

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA**  
**THE LAMP WITHIN**

**By**  
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*Villa Rica February 22, 2004*  
*John 1:1-18*

Text Matthew 6:22-23 **"The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup>"But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!**

Of all the five natural senses which one is the most precious to you? Would you say hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, or feeling? Which would you rank at the top of the list as of greatest importance to you in your day-to-day activities? Actually every one of our senses is important and we perhaps don't thank God enough for them. It is not until one of them is impaired or lost that we realize how very precious they are. But I daresay that if you had to make a choice as to which of the senses you would most loathe to be without it would be your eyesight. It enables us to see what we could not otherwise see. It opens up vistas of beauty and understanding to us.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words.

I heard the story of a little daughter of an artist who lost her eyesight in her infancy. For years it was thought her eyesight was permanently lost. But then a successful surgical procedure gave her back her sight. Her mother had died early in her life and her dad had been her constant companion and dearest friend. While she lay in a darkened room with her eyes still bandaged her one thought was that *Soon I'll be able to see my dear father.*

When the days of waiting had finally passed and the bandage was removed, at long last she was able to look into the face of the one who meant more to her than any other person on earth. She trembled for joy, closed and opened her eyes several times to convince herself that she wasn't dreaming. Then, as her dad took her into his arms, she exclaimed "And I had such a beautiful father all these years and didn't even know it!"

We can surely appreciate the thrill it must have been for this daughter to see what before she could only imagine and visualize in her mind's eye.

But this is how it is when Christ removes the bandages of sin and opens up our understanding to God's salvation in His Son and heaven.

### **I. Jesus Christ Is The True Light Of The World**

Isaiah prophesied, **The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined. Isa. 9:2 (NKJV)**

Matthew tells us that when Jesus settled in Capernaum in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali that it was in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah (See Matt. 4:14-16)

The unique thing about man is that he was made in the image of God, which means he has an intellect, a mind, the ability to think and to know. This is that soul part in man, his psyche, his spiritual self, which can discern and evaluate and estimate and reason. This part in man has an immortal subsistence. It can never be annihilated or destroyed. Our present bodies are mortal but the soul is created

immortal. It will always exist and be aware of its existence. That is why the prospect of hell is so awful and the prospect of heaven so glorious. The souls in hell have a consciousness, never-ending awareness of what they did on earth and why they are where they are and the acute knowledge that they deserve the punishment they are receiving. Paul says there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust (Acts 24:15).

When Christ speaks in the sermon on the mount of the eye of the body he is speaking of the soul, which can see and give illumination. He calls it the lamp of the body. It lights up with understanding and knowledge. But the soul is dependent on the data and information fed in to it from outside itself. The light on the inside of the body comes through our five physical senses. They all give entrance to the soul and can be a part of the learning, knowing process by which the soul makes judgments and calculations.

For example, the natural world around us discovers to us many things. It actually tells us about God. The scripture says that all men are without excuse when it comes to knowing there is a God who, though invisible to the naked eye, made all things. But because men do not want to honor God as God and give him thanks for his goodness in supplying food and all the things necessary for life that he let their foolish hearts be darkened.

Romans Chapter 1 is a terrible indictment of mankind for rejecting the light that comes to the souls of all men through the created order. The apostle says that men suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Men become futile in endless speculations as they deny the truth of creation. They concoct ideas about how this universe and order got here, but leave God out of those ideas, or if they include God it is more as a manipulator of matter, not as the Creator and sustainer and Governor of the universe.

However, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God can come to the soul in another way. It is to be seen in the face of Jesus Christ. We are not limited to the creation for our knowledge of God and our soul's orientation to reality. Another, superior source of light shines in the face of Jesus Christ. Indeed, by this light men can come to know more than simply that there is a Creator. They can come to know their Creator as a personal Savior and Lord.

In John's gospel we read, **<sup>6</sup>There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. <sup>9</sup>There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. John 1:6-9 (NASB)**

John points out that the man who appeared in Nazareth was none other than the Creator God. He wrote, **<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. <sup>11</sup>He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup>But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:10 -13 (NASB)**

We are told that in Him is life, and the life was the light of men. We see in this statement that God equates life with light. There must be light in order for there to be life. Darkness speaks of death and loss. Jude speaks of the destiny of sinners who join the fallen angels as kept in chains of darkness, a black darkness reserved for them forever.

Charles Colson and several other Christian leaders once met with President Borja of Ecuador to discuss Prison Fellowship International's ministry in Ecuadorian penitentiaries. They had no sooner been seated in luxurious leather chairs than the President interrupted the conversation with the story of his own imprisonment years before being elected to the presidency.

He had been involved in the struggle for democracy in Ecuador. The military cracked down, and he was arrested. Without trial, they threw him into a cold dungeon with no light and no window. For three days he endured the solitary fear and darkness that can drive a person mad.

Just when the situation seemed unbearable, the huge steel door opened, and someone crept into the darkness. Borja heard the person working on something in the opposite corner. Then the figure crept out, closed the door, and disappeared.

Minutes later the room suddenly blazed with light. Someone, perhaps taking his life into his hands, had connected electricity to the broken light fixture. "From that moment," explained President Borja, "my imprisonment had meaning because at least I could see."

Even more important than the light we see with our eyes is the light that Christ brings to our hearts, giving our lives the understanding and meaning only he can give. -- Ronald W. Nikkel in *Fresh Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching* (Baker), from the editors of *Leadership*.

Light is life giving! In heaven the Lord is the light of that place forever. We read <sup>23</sup>**The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.** <sup>24</sup>**And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.** <sup>25</sup>**Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).** Rev. 21:23 -25 (NKJV)

## II. The Light Within Can Be Darkness

Now when you hear Jesus say, **if the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness** it sounds as though this is a contradiction in terms. How can a person be in darkness if he has light? I remember a few years ago I heard about black light bulbs. I can't imagine why anyone would want a black light bulb. But you can paint the globe of a light bulb black so that the light is barely seen at all. Yet you could say that there was a light burning even if you couldn't see by it.

Obviously, what Christ is speaking of here is that the soul, the psyche, the thinking, reasoning part of a human being can take in misinformation, can suppress the truth through error and sin, so that knowledge is darkened. The truth is denied and the soul is basing its conclusions on faulty surmising and wrong notions. Jesus speaks of such a soul having a bad eye, an evil eye. The understanding is blinded by sin, by error, by so-called light, which is not really light at all. Satan comes as an angel of light, but his light is darkness, it is always antichrist even when it claims to be information about God. Isaiah warned against the false prophets,

<sup>20</sup>**Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;  
Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness;  
Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!**  
Isa. 5:20 (NASB)

<sup>20</sup>**To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.** Isa. 8:20 (NASB)

How many of us have ever made a bad decision based on faulty information? You may remember what happened to a 61-year-old Massachusetts grandmother who took some wrong turns and made some poor decisions as to which roads to take with her school bus on the first day of her new job as a driver. She got so lost that she wound up in the state of Connecticut.

Because she had already picked up ten kids on her route, an all-points bulletin was issued for her on charges of kidnapping and, since she had crossed the state line, the F.B.I. was called in. After finally locating the lady and interrogating her the police and F.B.I. agents concluded that she had made some wrong turns and had simply lost her way. So they released her.

A lot of people were upset but that was a recoverable situation. However, when it comes to matters of life and death it is vital that we have the right information. And we must act on that correct information. Scripture says, **There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. Prov. 14:12 (NASB)**

**If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!**

The Psalmist said,<sup>30</sup> **The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.**

<sup>28</sup> **For You will light my lamp; The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.** <sup>105</sup> **Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.**  
**Psa. 119:130 Psa. 18:28, Psa. 119:105 (NKJV)**

Jesus said, **I am the way, the truth, and the light.**

In the Old Testament Tabernacle there was a golden Lamp stand that weighed 120 pounds. It symbolized Christ as the Light. It was hammered out of one solid piece of gold, which speaks of Christ being beaten with many stripes for our sins. The beautiful Lamp stand had six branches coming out. Each branch had a cup and a bulb and a flower. This was to represent almond blossoms in its three stages. The almond represents the resurrection, which presupposes the incarnation and the holiness of Christ's humanity and the glory of his resurrection. But the important thing about the Lamp stand was the light that it shed to those within the holy place. It was placed on the sunny south of the Tabernacle. From the south comes light, and warmth and blessing. And it was to be fed its fuel from beaten olives that flowed continuously into the cups or bowls.

The Christian has the light of Jesus Christ. The oil in the Lamp stand represented the Holy Spirit who flows continuously in the heart of the believer, supplying the anointing needed. This Light was placed over against the Table and the Light would light up the Table on which the bread of life was displayed. The beauty of the Lamp stand could be seen as well as the other articles of furniture, which also represented Christ.

God shines into our hearts the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, the light can be missed even when the light is shining. Unbelief blackens the light.

We see that same Lamp stand in Daniel 5 in Belshazzar's palace as he is throwing a celebration honoring the gods of silver and of gold using the precious utensils of the Temple. And it tells us in Daniel 5:5 that suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the Lamp stand on the plaster on the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. Then his face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack, and his knees began knocking together. He could not read the writing but he knew God was revealing something solemn and grave to him. Only Daniel could give an interpretation of the writing on the wall, and it was that his kingdom had come to an end, that he had been weighed in the balances and been found wanting. His kingdom would be divided and be given to the Medes and the Persians and in that very same night the king was slain.

Belshazzar had the Lamp of God but never discerned the meaning of the Light it shed. This tells us that the Word of God will judge those who do not have the light of Christ, that like Belshazzar they did not know and could not discern Christ in the end. Like him they had worshipped false gods of silver and gold.

How is it within your soul today, my friend? Do you have the Light of the Lord? Is Christ your everlasting light? Are you walking in the light of His Word? Are you heeding His Word? We come to the light of Christ and begin living by His light. Do you repent of sin as the Spirit of the Lord convicts you of sin? Are you practicing an observable love for the brethren? That is an evidence of your faith in Christ.

"The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup>"But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

Ask God today to fill you with His Light. Ask the Lord Jesus Christ to come in and light your soul for time and eternity.

#### #476 "The Light of the World Is Jesus"

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