*Introduction*

This is the time of the year when we have just put the clocks back and it is getting darker by the day, so that it is dark by about 5pm and we are having to put the light on earlier to see.

I hope you have equipped yourself with energy saving light bulbs, that give out the same light but cost you less because they use less electricity.

As Christians we are called to let our light shine in a dark world.

The question we need to look at this morning is this – How brightly is your light shining?

I don’t ask this question so that you feel guilty about your Christian walk, after all I’m sure you are walking with God in the best way you can. I am not asking it to bash you over the head and say you can do better.

But because i want to encourage you to shine bright for Jesus, and if you are not shining, see how we can make it shine.

For one thing is certain, it’s getting darker in the world. If we do not shine, there will be no light – at all!

In order to look at how our light is shining we need to consider the following:

1. Who are we?
2. What type of light are we giving out
3. How do we shine
4. **Who are we?**

Before we look at our lights and how bright they may be, it’s always good to look at the source of the light we are shining.

Let us remind ourselves of the amazing truth that as a born again Christian, your Father – God, IS LIGHT. In Him there is no darkness at all.

We read in John 1

***JN 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.***

We are Children of light because of the life that Christ has imparted to all those who have trusted in Him as Lord and Saviour. If you have never trusted Christ by repenting of your past life, asking for his forgiveness and accepting Him as Lord, you do not have the light of Christ within you.

The good thing is that there is still the opportunity for you to give yourself to Jesus Christ, come and see me afterwards and we can talk and pray about it.

Jesus himself said:

***JN 3:19-21 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."***

And again

***JN 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."***

Therefore there is a direct union between light and truth.

As Sons of God, we have the light of God in us because we have Christ in us, and His light should be shining from us.

The second question we must ask ourselves this morning is this:

1. **What type of light are we giving out.**

Surely, I hear you say, Light is light!

Well that is true, but what is the intensity of that light.

***MT 6:22-23 "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!***

You will only shine as much as your eyes allow.

Therefore it stands to reason that if you are always focusing on things that are bad, and therefore of the dark, you will fill yourself with darkness.

The light that you give out, will be at best dim, if anything at all.

We must remember that Paul tells us in 2 Cor 11:13-15

***2CO 11:13-15 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.***

Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount

***MT 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 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. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.***

Do you spend your time looking at, filling yourself, doing, things of darkness? Then do not expect to glow brightly for Jesus in your Christian walk.

1. **How do we shine?**

Paul’s letter to the Ephesians gives us the basis of how to shine:

***EPH 5:8-14 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."***

***PHP 2:14-15 Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe***

***ROM 13:12-14 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. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.***

Jesus himself commands

***JOHN 12:36 Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light."***

The story of Hannukah is an amazing story of how the temple light did not go out. In the temple the candle was supposed to burn all the time, day and night.

Against great odds, after three years of fighting, the Maccabees succeeded to drive the Greco-Syrians out of Judea. Hanukkah proclaims the message of the prophet Zachariah: "Not by might, not by power, but by My spirit."   
  
The Maccabees reclaimed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. They cleaned the Temple, removing the Greek symbols and statues. When Judah and his followers finished cleaning the temple, they rededicated it. On the 25th day of the month of Kislev in 164 BCE, the Temple was purified and rededicated.   
  
According to tradition, when the Maccabees entered the Holy Temple, they discovered that the Greco-Syrians had defiled the oil which was used to Temple's menorah. Only one vat of purified oil remained - enough for only one day. It would take the Jews a week to process more purified oil. Then a miracle occurred. The Maccabees lit the menorah and it burned for not one, but eight days, by which time the new, purified oil was ready. This is why the Hanukkah Menorah has eight candles (not including the shamash candle used to light the others) and one reason why Jews celebrate Hanukkah for eight days.

We are, as Christians commanded to give out light. To be like a city on a hill that cannot be hid. To give light to all around. The light we show should point to the LIGHT – Jesus.

We are to let our light shine, even through the difficult times of hardship and persecution.

***HEB 10:32-36 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.***

***So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.***

*Conclusion*

We are living in a land of darkness, one that is getting darker all the time. How will people hear of the Saviour who was born and who died for their sin?

They will only hear if they see our light.

God is light.

Jesus is light

We have the light in us and we have to let it out.

***1JN 1:5-7 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.***

Walking in the light has benefits for us to. We have just read 2 of them.

But there is another great truth that comes out of light, and it is this.

When the time comes, we all will be in heaven, the place where God is, and the words of Scripture say this about heaven:

***REV 21:23-22:5 The 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. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.***

***Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.***

What more do we need to encourage us to walk in the light and to let that light shine for Jesus.

Amen