

December 25, 2015  
John 1:1, 4-5, 14

Christmas C  
The Light is Born

*Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Newborn King. Amen.*

On November 4, 1879, Thomas Alva Edison submitted his patent for the first ever commercially practical incandescent lightbulb. Actually his first successful test came on October 22, 1879, the lightbulb burned for over 13 hours. He spent the next two weeks perfecting it until it was ready to be submitted for patent. Several months after that he discovered a way to have a light bulb last for over 1200 hours. Thomas Edison is known as the man who invented the lightbulb...and he is.

There's a problem with lightbulbs though...they burn out. They can go dark. This light can be overcome by darkness. Now I want you this Christmas morning to close your eyes...yes you may have been up early opening gifts or up late celebrating with Egg Nog, Cookies, and Gifts. Close your eyes...it's dark isn't it. I want you to think in your life to the darkest physical place you have been. Maybe it's underground in a cave without any natural light. Maybe you've been in the mountains or in desert or in the fields on a moonless night away from all light pollution. It's dark, completely dark!! Darkness is the absence of light!!

This experience felt by some and oh so rare today was a common occurrence in the first century. Their only source of light, was the light of the sun by day and their oil lamps by night. Without the sun and when their oil lamps were snuffed out they lived in utter darkness...darkness so thick you can feel it.

If you haven't done so already, open your eyes. Now I want you to think back to a darkness in your life. Since Christmas Day 2014 I am sure you have had some great joys, but I am also sure you have had some very dark days. Those dark days might include the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, a health crisis. Those dark days might also include financial burdens, troubles with parents or children, fighting in your family or even in your church family. Your dark days also include your sins that you commit on a daily basis.

The Gospel of John uses much light and dark imagery, especially in these first few verses of the Gospel. John takes us all the way back to the beginning where there was nothing and the first thing that God spoke into being was light. Genesis 1 states: *1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

*3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day,*

*and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.*<sup>1</sup>

Even before time began there was darkness—at creation, God first brought light into the world. It's been a cosmic battle since the beginning...darkness and light are always in opposition. John portrays that quite well. For even in our Christmas text he writes: <sup>5</sup> *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*<sup>2</sup> When darkness wars against the light, it reveals itself to be an evil force. Satan uses darkness quite well.

When I was growing up at home, I remember my parents telling my sister and me. "There's nothing good that happens at night." For the most part that is quite true. Darkness brings its trouble. Darkness brings its dangers and insecurities. Satan often uses the darkness for his benefit...whether that be physical darkness or the darkness that causes spiritual distress. The dark days in your lives over the past year may have shaken your faith, they may have caused you doubt, they may have had you question, "Okay God, WHERE ARE YOU, WHY DID YOU CAUSE THIS TO HAPPEN TO ME?"

Yet there are those times that we like to be in the dark. We are not comfortable with the light. Your eyes aren't comfortable with light...we put tint in our windows of our vehicles, we wear sunglasses when it's bright and sunny. We know what light also does in our dark lives. It exposes us for who we are.

Yet while we stumble around in darkness, feeling comfortable, that darkness does bring distress. Think to when the sun doesn't shine for days or let alone weeks as it sometimes does in the winter or even when the days are so short and the nights are so long. What do you feel? I know my mood is affected after a while. I'm more tired and just need the sun to shine. Perhaps you too are like that. Perhaps you need the Son to shine in your life.

Dear fellow saints in the kingdom of God. I've got some really amazing news for you this morning. The Son is Shining in your life. Today is the day that we celebrate the birth of the Son. Today we celebrate when the true light was born into this world. On this day we celebrate "*The Word (who is the light) became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*"

Once again this morning, you receive the light, the light of the world who gives to you light in your life. When it comes to this light...darkness cannot overcome it. Darkness cannot overwhelm it. The Darkness of Satan cannot and will not overwhelm the Light of Christ. Jesus Christ is the light no darkness can overcome.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Ge 1:1–5). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Jn 1:5). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Jesus Christ is your light in your dark world.

During the month of December and the season of Advent, people hang Christmas lights on their trees, but many decorate the outside of their homes and businesses. These lights, at least for me, remind me that the light of Christ continues to live on each and every Christmas season. If you haven't noticed, Christmas is the one holiday where light is central focus. Think about it for a moment with me... we have the mentioned Christmas lights on trees, on homes, on businesses. We have parks that are filled with Christmas displays of light. We even have the Advent Wreath, the Christ Candle in the middle. Many churches have the tradition of a Candlelight Christmas Eve service. Some even have the wonderful tradition of Midnight Candlelight Christmas Eve Mass.

Christmas is all about light and the lights that shine on Christmas are a wonderful reminder of the light that was born for you. Jesus Christ is your light. He even says as recorded in John 8, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

The Light of the World when He appears shows us for who we are, but the Light overcomes the darkness. The Light grants to you His love and forgiveness. The Light grants to you His love and forgiveness because of a time when the light grew up. The light who was born at Christmas was born to die. There was a moment when people thought, when Satan thought that the Light was snuffed out, that the Darkness had overcome the Light. For at that moment on that Friday there were several hours of pure darkness.

On a Sunday morning, light burst forth. While it was still dark, the gospel writers tell us, the women went to the tomb and found the stone rolled away. While it was still dark, the light burst forth onto the scene again. The light was given back into the lives of His followers.

Dear redeemed and forgiven Saints...Christmas Morning is a time to reflect on the light...the light that has overcome the darkness, the light that no darkness can overcome. Christmas morning is a time to celebrate the greatest gift ever given, the gift of light and life. Christmas morning is a time to remember that amidst the darkness God brought forth light. He did it first at creation, when He first created light. He did it again on Christmas when in the dark world, a world that was spiraling out of control, God sent His Son Jesus, to be born of a virgin in a stable, a cave like structure where animals were housed from the travelers, and His mother and earthly father laid Him in a feeding trough for animals with a bed of straw. The light of the world was born for you amidst the darkness.

"Nothing good happens in the dark," is a true saying when darkness is the only thing at play, but when the Light of the World is active, good things come out of the dark. It's not the dark that is good, but the light that shines through the darkness that is good.

Light is indeed a miracle. It brings so many blessings, whether it be the lightbulb invented by Thomas Edison or more importantly the miracle of the birth of the light on Christmas.

Our Gospel lesson also shares with us how John the Baptist came to bear witness about the light, an Advent theme, but yet also a Christmas theme, for we to are called to bear witness about the light. We are called to reflect the light of Christ to those around us so that they can too experience the miracle of the light born at Christmas.

You see, you don't need a stadium full of lights or even one lightbulb to show the miracle and gift of light. It only takes a spark. It only takes a single flame of a candle to pierce the darkness and shatters the hold darkness has on our lives.

Today we give thanks to God for that light...the light that is born for you. The light that is born for you on Christmas to invade your dark lives and bring you Christmas Joy and Peace.

In Jesus Name, the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome. Amen.

*Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior, our Newborn King, the Light born for you. Amen.*