriend to be here. Or your boyfriend. Or your wife. Or your husband. Some of you honestly, you really felt pressured and you don't want to be here. But you felt obligated.

I don't care why you came. You're not here by accident. God wanted you here. Before you were born He knew you would be here because He wants to light up your life like you would never even imagine. Light up your life in a way that you never understood that was possible. He wants to come into your darkness.

I want us to begin this morning with a very simple littler prayer. "God, I don't know why I'm here today. But I ask You to shed Your light on me. A little light on me so I could see You better, myself better, and so I could see the future better for my life." I want us to pray that prayer. Let me say this prayer aloud and you can pray it in your mind.

That's our goal today. Our goal is that God would shed His light on you and you would understand Him in a way you've never understood Him before.

See the L in the word light:

L – He came to Light up our minds and let us know what God is all about.

Have you ever had a flash of insight, "It was like a light bulb went off in my mind." Something you couldn't figure out before, all of a sudden it made sense. The light bulb went on and you were enlightened. All of a sudden things got clear and you went, "That makes sense. Now I know why that's happened in my life. Now I can see what God is doing." You understand it more.

The first benefit of knowing Jesus Christ is that confusion is replaced with clarity in your life. Things just get a whole

lot clearer. You see yourself clearer, you see God clearer, you see life clearer, you see problems clearer, you see other people clearer. Why? Because all of a sudden the light has been turned on. Jesus said, "*I am the light of the world.*" Notice a couple verses. The Bible says "*Understanding God's word brings light to the minds of ordinary people.*" He says when you understand this book, God's word, the Bible, all of a sudden things become clearer as to what life is all about. Notice what Jesus said in John 12 "*I have come as a light to shine in this dark world so that all who put their trust in Me will no longer remain in the dark.*" Jesus said, "I don't want you to be in the dark. I don't want you to be in the dark about life, about yourself, or your problems. Most of all I don't want you to be in darkness about what God is really like." Jesus Christ came to earth to show us what God is really like. "*Anyone who*

has seen Me has seen the Father.” John 14:9-10 “Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.” Colossians 1:15

Here’s a second reason. He came not only to light up our minds...

I – He came to tell us the truth. He does that by Informing us that He has a plan and purpose for our lives.

Did you know that before you were born, God thought of a purpose for your life? God created you for a purpose. You are not here by accident. There maybe accidental parents. But there are no accidental babies. Maybe your parents didn’t plan you but God did. God word, the Bible says, God planned the days of your life while you were in your mother’s womb, before you were even born. God says “I have a plan and a purpose for your life. He says “I want you to know it and I want you to know the truth about

you.” Jesus said this *“I came into the world to tell people the truth.”* So what is God’s plan? *“God’s secret plan has now been revealed to us; it is a plan centered on Christ, designed long ago... And this is His plan: At the right time God will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. Furthermore, because of Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us from the beginning, and all things happen just as He decided long ago.”* Ephesians 1:9-11

God wanted a family. He didn’t need a family. He wanted a family. He wasn’t lonely. He’s a loving God and He wanted to create you in order to love you. The whole reason your heart is beating right now is you were made to be loved by God. You were created as an object of God’s love. In fact, the Bible tells us that God formed the entire universe just so human life could exist. It tells us that God

created the universe and then created the world with just the right rotation of the axis and just the right combination of water and air that would sustain life. Then He created you for a reason. You are not an accident. He knows you and He loves you and He wants you to know and love Him back. One day He wants to take you home to live with Him in heaven for eternity.

If you really emotionally grasp what I just told you, if you ever emotionally get what I just said, you will never again have a problem with inferiority. You'll never again have a problem with insecurity or low self esteem. When you realize that the entire universe was created for you to sustain you so God could create you, so He could love you and from that give you the freedom of choice to reject Him or receive Him and live with Him forever. That is His amazing plan for you.

Why did God do it? Because of His love. He loves you.

It's one thing to say you love somebody. It's another thing to show it. *"God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us."*

That's how much you matter to God. What should be my response to this plan? When I understand how God created the whole universe to create human life to create me so I could be loved by Him, saved by Him, and taken home with Him into eternity, what should be my response to that? Deep, deep gratitude. Paul says this *"When I think of the wisdom of the scope of God's plan, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father."* He says, I am overwhelmed of how cool, how great, how good, how wonderful, how gracious God is. He says, I fall to my knees and I pray to the Father.

That's why we need the third reason why Jesus came to earth, why we celebrate Christmas. He said I didn't just come to light up your minds and tell you the truth...

G – I came to Guard and Guide your steps.

In John 8 Jesus said this *"I'm the light of the world. If you follow Me, you won't be stumbling through the darkness for living light will flood your path."* He says "I want to light your path, I want to direct you through life, I want to be your guiding light." You know why? Because God can see farther than you can.

So let me ask you a question. What are you having a hard time figuring out in your life today? What is it you can't figure out right now? You say, "I just can't see it!" I can't see how it'll work out."

What do you do when you can't see? You flip the switch and turn on the light. God's light that is I am talking about.

And what is the switch that turns on God's light in your life? It's called FAITH. It's called relying on your faith, it's called trusting in God and not in yourself. When you say, "God, I don't know what the problem is in my marriage. It's not working out. But I'm going to trust You to work it out to guide me through this season of life.

Boom! When you say that you have just flipped the switch on. And the light will come on. When you say, "God, I'm having problems with these kids. I'm having a problem at work. I'm having a problem with my health. My finances are falling apart. But I'm not giving up... I'm going to trust You in this, Lord." Boom! You just flipped the switch. And you turned on the light here what happens when you do that? Listen to God's word, the bible, *"The*

Light makes all things easy to see.” But Jesus didn’t just come to guide your life, to tell you the truth to show you His plan....

H – I came to Heal your hurts.

Jesus came to heal our hurts. This is so big. I’ve talked to hundreds of people personally and I’ve discovered one thing. Everybody has hidden wounds. Everybody has a place they’re hurting that’s hidden from everybody else. It’s a hidden wound. You may be hiding it well. You appear okay. You appear cool. You’re hip. You’ve got it all together – supposedly. Of course, we all know you don’t have it together because nobody does. But you appear okay but inside you’re hurting.

It may be something happened a long time ago, something that was said to you and it hurt. Something that

was done to you and it hurt or maybe something that wasn’t done to you that should have been done and it hurt.

Or maybe it’s a hurt about some things that you’ve done and you regret it and you feel shamed about it, guilty, and you’ve hidden it in the closet. You don’t want anybody to know about it because it’s painful and embarrassing but it still hurts.

Then at Christmas we come and it’s supposed to be a happy time. We say this is the season to celebrate. The season of good cheer. But in reality, a lot of people at Christmas are lonely. And a lot of people at Christmas are hurting. But here’s the good news. No matter where you are hurting Jesus Christ can heal it. Resentment, worry, guilt, fear, bitterness, boredom, whatever. Jesus Christ can heal your hurt. He’s the light of the world.

You need God's light in your life. It's pretty amazing what doctors can do today in healing people. But only God can heal a broken heart. Only God can heal a broken spirit.

Only God can heal a broken relationship. Only God can heal a broken dream. He says, come to Me because I came to heal your hurt.

(PAUSE) Now there's one more reason. This is the best of all. They all build on each other. See Jesus came to earth to show us and light up our minds so we could see what God is like. He came to inform us of God's plan and tell us the truth. He came to guide our steps. He came to heal our hurts. And...

T – He came to Transform our lives.

John 10 *"I came to give life, [not religion, notice] life in all its fullness."* Unfortunately most people never learn how to really live. They just exist. So Jesus came to say I want

to talk to you about three kinds of life – new life, abundant life and eternal life. See He came to take care of your past, your present, and your future.

He says I want to give you new life. That means everything you've ever done wrong is completely forgiven and forgotten. He wipes the slate clean. You get a fresh start. What a deal! Have you ever heard anybody say, "I'm born again." What does that mean? Is that like some spooky reincarnation thing? No, it just means that person said, "Jesus gave me a fresh start in life." Everything I'd done prior to when I stepped across the line is forgiven and forgotten and wiped out and Jesus says, Let's just start over. You don't need to feel guilty about all these things.

Let's just start over. That's new life. Second, He says, I want to give you abundant life. What is that? What's a life of meaning and purpose and significance? You were made

for more than survival, then just existing. You were made for more than just success. You have significance and around here we say your life has purpose and we call it a Purpose Driven Life. If you want to know about this Purpose Driven Life when you leave here we have in the back a book for you it is called just that the Purpose Driven Life Book. Jesus calls it abundant life – living a life that your values and your meaning and your significance all come together. And you're living a life that God meant for you to live, that God created you to live...

Then He says, And by the way, I'm going to give you eternal life. That's God's retirement plan to those who have trusted in Him down here on earth with our lives. He says "We're going to take care of your past, your present, and your future. That's My Christmas gift to you in Jesus Christ."

As we begin this new year, 2009, I'm sure there are some things here you want to change in your life. The reason I know that is because there's some things I want to change in my life. Let me give you a little secret. You don't need a self improvement program. You need a Savior. You need God. All of the books written about self improvement are great but there is one thing they are missing, they don't give you the power to do it. Only Jesus can give you the power.

When you come to Christ and open up your life to Him, He will give you the power to be more fully alive then you will ever be alive.