

Seeing and Being The Light

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the transition from Jesus being the light of the world to believers being called to be the light, focusing on the importance of recognizing the glory of Jesus as the true light. It delves into the significance of Jesus' glory, not just His teachings or miracles, and challenges individuals to assess if Jesus is truly special and precious to them. The sermon also highlights the role of a clear conscience as the lamp that holds the light of Jesus, emphasizing the need for a genuine relationship with Christ and a deepening appreciation of His humility and gentleness.

Duration: 33:48

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:4, Matthew 13:44, John 17:22, Ephesians 3:10, Luke 11:33

Topics: "Being the Light", "Recognizing Jesus' Glory"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the transition from Jesus being the light of the world to believers being called to be the light, focusing on the importance of recognizing the glory of Jesus as the true light. It delves into the significance of Jesus' glory, not just His teachings or miracles, and challenges individuals to assess if Jesus is truly special and precious to them. The sermon also highlights the role of a clear conscience as the lamp that holds the light of Jesus, emphasizing the need for a genuine relationship with Christ and a deepening appreciation of His humility and gentleness.

Transcript

So, what I wanted to share was, I've been thinking about the light that is Jesus, the light of Jesus and how we can be the light in this earth. We know that Jesus was the light of the world, he said that, but then he told us that he's leaving and then now we are to be the light of the world. So, we change, it changes.

And so, I wanted to share a couple of thoughts about that. What is the light? And the easy answer is Jesus. That's, you know, the Sunday school answer that you could probably give to any answer that has to end in a positive thing, and you're probably right.

But I wanted to underline something about Jesus that I think helped me to see it's not just a simple answer of Jesus. And that's from 2 Corinthians chapter 4. So, you can turn there, 2 Corinthians chapter 4, it talks about the glory of Jesus, that is the light. Not Jesus, but the glory of Jesus.

And it's a simple word, but it has an implication for how I can live. And children, I want to be able to speak in a way that maybe even you can understand as I go along. 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 4, it says this,

that the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, so that they may not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

So, what I need, what the light is, is the glory of Jesus. That's the good news. The glory of Jesus is the good news.

And that is the light. It's not just Jesus. And the reason I say it's not Jesus is because it's not the teachings of Jesus.

It's not the doctrine of Jesus. It's not the stories of Jesus. We can teach all of that to children.

We can teach all of that and learn it as adults. We can teach it to animals. I mean, animals can parrot what we talk about all the stories of Jesus.

No problem. They can have it all in their whatever brain they have. But that's not the gospel.

That's not the glory. The glory is not just the teachings and the stories, even though that makes up part of it. The glory of Jesus is what is the light.

And it is what makes Jesus different from all other human beings. That is what we must lift up when we say we have the light within us. And another word for glory is this.

What makes Jesus so special? That is the light. Children, it's what makes Jesus so special. Is it that he walked on water? Is it that he turned water into wine? Is it that he fed 5,000? Is it that he healed everybody who came to him? What makes Jesus so special to you? What makes Jesus so special to me? That is the glory of Jesus.

And it doesn't get anything more complicated than that to ask myself, is Jesus really special to me today? Children, you know some things that are special to you. Maybe it's a toy. Maybe it's a doll.

Maybe the toy from last year used to be special to you. It's no longer special to you now. Now you're closer to your birthday and you're looking for a new toy.

You're looking for something new. That's what's special to you. But the gospel is that we can have a light.

And the light is not that Jesus comes and lives with us. It is that the glory of Jesus becomes our light. And again, the glory of Jesus, even for children to understand, is that Jesus is special to us.

And as we get older, toys or things may not become as special to us. Our children become special to us. Friends or family become special to us.

And the question is, is Jesus special to me? That is his glory. That is the thing that I can say, Lord, that is the light that I must always ask myself, do I have? And now we know the answer to that question. The Bible answer the question is that he died on the cross for me.

But again, the question, what we need to get right is not the quiz. What we need to get right is, do we have the light? And if Jesus is really special to me, I have the light in me. If Jesus is not special to me anymore, I don't have the light like I used to have in me.

And that is something that has to be a personal question that I answered 20 years ago, 30 years ago, two years ago. But there is again being asked of me again today, is Jesus special to me? And is Jesus

precious to me? He is a person, because that is the light. The light that is supposed to shine is the glory of Jesus.

Is there a sudden shine about Jesus when I think about him? When I see that, when I hear about him, is it lost some of its attractiveness? I'm still reading the Bible. I'm still having victory over sin. But if Jesus is not personally attractive to me, I'm in danger of not having that light in me.

And if I don't have the light in me, then I'm in danger of walking in darkness. So even though we're in the new covenant and we can have the glory of Jesus explained to us in many different ways, that is, it's his humanity, that he was tempted in all points and never sinned, that he had fellowship with his father, we can have a lot of that knowledge. And we have this expression, oh, I received light on this.

I saw the light. God showed it to me. Well, God may have showed it to you in your brain.

God may have shown it to you in your mind so that you're able to explain it. But has that glory descended and come down to our heart so that we can see the good news and we have it as good news? That's the question that we have to ask ourselves. And what I find is that the God of this world, it says in 2 Corinthians 4, verse 4, 3 and 4, I think it is, that the God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving.

And I used to think that it has blinded the minds of the non-Christians. But I see that the devil has ways in which he can blind me even now. From Jesus being special.

This is what happens when we are born again. Jesus becomes special to me. Dear children, this is what will happen to us if we're born again.

Jesus becomes our personal Savior. That's what we say. That means there's a personal relationship between me and Jesus.

It's not some knowledge that I agree with. It's a personal relationship. And I continue to see and I continue to be not blinded as I continue to see the glory of Jesus, which means Jesus is special to me.

And Jesus becomes more and more special to me. That is the relationship that grows when we are in love, even here on the earth, in a loving relationship between husband and wife, father and children. As we grow in love, that relationship becomes even more precious to us.

So that's a very simple question to ask ourselves about Jesus and us. Have we seen the glory of Jesus? Very simply as Jesus has become more special to us. And even we who are Christians can be blinded by the God of this world.

Not to the point, I'm not saying that you're going to go to hell, but we don't see Jesus like we used to. And we need to ask God, Lord, not just show the shine, the light, but Lord Jesus, you need to give me sight because the light can be bright in the room. But if the God of this world has blinded it, the problem is not that the light is not shining.

The problem is that I've been blinded by circumstances, by trials, that God is shining a light over and over again. But I don't see the glory of the light. I know I get the knowledge, I get the facts, I'm listening to sermons, but the glory is missing.

That means the specialness of who Jesus is, is missing as I'm going on. Or maybe it was there a few years ago and it's become less. And that is what I have to always gauge in my life.

Not, Lord, am I seeing more things about you? That's not what I should ask myself because that could just become an increase in knowledge. No, Lord, am I seeing more of how beautiful you are, how precious you are to me? And we must fight for ourselves, for our children, for those around us who don't know Jesus, that their blindfolds may be removed from us. And we must always be aware of, Lord, it's not just that we must know more about you and we must listen to more sermons.

But beyond all of that, the glory of Jesus has to become true in our lives, which means Jesus must become very personally more precious to us. What's the proof that Jesus is becoming more precious to us? This is the verse that the Lord keeps reminding me to mean, is Matthew chapter 13, verse 44. You can turn there, Matthew chapter 13, verse 44.

There are times in our lives when we have this, but this must be a constant question in our lives. Lord, do I still have it? Do I still have this heart? Otherwise, the glory of Jesus might be becoming not as clear to me. The devil may be slipping in a little bit of a blindfold over my eyes so I don't see it.

Matthew 13, verse 44, it's very simple. The kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field which a man found and hidden again and from joy over it goes and sells all that he has to buy the field. There are times in our lives when we have a sell-all mentality.

My emotions can be sold. My own honor can be sold. What I do for a living can be sold.

Lord, they're all negotiable. But knowing you and seeing your glory and seeing you to be precious, that's not something that I'm willing to sell. And I'm willing to sell everything else in order to see that.

And that's a very high standard. It's a very high standard to maintain that. But this is what we have to keep fighting for, dear brothers and sisters.

Amidst the growing knowledge that we have, the Christian life is very simply coming down to, is Jesus becoming more and more precious to me? So that the answer is easier that I'm willing to sell all to receive Jesus, to gain Jesus again. And it's a very personal relationship that my wife is seeing. It's a very personal relationship that my children are seeing.

And there are different levels of blindness. There could be just total blindness that the non-Christians have. But I'm also seeing that, you know, like that man in, I think it's Mark chapter 7 or 8, where he saw men walking around like trees.

He's not seeing clearly. I'm not seeing the value of men and women for who they are. What do you do with trees? You can cut them down.

You can do whatever you want with them. You can swing on them. You can jump on them.

If a branch breaks, no big deal. You can turn them into paper so that you can write with them. You can burn them for firewood.

And when I see men walking around like trees, I reduce people to be like objects that I can use for my advantage. I can swing on them to jump to the next position in my career. I can gather them for my firewood to keep me warm.

I just want to have friends to keep me warm and make me happy. I use them like humans use trees. And when I see that I have that selfishness in me that I want to gain at the end of the day, I'm not seeing them for who they are.

I start using them. And I start thinking they are for my benefit. They're here to serve me.

I can use my children. I can see my children walking around. There's people walking on the streets.

I can see my wife. I can see my husband. I want to use them.

They are for my benefit and for my gain. This is the problem with the blind man who was partially healed. I could see something but didn't see people for who they are.

And when I look at my wife, when I look at my children, when I look at my co-workers, when I look at my neighbors, when I look at my boss, the question is do I see them as people who I can use to further my goals and my interests? Or do I see them as souls that were created in the image of God and that they have their own dignity, they have their own walk that they have, and they have to have a relationship with God. That they were each individually created in the image of God. If I don't see that and there's selfishness within all of us, then I have to say, Lord, there's blindness in me.

It's not total blindness like the world. But I don't see people the way you saw them, so much so that you were willing to die for them. You were willing to come all the way from heaven to die for this evil co-worker of mine or this difficult neighbor of mine.

You saw them very different than I did. You were willing to leave the 99 and go after the sheep that's lost. I see them as trees, so I just want to use them for my purposes, for my warmth, for my benefit.

And say, Lord, I need my eyes to be cleansed. I need my eyes to be touched again. I also see that some of us can be colorblind.

We don't see how God's purposes are so rich. And I'm not just talking about skin color. I'm talking about the color that comes through different personalities, that comes through different skills and lack of skills and weaknesses.

Dear brothers and sisters, do you know that the presence of some colors means the absence of some other colors? That's all a color means. If you take away some other colors from one color, you get red and blue and green. It's the presence of something and it's the absence of another.

That's the way colors are. That's the way colors work. And so when I see people who have different skills or what I see as weaknesses in them, do I see it part of the multicolored rainbow of God's glory? And He made them with different skills than He made me.

He made them with weaknesses. And I have to come to their aid and I have to sympathize with them rather than judge them, rather than be critical of them. It's a beautiful verse that I saw a few years ago from Ephesians chapter 3 verse 10.

I want to share with you that verse. Ephesians chapter 3 talks about God's wisdom and God's unfathomable, almost unmysterious wisdom. It says that in Ephesians chapter 3 verse 8, Ephesians chapter 3 verse 8, to me the very least of the saints, Paul is saying this grace has been given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ and to bring to light what has been hidden.

And verse 10, here it is. So that the manifold wisdom of God, and that word manifold means multicolored. The multicolored wisdom of God may be known.

The wisdom of God is like a rainbow of all the different colors and the colors are not just skin color. It's the rainbow colored wisdom of God that comes through in giving our children different gifts and abilities and different weaknesses too. And God made them that way.

And God wants us to partner with them. God gave our spouses certain weaknesses and strengths and God wants us to partner with them. That is the blindness that we can see because we're so focused on the red that we don't see the blue.

We're so focused on the red. We don't see the green. And these are the ways in which the saying, will you see a blindness? Will you see that the devil is trying to blind you from the glory of Jesus? And one of the glories of Jesus that we've heard in our church and that is not usually thought about as the glory of Jesus is the glory of Jesus that said, Lord, that we may be one.

We can read that in John chapter 17. John chapter 17 is where we see the glory of Jesus is that we, the church may become more and more one, that that rainbow color can coexist with each other. And the red is not trying to tell the blue to be like the red and the violet is not trying to tell the orange to be like the violet.

That we can allow each color to coexist, the different personalities, the different ways we think about different things in any area, except from sin that we are willing to accept one another, the quirks that some people have on how they respond to COVID or how they have different points of view on different matters that we're discussing that the rainbow colored view of God can still be preserved, but that we may still all be one. John chapter 17, verse 22, the glory which you have given me, this is Jesus saying, I've given them, I've given them all the glory that I have. And here's the proof that they'll have this glory.

They'll have the glory of Jesus. The proof of it is that they will be one, just as the father and the son are one, that the rainbow, different colors will get along. And that's my desire, dear brothers and sisters, that we may have the glory of Jesus, Jesus being special to us in our personal lives and the body of Christ becoming increasingly special to us, that we cherish it.

We cherish the members, despite their past, despite all the mistakes, despite all their personalities, as we seek to forget what lies behind, seeking to allow the blood of Jesus to completely cleanse us and look at us as if we have never sinned. And we've always obeyed that we will look at one another amidst our different personalities and strengths and say, Lord, this is the rainbow colored picture of God that you're painting. I also want to share one last thing.

What is the lamp that holds the light? We have the light inside of us. What is the lamp that holds the light? I want to share with you this verse in Luke chapter 11, verse 33 through 36. Luke chapter 11, verse 33 to 36, it talks about a light shining.

And it says in Luke chapter 11, 33 through 36, no one after lighting a lamp puts it away under a basket or a lampstand. And then he says, here's what the lamp is. Here's the lamp on which the light shines.

And he says, the eye is the lamp of the body. When your eye is clear or healthy, your whole body is full of light. And we've been taught that the eye is not our physical eye, but it's our conscience.

It's our conscience that tells us you sinned here, you sinned there, you had that wrong spirit here, you had a wrong thought here, you were proud here, you did this, you did that. And it's the conscience, it's a clear conscience that is our light. And dear brothers, that spoke to me because we think that we are the lamp that holds the light by putting verses on our Facebook page or on our signature or that we share these messages.

And we have all these ideas and thoughts about the Christian life and that that becomes our light. And it's not just our actions, because there can be many people who duplicate the actions, but don't make Jesus precious to them. I'm not interested, dear brothers and sisters, in overcoming anger and overcoming lust of the eyes if Jesus is not shone and made brighter as a result.

Let me say that again. I don't want to get victory over sin of lust and anger, but where Jesus is not the light and that Jesus being precious to me is not shining forth. That is the light that must shine.

Sadiq doesn't lust anymore, Sadiq doesn't get angry anymore. No, the light should be Jesus is more precious to me, Sadiq. Then, of course, he doesn't lust as he used to and he doesn't get angry as he used to.

But the light that is shining is not my victory over sin, but that Jesus is precious to me. And Jesus is what separates the Christian from everybody else. And the lamp that holds that light is a clear conscience.

It's a good conscience, a conscience that's becoming more and more sensitive towards sin. That is what must become our lamp. That must be what we hold up.

That is the authority with which we say Jesus is precious to us. And so I want to underline that, dear brothers and sisters, we can say that Jesus is precious to us. A lot of people are saying Jesus is precious to us.

A lot of people would like to talk about how Jesus is so precious to them. They'll sing songs. They'll cry tears saying Jesus is so precious to me.

You're a loving father. They can say all the right theology. But do they have the authority? Is that light being held up on a lamp that can withstand anything? Jesus tells me what that lamp is.

The lamp is a good conscience. And so if I see somebody holding up a lamp that doesn't take sin seriously, that light doesn't have authority. And that light is not worth it.

And so for me, dear brothers and sisters, if we want to hold up this beautiful Jesus to other people, it must be held up by the lamp of a clear conscience. It's that's the lamp with which I say, Lord Jesus, you be the light on this lamp. We must throw away all of the lamps, all of the lamps of other avenues or methods in which to shine the light of Jesus being so precious to us.

The lamp that we as Christians hold up is individually, dear brothers and sisters, in our own lives. I'm living with God with a clear conscience. Then, Lord Jesus, I want you to be precious to me, not your works, not your ministry, but your life.

And so when Jesus tells me, come and learn from me, humility and gentleness, that becomes precious to me. Humility and gentleness become super exciting things for me to run after. And I look forward for ways in which I can say, Lord, show me more of your humility.

Show me ways in which I am proud. Help me to keep investigating where I'm not gentle like I should be, because I want you to be precious. And what's so precious about you is your humility and your gentleness.

That's what you told me to learn from you. And I put my humility and gentleness on display, the humility and gentleness of Jesus on a display of a good conscience. Say, Lord, I'm walking with you in secret and you're showing me areas where I need to be more humble, where I need to be more gentle with my tongue or my demeanor or my conversations or my coworkers.

I want to be more humble. I want to be more gentle. And God says, keep doing that.

Keep seeking to live a life where you keep a clear conscience. And that becomes a powerful lamp on which I can hold up Jesus is precious to me. Because dear brothers and sisters, I want to say this.

There are so many strains of Christianity which will sing all the right songs, which will tell you that Jesus is precious to you, Jesus is precious to them. He'll sing all the songs. We can listen to them, but we must be careful of the sermons we listen to, the songs we listen to.

And we have to ask ourselves, Lord, I don't want to be influenced by their spirit because I want to look at the lamp that is holding the light. I want to see if that lamp is really something that treasures a good conscience that has a disregard for sin, that has a hatred for sin. And I find that in Christianity among young people, there's so much of a desire to please other people, to look good, to have a good reputation and produce good songs, talking about Jesus being beautiful and Jesus being precious.

But I listen to them and I look at them and I watch them and they also want to be relevant and they want to be cool and they want to be recognized. And so we have to be discerning to say, Lord Jesus, it's not that I just want Jesus to be precious to me, but I want that to be the light that is being lit on a lampstand of a very good and healthy conscience. Conscience.

Dear brothers, it should be a good conscience, like a good weighing machine, a weighing machine that is good. That means a weighing machine that's working properly. When you put sin on it, it registers and says, hold on, there's sin on this weighing machine.

It's starting to flutter more. Before it used to be a rock that was put on it and it used to flutter. Now it's becoming more good because now it tests when you put a bag of sand on it, not a rock anymore.

We just put a little bit of sand on it and it starts to flutter. And a day will come that we even put a feather on it, a feather of sin, and it starts to flutter. And that's the progress in which we are saying, Lord Jesus, I want to hold up your light on a good, healthy conscience.

If that is happening, then we can be the light. We can be the light. We want to see the light.

We want to see the light. We want God to cure us of all our blindnesses that come in, whether it's partial blindness, whether it's not seeing the full rainbow-colored beauty of God among all the brothers and sisters that God has given us, and the non-Christians in our neighborhood that God wants to reach through us and in our workplaces, that we can say, Lord, I want to have my eyes open to the multi-colored rainbow that's not yet complete, and that you want me to be the ones to reach out to them, people in the church and outside the church. I want my eyes to be open to how much more precious you are than you used to be.

But Lord, I don't want that light to be held in any other lamp. I don't want it to be in any kind of lamp. I want it to be held in the lamp of a good conscience.

And that's what I'm checking every day. Lord, is this my light? Are you more precious to me? Am I seeing your rainbow-colored love of God that goes much further, your kindness, your mercy, being much more broad than I've ever thought it to be? And Lord, am I holding that light in a lamp that is a good conscience, walking in secret before you? Then I can see the light, and I can be the light. May God help us in the days to come to be an increasingly bright light in an increasingly dark world.

It's an increasingly dark world not because of a political party winning or not. That's got nothing to do with it. It's because God said in the last days, deception will increase.

Deception to blind us from the glory of Jesus. Not any political regime or government or system than that. It's being blinded from the glory of Jesus.

And dear brothers and sisters, we're all in danger of that. Judgment begins in the house of the Lord. So we begin there and we say, Lord, we want to be freed.

We want the whole world to be freed from the blindness of the glory of Jesus. Help us, Lord, to be part of your army, part of your rescue force. I can get that in the days to come.

May God help us.

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