

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Let the Light of Jesus Shine”
(Part II of the Lenten series “The great “I AM” statements of Jesus”)
March 01, 2026

Scripture

Isaiah 42:6
John 8:12

Core Idea and purpose

Core theological ideas from earlier sermons in the series:

- (02/22/2026) To know Jesus is to know God on a first name basis

Core theological idea: We must let the light of Jesus illuminate our situations and hearts.

Challenge/purpose: To encourage people to seek truth by allowing the light of Jesus to illuminate their situation and hearts.

The Sermon

I would like to introduce you to a wonderful woman of God. Her name is Jarena Lee, and she was the first female preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church. She preached publicly to racially mixed Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist & Wesleyan congregations across the mid-Atlantic states, lower Canada, Cincinnati, Detroit & New England. This was during the early 19th century, a time when slavery was institutionalized, and women could not own property or vote.

When she was in her 20s, she received God’s forgiveness and gave her life to Jesus. About 4 or 5 years later, while in a silent & meditative prayer, she heard a voice that said, “Preach the gospel; I will put words in your mouth and will turn your enemies to become your friends” Surprised, she asked God if she understood his instruction and then she saw an image of a Bible on a pulpit.

She immediately told the AME founder and Bishop, Richard Allen, about her calling. To her dismay, he told her that it was against Methodist policy for women to preach.¹ Richard Allen was a great disciple of Christ who lovingly resisted racism. But, when Jarena first told him about her calling, he did not allow the light of Christ to illuminate the situation or his heart.

When we do not allow the light of Christ to illuminate our situation & hearts, we inevitably misjudge, stifle and, even hurt other people. Without the light of Christ,

¹ <https://www.guideposts.org/inspiration/miracles/historical-figures-and-their-divine-experiences> ; Google [Jarena Lee - Wikipedia](#) ; Google [Jarena Lee | Christian History | Christianity Today](#)

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Let the Light of Jesus Shine”
(Part II of the Lenten series “The great “I AM” statements of Jesus”)
March 01, 2026

what is really going on in a situation and the true condition of our hearts remain shrouded in darkness.

When I clean the house, my lazy nature tempts me to do it in the dark. That way I cannot see all the dirt and I finish much faster. Thus, I have more time for watching television, reading, or taking a nap but the house is still dirty. Worse yet, my wife, Donna, will come home and see all the dirt! When we clean a house, we should turn on all the lights so we can see what is clean and what is dirty. Light shows us the true condition of the house.

In the same way, the light of Jesus shows us what is right and what is wrong. It reveals the true condition of our hearts and the situation we are in. It shows us where there is justice & injustice; where there is love & hate; and where there is good & evil. So, we must allow the light of Jesus to illuminate the situation so we can discern good from bad. We must also allow the light of Jesus to illuminate our hearts so we can discern loving desires & motivations from unloving desires & motivations.

Last week, we looked at Jesus’ declaration that He is the Great I AM. With this claim, Jesus said that He is fully human and fully God. This automatically implies that He is the light of the world. But in John 8:12 Jesus explicitly said that He is light. He said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

With these bold words, Jesus claimed to be the fulfillment of prophecy. Isaiah 42:1-7 is a prophecy about the coming Messiah and verse 6 clearly says that the Messiah will be a light for the Gentiles. This means he will be a light for all people. Let us look at the entire passage:

¹ *“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring **justice** to the nations.*

² *He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets.*

³ *A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth **justice**;*

⁴ *he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes **justice** on earth. In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”*

⁵ *This is what God the LORD says—the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives*

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Let the Light of Jesus Shine”
(Part II of the Lenten series “The great “I AM” statements of Jesus”)
March 01, 2026

breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it:

⁶ *“I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a **light** for the Gentiles,*

⁷ *to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.*

Notice how this prophecy states that the coming Messiah will bring forth justice before referring to the Messiah as light. There is a connection between justice and the light of the Messiah. This light will illuminate society and our hearts to reveal justice or the lack thereof, just as light in our homes reveals cleanliness or the lack thereof.

Jesus often uses my wife, Donna, to light up a situation for me. I sometimes get annoyed when someone says or does something I don't like. When I am annoyed, I often complain to Donna about it. I expect her to reply, “Honey, you're right. That person was totally wrong!” Instead, she listens to me and then says, “Well, remember what this person is going through...” or “Let's look at this from his/her point of view.” I must admit, I find that annoying. But sometimes the things that annoy us are very good for us. Once I get over my annoyance, the light of Jesus begins to illuminate the situation and my heart. Once I consider the other person's point of view, I start to see all the good and all the bad in the situation. What is just & loving in that situation becomes clearer. I also begin to see what is really going on in my own heart.

Eight years after God called Jarena Lee to be a preacher, she spontaneously stood up and preached at a worship service when the scheduled preacher was unable to preach. Jarena later wrote in her autobiography, “During the exhortation, God made manifest his power in a manner sufficient to show the world that I was called to labor according to my ability...” Richard Allen was in the audience that day and, upon hearing her preach, immediately changed his mind, convinced that God had gifted her with the power of preaching. He ordained her as an AME preacher, even though she was a woman.² Richard Allen finally allowed the light of Jesus to illuminate the situation and his heart.

² <https://www.guideposts.org/inspiration/miracles/historical-figures-and-their-divine-experiences> ; Google [Jarena Lee - Wikipedia](#) ; Google [Jarena Lee | Christian History | Christianity Today](#)

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
"Let the Light of Jesus Shine"
(Part II of the Lenten series "The great "I AM" statements of Jesus")
March 01, 2026

Do we allow the light of Jesus to illuminate the situations we are in? Do we see everyone through the eyes of Jesus? Do we try to see everyone's point of view? Do we prayerfully ask, "What is just & unjust in this situation? What is loving & unloving in this situation?"

AND

Do we allow the light of Jesus to illuminate our hearts? Do we ask God about our true motivations? Do we ask God about why we feel the way we do...what is the real cause of our anger or happiness? Do we prayerfully look at our attitudes, to see if they are loving or unloving; just or unjust?

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Let the Light of Jesus Shine”
(Part II of the Lenten series “The great “I AM” statements of Jesus”)
March 01, 2026

Sermon Outline

- I. I would like to introduce you to a wonderful woman of God.
 - A. Her name is Jarena Lee, and she was the first female preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church.
 - She preached publicly to racially mixed Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist & Wesleyan congregations across the mid-Atlantic states, lower Canada, Cincinnati, Detroit & New England.
 - This was during the early 19th century, a time when slavery was institutionalized, and women could not own property or vote.
 - B. When she was in her 20s, she received God’s forgiveness and gave her life to Jesus.
 - C. About 4 or 5 years later, while in a silent & meditative prayer, she heard a voice that said, “Preach the gospel; I will put words in your mouth and will turn your enemies to become your friends”
 - Surprised, she asked God if she understood his instruction and then she saw an image of a Bible on a pulpit.
 - D. She immediately told the AME founder and Bishop, Richard Allen, about her calling.
 - To her dismay, he told her that it was against Methodist policy for women to preach.³
 - Richard Allen was a great disciple of Christ who lovingly resisted racism.
 - But, when Jarena first told him about her calling, he did not allow the light of Christ to illuminate the situation or his heart.
- II. When we do not allow the light of Christ to illuminate our situation & hearts, we inevitably misjudge, stifle and, even hurt other people.

³ <https://www.guideposts.org/inspiration/miracles/historical-figures-and-their-divine-experiences> ; Google [Jarena Lee - Wikipedia](#) ; Google [Jarena Lee | Christian History | Christianity Today](#)

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Let the Light of Jesus Shine”
(Part II of the Lenten series “The great “I AM” statements of Jesus”)
March 01, 2026

- A. Without the light of Christ, what is really going on in a situation and the true condition of our hearts remain shrouded in darkness.
- B. When I clean the house, my lazy nature tempts me to do it in the dark.
- That way I cannot see all the dirt and I finish much faster.
 - Thus, I have more time for watching television, reading, or taking a nap
 - but the house is still dirty.
 - Worse yet, my wife, Donna, will come home and see all the dirt!
 - When we clean a house, we should turn on all the lights so we can see what is clean and what is dirty.
 - Light shows us the true condition of the house.
- C. In the same way, the light of Jesus shows us what is right and what is wrong.
- It reveals the true condition of our hearts and the situation we are in.
 - It shows us where there is...
 - justice & injustice;
 - where there is love & hate;
 - and where there is good & evil.
 - So, we must allow the light of Jesus to illuminate the situation so we can discern good from bad.
 - We must also allow the light of Jesus to illuminate our hearts so we can discern loving desires & motivations from unloving desires & motivations.
- III. Last week, we looked at Jesus’ declaration that He is the Great I AM.
- A. With this claim, Jesus said that He is fully human and fully God.
- B. This automatically implies that He is the light the world.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Let the Light of Jesus Shine”
(Part II of the Lenten series “The great “I AM” statements of Jesus”)
March 01, 2026

IV. But in John 8:12 Jesus explicitly said that He is light. He said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

- A. With these bold words, Jesus claimed to be the fulfillment of prophecy.
- B. Isaiah 42:1-7 is a prophecy about the coming Messiah and verse 6 clearly says that the Messiah will be a light for the Gentiles.
- C. This means he will be a light for all people.
- D. Let us look at the entire passage:

*¹ “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring **justice** to the nations.*

² He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets.

*³ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth **justice**;*

*⁴ he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes **justice** on earth. In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”*

⁵ This is what God the LORD says—the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it:

*⁶ “I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a **light** for the Gentiles, ⁷ to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.*

- E. Notice how this prophecy states that the coming Messiah will bring forth justice before referring to the Messiah as light.
 - There is a connection between justice and the light of the Messiah.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Let the Light of Jesus Shine”
(Part II of the Lenten series “The great “I AM” statements of Jesus”)
March 01, 2026

- This light will illuminate society and our hearts to reveal justice or the lack thereof, just as light in our homes reveals cleanliness or the lack thereof.

V. Jesus often uses my wife, Donna, to light up a situation for me.

- A. I sometimes get annoyed when someone says or does something I don't like.
- B. When I am annoyed, I often complain to Donna about it.
- C. I expect her to reply, “Honey, you're right. That person was totally wrong!”
- D. Instead, she listens to me and then says, “Well, remember what this person is going through...” or “Let's look at this from his/her point of view.”
 - I must admit, I find that annoying.
- E. But sometimes the things that annoy us are very good for us.
 - Once I get over my annoyance, the light of Jesus begins to illuminate the situation and my heart.
 - Once I consider the other person's point of view, I start to see all the good and all the bad in the situation.
 - What is just & loving in that situation becomes clearer.
 - I also begin to see what is really going on in my own heart.

VI. Eight years after God called Jarena Lee to be a preacher, she spontaneously stood up and preached at a worship service when the scheduled preacher was unable to preach.

- A. Jarena later wrote in her autobiography, “During the exhortation, God made manifest his power in a manner sufficient to show the world that I was called to labor according to my ability...”
- B. Richard Allen was in the audience that day and, upon hearing her preach, immediately changed his mind, convinced that God had gifted her with the power of preaching.

Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
“Let the Light of Jesus Shine”
(Part II of the Lenten series “The great “I AM” statements of Jesus”)
March 01, 2026

C. He ordained her as an AME preacher, even though she was a woman.⁴

D. Richard Allen finally allowed the light of Jesus to illuminate the situation and his heart.

VII. Do we allow the light of Jesus to illuminate our situations and hearts?

A. Do we allow the light of Jesus to illuminate the situations we are in?

- Do we see everyone thorough the eyes of Jesus?
- Do we try to see everyone’s point of view?
- Do we prayerfully ask:
 - What is just & unjust in this situation?
 - What is loving & unloving in this situation?

AND

B. Do we allow the light of Jesus to illuminate our hearts?

- Do we ask God about our true motivations?
- Do we ask God about why we feel the way we do...what is the real cause of our anger or happiness?
- Do we prayerfully look at our attitudes, to see if they are loving or unloving; just or unjust?

Let’s pray.

⁴ <https://www.guideposts.org/inspiration/miracles/historical-figures-and-their-divine-experiences> ; Google [Jarena Lee - Wikipedia](#) ; [Google Jarena Lee | Christian History | Christianity Today](#)