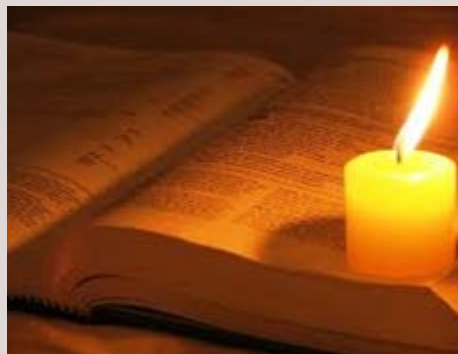


LIGHT IN THE BIBLE

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For the next few weeks, we will be engaging in a brief reflection or word study, if you will, on the word light. We will be focusing on how it is applied in the Bible, what and who it refers to and how this could and should influence our lives as Christians. The word light is used in the Bible approximately twenty different times, however each time the fundamental implication is the same... "God is light." (Bible, 2005). This necessarily means that we, who were created in the image and likeness of God, should also be light as Saint Matthew tells us in his Gospel, "you are the light of the world" (2005).



What does it mean to be "the light of the world?" This is a simple yet complex question to answer. A simple answer would be a person who elevates others. In other words, points the way to Jesus, points the way with unadorned words and even acts of kindness towards others. However, the ideal would be a person who is so in communion with Jesus that they actually reflect his luminosity. The kind of person one can feel and almost see that indescribable essence that is God dwelling within. We are all called to have this relationship with Christ, but there are some, who by the grace of the Holy Spirit are able to better manifest Jesus who lives in each one of our hearts. Reflecting His glow, with His brightness one can not only point the way, but one can actually be one another's light...we can and should strive to direct the way for each other towards heaven... towards the source of all light, towards God who is light. The light is love and should be present within every daily action, interaction, thought, words, and gesture. When we are docile to the Holy Spirit we become witnesses of God's light in the world.

St. John tells us "God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all" (2005). Within each one of us there should be no "darkness at all," but because of original sin, our fallen human nature it is exceedingly difficult for us to obtain. Most of the time we do not even recognize we are acting in darkness, we do not grasp that the critical thought about a co-worker is an act of gloom, an act not enlightened by the Holy Spirit but rather guided by the sinfulness of man. We need to recognize God in our lives...in our hearts and in each other. We need to implore Him to heal us; we need to ask Him to let us see, most importantly we need to be brave enough to allow Him into our hearts...When we are told, "Take courage; get up He is calling you"....He says to us, "'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man replied to him, 'Master I want to see.'"

It takes courage brothers and sisters, to be healed, to accept a change in our lives, in our hearts, minds and attitudes. Most are complacent, blaming those around them for their failures and lacking...when sometimes all it takes is the audacity to face ourselves, embrace ourselves and then change ourselves. We need to face ourselves, our ugliness, our weakness, we need to know where we need change, healing, we need to recognize the areas in our hearts that need His light. St. Paul declares us "he will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and manifest the motives of our hearts" (2005). Then we can embrace ourselves; grow familiar with our ways of being that are not of the Lord. We can comprehend our actions and the reasons behind why we do what we do. Only then can we let His rays of healing light shine in our deepest wounds...and begin to heal.

This requires a specific generosity of heart, for we need to be willing to be exposed. We need, in the words of our Mother Foundress, "a generous heart, a heart allowing God to freely use their hearts to reveal His love, making them instruments to reveal His love; therefore becoming one movement of love to receive and communicate" (Mother Adela, 2008).

Father Hans Urs von Balthasar exclaims, "In no way is this light (Trinitarian light of love) produced through absorption of oneself...," simply put one can not be self-absorbed (Magnificat, 2012). Rather, one must serve others. Jesus Himself tells us, "The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life..." (2005). It is in giving of ourselves to others that we are most fulfilled. We were indeed created to receive love from God and others but even more so to give love and , the love of God to those we encounter regularly, once in a while or just once in our lives. The mystery of God's life, of God's light is revealed to

others through us. We become the "living images" "reflections" of God's love and grace to others. Light cannot be hidden. "It is a lamp to be brought in to be placed under a bushel basket or under a bed, and not to be placed on a lampstand? For there is nothing hidden except to be made visible; nothing is secret except to come to light" (2005). If we have been blessed in receiving the light of God within our hearts, we cannot and should not hide it, we need to let it shine so others may receive the same gift we have received; and even if we would want to hide it, eventually it will be revealed for His light in us cannot go without being seen.

The Eucharist is Jesus' true presence here on Earth. "And behold I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Mt 28:20). Jesus, true God and true light is with us always, we need only turn to Him. The Eucharist is a manifestation of Jesus' light. It radiates His tender and unfathomable love for each one of us. It is in spending time with Him that we come to see, we see our own darkness, we see it in those around us...but most importantly we learn to see His light and all it illuminates.

Jesus, "was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became with light" (Mt 17:2). The Eucharist radiates His light, it is the ultimate gift of His love, prayer time, and adoration before His real presence in the Blessed Sacrament should be reflected in our countenance. Others should be able to look at us and see His love, His transparency, clarity in our eyes and hearts, hear it in our words, feel it by our presence; simply we should point them to God. His light and love reigning in our hearts should touch others so as to instill in them a desire to have what we have; a desire to know Him better and also reflect the warmth of His love.

"For God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to bring light to knowledge of the glory of God on the face of Jesus Christ" (2005). If we allow Him, He can and will shine in and through us - reaching out to others, especially those who have turned away from Him through us, each one of us. Imagine the power, the warmth of the Sun felt manifested in and through by the Son that dwells in us.

How would one acquire the light of Christ? Contemplating this same light in prayer, prayer before Him in Adoration, prayer alone in the car, in your room; is keeping our souls in communion with Him at all times. Father André Louf, O.C.S.O., tells us "prayer enables us to better understand the Father's will, it also helps us to penetrate deeper into reality. To a heart steeped in prayer everything becomes transparent." In prayer one's situations, problems and worries are made clear; it helps us to see the hand of God in our lives. This should bring us comfort; one should confidently bask in the warmth of His light and then be a beacon of that same light to others. St. John Chrysostom tells us in one of his homilies, "As the eyes of the body are enlightened when they see light, so our spirit, when it is intent on God, is illumined by his infinite light" (Office of Reading, 1976).

Blessed John Paul II in his Encyclical Letter: *Redemptor Hominis*, teaches us that "the nature of love is to express itself, to give of itself" (RH,). God's light, His love is to be given away, for by its very nature it is Trinitarian. This is to say that God, the one triune God, lives in a circle of love, of light. Therefore, "be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love..." (2005), to live in His light is to live in love. God gives His light, His love; one receives humbly accepting any and all gifts God the Father wishes to grant through the Holy Spirit; applying these gifts to the service of God, to love for one another. Therefore, the love we have for one another must be authentic and merciful; it must be proof that we know God; it should radiate His loving light.

On a personal note, one night in prayer, realizing a verse that always sticks out, Mt 5:14 "you are the light of the world," searching and discovering similar parables and verses throughout the Bible, including some of the ones previously quoted. Saint Luke tells us how great God's light is! ... Light... His light should reign in our hearts...Scripture begins with light, the first words are "let there be light" (Gn 1:3)...light...to walk in the path of the light, to live, act and be in the light...the most beautiful nights are those that are lit up by the moon...the moon who reflects the sunlight...the light God created on the first day...His real presence in the monstrance resembles the sun - that great light created by Light itself - we are to walk in this light, bathe in its warmth, feel comforted by it, feel it in a real and tangible way...sense it with our humanity - rejoice with our divinity - for we are called to be light in this world, to be the rays of light that illumine the darkness, shining light on all that is contrary to love and also bathing, with the warmth of light, the love that does exist in the world...light shines on love...

Light attracts light - light is love - God is light, God is love...the expression of a life lived in light is love, is it not? So much so is light from God that Satan masquerades as an angel of light (2 Co 11:14) in an attempt to

keep us from living in true light...in true love, in God's love...oh, how we need light, love...God! Help us O Lord to be like the sunflower that follows every movement of the sun, that we may always follow You, follow your light.

Light shines on the path of love, allowing us to clearly see what our journey consists of, allowing us to see where we can rest or not rest, where we can hold on or not hold on, and allowing us to see everything but most importantly the love of God. We are called to be light by the Light itself....we are called to be love by Love itself....

No one better reflects His light than the one often referred to as the moon, for the moon reflects at all times the light of the Sun, than Mary the Mother of God. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, you have given the world its true light, Jesus, your Son - the Son of God. You abandoned yourself completely to God and thus became a wellspring of the goodness which flows forth from him. Show us Jesus. Lead us to him. Teach us to know and love him, so that we too can become capable of true love and be fountains of living water in the midst of a thirsting world" (Pope Benedict XVI, 2005). She is our model of faith, trust, and abandonment and of total availability to the Father's designs.

Mary is our guiding star; she illuminates the path of love. She shines the light of Christ in each one of our hearts, if we allow her. She gave birth to Light itself, Light dwelt in her, Light shone through her. She contemplated the Light, "And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart" (2005). She was so immersed with the things of God that she necessarily mirrored Him, His love, and His light. This is how we should strive to be, so involved with the things of God in our hearts that without us even knowing it, we too become mirrors of His light and therefore instruments of His love. May God bless you.

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