Light The Night

Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

- I. The Reality of Darkness Isaiah 9:2 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.
 - The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light!!!

Most people <u>don't like the dark</u> - It <u>unsettles</u> us - It hides <u>what we cannot see</u> - It can be <u>scary</u> - It can be <u>dangerous</u> - **It can be confusing.**

<u>Children cry out at night</u> when the lights are off because <u>something about the</u> dark makes them feel vulnerable.

- The truth is, we never fully outgrow that.
- Even as adults, there's something about darkness that makes us uneasy.
- In the dark <u>you lose vision</u>, <u>direction</u>, and you lose <u>your sense of safety</u>.
- And heavy darkness has <u>fallen on our nation in recent days</u>...

There is also <u>a light beginning to shine</u>.

- People who never professed faith in Jesus are suddenly lifting their voices.
- People who once saw <u>no hope</u> are <u>now seeking to know God</u>.
- Faith has been tested, but *out of the testing comes* <u>a louder declaration</u> <u>than ever before...</u>

The grace and love of Jesus Christ is still the answer for a lost and dying world.

But this is not a new story.

• The prophet Isaiah spoke of it long ago: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." (Isaiah 9:2)

Darkness has always been the reality of a world without God. And <u>if we're going</u> to hear the call to light the night, we must first understand the reality of the darkness we are facing.

Darkness is not just the backdrop of our world today; it is the very condition of humanity without God.

- Isaiah spoke of people walking in darkness...
- Living under the shadow of *confusion, sin, and hopelessness*.

We are seeing that same shadow stretching across our nation right now.

- **Violence has erupted** in ways *that shake communities* to their core.
- Anger and bitterness <u>are spilling out into the streets</u>.
- Fear and uncertainty are <u>gripping hearts everywhere</u>.

This is not just politics - This is not just culture - This is the reality of what happens when humanity <u>tries to live without the light of Jesus</u> Christ.

Darkness breeds... Confusion, Division, And Hatred - It twists what God created for good and turns it into chaos.

Before we can understand God's call to *light the night, we must first recognize* the true nature of the darkness that surrounds us.

1. What Causes Darkness

John 1:5 - The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Absence of Light

- Darkness is not a force of its own. It's simply the absence of light.
- You don't have to invite darkness in <u>just remove the light</u>, and *darkness* rushes in.
- That's why the very first words God ever spoke in the scriptures were,

Genesis 1:3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

Without light, there is <u>no life</u>, <u>no order</u>, <u>no direction</u>.

• Sin, Rebellion, and Rejection of God (John 3:19).

John 3:19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but <u>people loved</u> <u>darkness</u> instead of light because their deeds were evil.

- Darkness is caused when people push God away.
- That's called <u>Rebellion</u>. Rebellion <u>always</u> brings sin.

Sin always rejects the light of God's Word. Ignorance of God's Word

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Where the Word of God is absent, darkness rules.

A Bible unopened is like a light fixture left unplugged — the power is there, but if it's never turned on, the home remains in darkness.

Spiritual Blindness - 2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

- Paul said the god of this world <u>blinds the minds of unbelievers</u>.
- Satan thrives in darkness.
- He doesn't want people to see the light of Jesus.
- He <u>blinds</u>, he <u>distracts</u>, he <u>deceives</u>.
- Where people should be seeing truth, they stumble in spiritual blindness.

2. What Sustains Darkness?

Silence of the Church - Matthew 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

- Jesus/You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden
- Yet when the Church stays silent, darkness grows and gains ground.
- A <u>hidden</u> lamp <u>can't help anyone</u>.
- A <u>muzzled preacher</u>, a <u>silent saint</u>, an <u>inactive witness</u> all of these <u>allow</u> <u>darkness</u> to linger.

Compromise with the World - Romans 12:2 - Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- **Compromise** sustains darkness.
- When the Church blends in instead of standing out –
- The line between light and darkness blurs -
- The world cannot tell the difference.

Neglect of Prayer and the Oil of the Spirit - Matthew 25:8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

• In the parable of the virgins, the foolish ones let their lamps go out because they had no oil.

Darkness is sustained when God's people neglect prayer, neglect worship, neglect the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

- A lamp with no oil may look good when in the daytime, but
- When the night falls, it is powerless -
- We are <u>called to be a light</u> in the darkness.

Lies and Deception - Isaiah 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

- The prophet warned of a time when men would call evil good & good evil.
- Lies <u>sustain</u> darkness.
- When deception becomes culture, darkness becomes normal.
- People accept sin as truth, and truth as intolerance.
- 3. The Effects of Darkness When darkness rules, it brings with it - -

Confusion and Loss of Vision - Isaiah 59:9-10 - So justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness; for rightness, but we walk in deep shadows. 10 Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like people without eyes. At midday we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead.

"We grope for the wall like the blind, & we stumble at noonday as in the night."

- Without light, people cannot see their way.
- Families lose direction. Nations wander. Vision dies.

When darkness rules, it brings with it:

Stumbling and Wandering - John 11:10 It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light."

- Darkness causes us to trip over sins, over addictions, over wounds we never see coming.
- We wander w/out purpose, <u>stumbling over same things</u> again and again.

When darkness rules, it brings with it - - - Fear, Insecurity, and Hopelessness.

• Darkness breeds fear. People fear what they cannot see.

In the dark, every <u>sound is magnified</u>, every <u>problem looks bigger</u>, the <u>future feels uncertain</u>. *Hopelessness soon settles in*.

When darkness rules, it brings with it:

Lack of Love and Moral Collapse - Matthew 24:12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

- **Darkness** chills the heart.
- Love for God and other people *grows cold*.
- **Compassion** for others **withers**.
- When darkness reigns in our lives, people stop caring about one another.

When darkness rules, it brings with it:

Death Where There Should Be Life - John 8:12 When 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."

- Darkness suffocates life.
- It's a spiritual death zone.
- Nothing grows in the absence of light.
- Where there should be fruit, there's barrenness.
- Where there should be joy, there's emptiness.

Church, think for a moment about the reality of the world we live in.

- Think about the reality of darkness around us every day.
- Consider for a moment the <u>stumbling</u>, <u>confused</u>, <u>fearful</u>, <u>hopeless</u> souls, that are dying in a dark, dark world.

Isn't it time for the Church to shine brighter than it ever has before?

Could it be that we are here for "Such a time as this?"

II. The Power of Light - John 8:12 When 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."

- If darkness is real and it is then light is even more real.
- If darkness blinds, **light reveals.**
- If darkness kills, light brings life.
- Darkness cannot exist when light shows up, because light always wins.
- 1. What Light Does Reveals Truth and Exposes Lies Ephesians 5:13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.
 - Light reveals what's hidden.
 - When the light of Jesus shines, deception is exposed, sin is revealed, and truth is declared.

<u>Gives Direction</u> Where There Is Confusion - Psalm 119:105 *Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.*

- Light shows the way. It gives clarity in a world of chaos.
- It provides a path when people feel lost in the dark.

Produces Growth and Life - John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

- Nothing grows without light.
- Plants turn to the sun; people thrive in the presence of Jesus.
- <u>Light doesn't just illuminate</u> it energizes, it gives vitality.

Brings Joy, Warmth, and Hope - Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?

- Darkness brings fear, but light brings peace.
- Light warms cold hearts, replaces despair with joy, and gives us hope!

2. The Ultimate Light

Jesus Is the Light of the World (John 1:4-9). John's Witness: The True Light

Vs. 9 John said, That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

His Light Cannot Be Overcome - John 1:5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Darkness cannot overpower light.

- It cannot compete with it.
- It cannot <u>prevail over it</u>.
- Darkness has no defense against light.

His Light Gives Eternal Life and Freedom - Ephesians 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light!

 The light of Jesus doesn't just brighten our world — it transforms our very nature.

From lost to found - From blind to seeing - From death to life.

3. The Contrast of Light and Darkness

Light and darkness cannot coexist. Where one is, the other cannot remain.

- Light reveals / Darkness conceals.
- Light gives life / Darkness kills.
- Light brings unity / Darkness divides.
- Light produces peace / Darkness breeds fear.
- Light builds faith / Darkness feeds doubt.

If Jesus is the true Light, and His Spirit lives in us, then we carry that same power. That means everywhere we go, darkness has to leave.

III. The Responsibility of the Church - Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

If Jesus is the Light of the world, and His Spirit now dwells in us, then the responsibility for that light to shine shifts to us, the Church.

- We don't just <u>admire the light</u> we bear it.
- We don't just <u>bask in the light</u> we shine it.

Light is not just what Jesus gives us; light is what He calls us to be.

1. Called to Shine

We are bearers of His light - 2 Corinthians 4:6 For 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.

Just like the moon reflects the sun, <u>we reflect Jesus to a world that cannot see</u> Him otherwise.

Hiding our light is disobedience - You are the light of the world.

- Jesus said a city on a hill cannot be hidden -
- A lamp was <u>never meant to be covered</u>.
- A hidden light <u>helps no one</u>.
- A silent witness saves no one.
- A church that <u>refuses to shine</u> is like salt that's lost its savor <u>good for</u> <u>nothing</u>.

2. How to Shine

Through holiness and consecration - Philippians 2:15 - that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

Holiness, Purity, and Consecration is light.

Through bold witness in word and deed - Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

A shining life is not quiet about Jesus - It speaks, it testifies, it declares.

Through love and compassion - John 13:35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Love, Compassion, and Forgiveness is light.

When the world sees <u>a Church that truly loves them and Him</u>, they see the light of Heaven.

Through unity - John 17:21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

One candle makes a difference. A hundred candles light a room. A thousand candles light a city.

When the Church shines together, the darkness doesn't stand a chance.

3. The Urgency of Shining Now

Romans 13:12 - The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

- Paul <u>wasn't just speaking about his time</u>; he was speaking <u>prophetically</u> <u>about all time</u>.
- The longer the world goes on, the darker it becomes.
- We are closer to the dawn of eternity than we have ever been before.

Darkness will not diminish on its own — it must be driven out.

If the Church goes silent, the night gets darker.

But if the Church rises up, the night begins to break.

This generation needs to see the light now.

- Families <u>are stumbling</u>.
- Young people are confused.
- · Communities are divided.
- Our nation is in turmoil.

If the Church does not rise to her responsibility, our world will remain dark.

We must shine as the Church of The Living God —

Jesus <u>didn't say</u>, "You might be the light." He said, "<u>You are the light</u> of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

In Acts chapter 2, the early Church did not stay hidden.

They gathered in prayer, filled with the Holy Spirit, and then they spilled out into the streets.

They didn't just keep the light in the upper room. They carried it into the city.

• "These men have turned the world upside down."

That's the picture of the Church God is calling us to be.

- Not a Church that hides its light.
- Not a Church that keeps the fire locked behind four walls.
- But a Spirit-filled Church that shines in the workplace, in the schools, in the neighborhoods, and in the nations.

Church this is our Acts 2 moment.

 The world is <u>stumbling in darkness</u> - Families are <u>desperate for direction</u> -Our nation <u>is crying for hope</u>.

The answer has always been the same: Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.

CLOSE: So let's rise up!!!

Let's be the Church that spills out into the streets with the gospel of the Kingdom.

Let's be the witnesses Jesus called us to be.

Let's shine so brightly that no one around us can deny the power of His love.

Because when the Church pours out into the streets like Acts 2...

Sinners repent - The bound are set free - The hopeless find hope - And whole cities are transformed by the power of the name of Jesus.

Church — it's time to light the night. It's time to shine until the darkness flees.

It's time to rise up in the power of the Holy Spirit and let the world see Jesus in us.

The grace and love of Jesus Christ is still the answer for a lost and dying world.

Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world.

John 1:5 - The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.