

This is our second sermon of three concerning the value of the Word of God. Last week we looked at the fact that the Word of God can be expressed as **bread**. In John 6:35 Jesus said, “I am the bread of life.”

Today we are thinking about the fact that the Scriptures is a **light**. Jesus also said, “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12) Bread is basic – an accessible metaphor. And so is light – it is rather intuitive. Timothy Keller says,

Jesus Christ is *the* Word of God (John 1:1-14) because no more comprehensive, personal, and beautiful communication of God is possible. We cannot look directly at the sun with our eyes. The glory of it would immediately overwhelm and destroy our sight. We have to look at it through a filter, and then we can see the great flames and colors of it. When we look at Jesus Christ as he is shown to us in the Scriptures, we are looking at the glory of God through the filter of a human nature. (*Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, Timothy Keller, Penguin, 2014, 49)

Proposition

The Bible is beyond question, an amazing book. Just imagine the fact that it has 31,173 verses; 1,189 chapters; 66 books; over 40 human authors. Yet it is God’s unified and unequivocal love letter to His created ones. As Howard and William Hendricks put it in *Living By The Book*,

The bible is a single unit, bound together by the theme of God and His relationship to humankind. Each book, section, paragraph, and verse works together with the others to reveal God’s truth. That’s why Scripture is best understood by relating its individual parts to the integrated whole. (Moody, 2007, 26)

Here is a Bible that is 175 years old. Is the Bible dusty and historic for you? Or is it just an interesting academic project? Or do we see the **value for our lives?** This aspect of God’s Word is often expressed with the metaphor of light. Today we are going to explore three ways in which God’s Word is light for us.

[A] The Bible is light that unveils truth

God **reveals** Himself to us in the Word of God...making Himself accessible through divine revelation.

The use of light in Isaiah reveals God’s glory in the provision of our salvation, from the promise to illuminate His plan to a people who live in deep darkness, to purifying them, to bringing them into the earth he has made to be inhabited we will live in His light forever.

Isaiah 9:1-2; 49:5-6; 59:20-21; 60:1-3,19-20.

'light' (*or*) The Hebrew word means “light,”

- in the created order: light of day; light of heavenly luminaries (moon, sun, stars); lightning; light of lamp.
- Metaphorical or figurative use: light of life, of instruction, of abundance and of greatest value the light of God’s face.

'light' (*fōs*) The Greek word means to give light, to shine; to be enlightened, illuminated.

Here is an interesting factoid – my father-in-law’s name, and our nephew are named “light” or *Photis*.

Question: What was God’s first speech/act of creation?

Gen 1 ³ And God said, “Let there be **light**,” and there was **light**.

John 1 ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the **light** of all mankind.

Isaiah 9 ...but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—
²The people walking in darkness have seen a great **light**;
on those living in the land of deep darkness a **light** has dawned. (quoted in Matt. 4 ¹²⁻¹⁷)

Isaiah 49 ⁵And now the LORD says—
⁶“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to **restore** the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.
I will also make you a **light** ^a for the Gentiles,
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”

John 8 ¹²When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the **light** of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the **light** of life.”

Isaiah 59 ²⁰“The Redeemer will come to Zion,
to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,” declares the LORD.
²¹“As for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the Lord.
“My Spirit, who is on you, will not depart from you, and my
words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips
of your children and on the lips of their descendants— from this
time on and forever,” says the Lord.

Isaiah 60 ¹“Arise, **shine**, for your **light** has come,
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.
²See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the Lord rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.
³Nations will come to your **light**,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

2 Corinthians 4 ⁶For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.

Isaiah 60 ¹⁹The sun will no more be your **light** by day,
nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you,
for the Lord will be your everlasting **light**,
and your God will be your glory.
²⁰Your sun will never set again,
and your moon will wane no more;
the Lord will be your everlasting **light**,
and your days of sorrow will end.
²¹Then all your people will be righteous
and they will possess the land forever.

Revelation 21 ²²I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

[B] The Bible is light that reflects sin

James makes this point clear and he does so by using the metaphor of reflected light.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does. James 1:22-25

We need to contemplate or meditate on the Word of God. We cannot hope to get to the depths of God's truth unless we are prepared to allow our hearts and our minds to wrestle with what God is saying to us. Meditation is encountering the Word of God, and reflecting upon its meaning for our lives. Richard Foster writes, "If we hope to move beyond the superficialities of our culture, including our religious culture, we must be willing to go down into the recreating silences, into the inner world of contemplation." (***Celebration Of Discipline***, Harper & Row, 1988, 17)

Now this is not mere introspection...it is Biblical **inspection**. We must allow the Bible to pinpoint the problem in our heart. We must allow the Bible to be our **authority**.

In Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 7 there is a powerful response to God's Word. When God's people heard it read to them, they responded with brokenness, weeping, and confession. Interestingly, this did not lead to despair but quite the opposite. The people were moved to obedience and a place of great joy.

[C] The Bible is light that directs believers

Here is our key passage...John will read for us:

Psalm 119:105-112

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws. I have suffered much; preserve my life, O LORD, according to your word. Accept, O LORD, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your laws. Though I constantly take my life in my hands, I will not forget your law. The wicked have set a snare for me, but I have not strayed from your precepts. Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart. My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.

Of course, Psalm 119 is one of the most fascinating passages of Scripture. It is organized around the Hebrew alphabet, as an acrostic. Terms used for the Scriptures are in great variety: law, statutes, precepts, decrees, commands, ways, words). Psalm 119 focuses on the value of the Word of God in the life of the believer. Because God's Word is a lamp for us, the action step that we must take is to comply – to **obey**.

Psalm 80

³Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

⁷Restore us, God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

¹⁹Restore us, Lord God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

- Restore / Rescue
 - to turn back, return
 - to turn back (to God), repent
- be saved - to be liberated, or delivered from mortal trouble

Conclusion – see Digging Deeper
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American philosopher and writer Ayn Rand rejected religion and championed reason. On one occasion she was asked by a reporter what was wrong with the modern world (bear in mind, she passed away in 1982). She said,

Never before has the world been so desperately asking for answers to crucial questions, and never before has the world been so frantically committed to the idea that no answers are possible. To paraphrase the bible, the modern attitude is, “Father forgive us, for we know not what we are doing – and please don’t tell us!” (***Living By The Book***, Howard and William Hendricks, Moody, 2007, 26)

It is our conviction that when the truth of God’s Word shines on our lives it brings hope and healing. Think of the Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6:24-26...

The LORD bless you
and keep you;
The LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
The LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.

Your homework is to read God’s Word.

Please consider using You Version.

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The light of God’s Word will...

- unveil His truth to you...empowering you to combat the relativism that bombards us
- pinpoint sin in your life...leading to restoration and joy
- direct you in God’s way for your life...rescuing you from the pit of autonomy and individualism