

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 23 Jan 2022

Sermon Title : Light or Darkness

Speaker : Rev John Foo

Text : Psalm 119:105

INTRODUCTION

We will not be transformed simply by following a Bible reading plan such as the TbtW Bible reading plan religiously or joining the TbtW Telegram group although these will help. Neither will we be transformed because the reading plan has been laid out chronologically although that will also help. Rather, we are transformed by God through His living and active Word.

Two things God's Word does as we open ourselves to its transforming power:

1. God's Word is necessary to show us the way to live.

The psalmist describes God's Word as a lamp to his feet and a light to his path in days when paths were very dark and dangerous at night. A lamp was absolutely necessary to show the path one was walking on, especially when walking on unfamiliar ground. Here, the path referred to is the path of life. Just as a physical path requires a lamp to light the way, so does our path of life. A recurring theme in Psalm 119, the longest Book in the Bible, is that God's Word is a lamp to light the path of life; it is our essential guide.

A common misconception

Some Christians may not believe that God's Word is the only lamp that can light their path.

- We are always guided by someone or something in our lives. This person or thing may change over time as we go through life.
"If you are not guided by God (through His Word), you will be guided by someone or something else." Eric Liddell, Scottish missionary to China.
- We think we can walk on our own or use other lamps to light our path e.g. the lamp of our own sense of right or wrong, good or bad, our own set of principles and values, or the lamp of our own wisdom and understanding.
- We often pick and choose which lamp we want to use. Some people keep the lamp of God's Word close by but choose not to refer to it often because they have other lamps. Perhaps they turn to God's Word occasionally, especially during moments of crisis or difficulty when the other lamps they have been

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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using are not able to provide enough light. At these times, they cry out to God desperately.

If we seriously want our lives to be transformed by God through His Word, if we want to live our lives rightly, we must let God's Word be the only lamp to light the way.

2. God's Word guides us personally

The psalmist says in Psalm 119:105 "Your Word is a lamp to *my* feet and a light to *my* path." The psalmist was looking to God to guide him personally in his life. God wants to speak to us personally through His Word. We need the light of God's Word to guide us on our own journey of life.

When we listen to the Word of God through our daily devotions or Bible study, we need to have the posture/attitude to listen to what God wants to tell us about ourselves – our thoughts, actions, speech, attitude, feelings, motives, intentions, our hidden secrets and our dark side. Nothing about us is hidden from God. God wants to reveal and address all the hidden sins in our lives and He does this through His Word.

Common misconceptions

- Some Christians think that God's Word is talking about someone else and not to them personally. Psalm 119:105 reminds us that God wants to speak to us personally.
- Some Christians think they can be selective in what they want to hear. They only receive what they like and reject what they do not like or what they do not find useful, but that is not how God operates:
 - 2 Tim 3:16-17 tells us that God's Word teaches us things that we need to know, reproves us for the wrong things that we do and then moves on to teach us the right things we should be doing. In this entire process, God's Word is training us to live lives of righteousness, so that we may be engaged in every good work.

We cannot pick and choose what we want to hear or receive from God. It is natural for us to reject all reproofs and corrections. However, these reproofs and corrections are precisely the things which God wants to use to train us to live lives of righteousness. It is not just hearing good things but also hearing things we don't want to hear – things that God wants us to hear and address in our lives. To be transformed by the Word, we need to take everything God says to us personally and not leave out anything.

Understanding God's Word

- God wants to speak to us personally, not through another person's devotions.

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- In order to know what God is speaking to us, we need to study His Word. Those who are young in faith need to be given spiritual milk because they are not ready to receive solid food. Those who are more mature spiritually need to receive solid food from God's Word so that they can be trained by constant practice to discern right from wrong, good from evil according to the Word.
- Doing our daily devotions does not mean we can dispense with doing an in-depth Bible study like the DISCIPLE course. Devotional readings and the DISCIPLE bible study programme are complementary. When you learn how to read and understand the Word, it helps you do the TbtW devotional reading.

One clear indication of whether God's Word is guiding you is whether you are spending time constantly in His Word or whether you are reading His Word sporadically. For a person who depends on God's Word to be his guide, he will always be running back to God's Word for guidance & understanding.

Light or Darkness

Darkness

- There is darkness in our path of life – otherwise there is no necessity for a light. Anything that is not from God belongs to the dark side.
- Our problem is that we often cannot discern the things of darkness. Things of darkness have an insidious and deceptive way of misleading and confusing us. We don't even think that our lives are surrounded by darkness.
- Just because we have been brought into the Light does not mean that darkness cannot reach us. We are living in a dark and perplexing world and this darkness has a sneaky way of encroaching into our lives without us knowing. We think our dark thoughts and dark things we hold in our hearts are trivial and that is the control darkness can have over us to destroy and ruin us.

Light

- The light of God's Word dispels all darkness. It brings to light everything that is hidden in the dark. When you allow God's Word to shine its light on you, His Word exposes everything that has been hiding in secret in our hearts all this while. The transforming power of God Word releases us from darkness.

Conclusion

It is essential for us to let God's Word be the only lamp to light up our path of life. When we walk the path of life lighted by God's Word, we know where to go and what to avoid. This path leads heavenwards and is strewn with God's blessing, peace and presence. However, if we choose to walk the path of darkness, this leads to death and destruction.

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As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

As a group, take a few minutes to memorize Psalm 119:105, then recite it together.

1. After reciting, say together, "This is the Word of the Lord."

And also respond, "Thanks be to God." Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now.

a. As you recite God's word, how has this verse spoken to you?

b. (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Light or Darkness"?

(ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. God has provided His Word to light up our path. What does this tell you about God and His Word?
- 2b. (i) Besides God's Word, what are some lamps that you have used to light your path of life?

(ii) Why is it dangerous to use lamps other than God's Word to light your path of life?
- 2c. Do you have the tendency to feel that God's Word is talking about someone else or addressing a general situation but not talking to you personally?

- 3a. On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the least and 10 the most, to what extent do you pick and choose what you want to hear from the Word of God?
- 3b. What is one thing you can do to overcome this tendency to think that parts of God's Word do not apply to you?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 3b. above, so that you can experience God's Word illuminating every part of your life for the following week(s) until your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your personal testimony of how God spoke to you personally through His Word to teach, reprove, correct and train you in righteousness.

OR

Give thanks to God for blessing you with His Word to be the lamp that lights and guides your path of life.

5. With a prayer partner, bring all that has been shared in 3b and 3c to God, asking God's Word to illuminate the secret parts of our hearts to reveal things that you find difficult to face.

As a group, discuss what the group can do to encourage each other to grow in the understanding of God's Word so that you can be guided by the lamp of God's Word in your daily lives.

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