Glow in the Dark - Part Three

# Full of Light

## (Luke 11:33-36, Acts 9:1-20)

Welcome back to week number three of our series, “Glow in the Dark.” We’ve been talking about being people of light in a dark world. And we’ve been looking at the biblical concepts of light and darkness, and what that means in the life of a believer. And so, today as we continue this theme, we are going to look at the words of Jesus about glowing in the dark.

Now, he doesn’t specifically use that terminology, but he does talk about being a light, and how what we receive into our bodies is a determining factor of how brightly our light will shine. He talks about the spiritual impact that the choices you and I make on a daily basis will affect the health of our souls. In other words, where we go, what we do, what we look at, listen to, touch, taste, and hold onto, we are actually receiving that into our souls. And so, Jesus tells us in Luke chapter 11, at verse 33,

"No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead, he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light” (Luke 11:33).

“Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness” (Luke 11:34).

Here in this passage, Jesus uses the analogy of a lamp in a house to illustrate the point that our spiritual insight, our ability to see what God wants us to do can be easily clouded when we fix our focus or set our affections on things of this world. But as the eye, which often represents the attitudes of the mind, is properly focused on the light, then the whole body can function properly, sharing our light with others.

And so, as we have been saying in this series, we are to Glow in the Dark, and last time in part two, we saw that God’s Word is a light that shines in this dark world. In Psalm 119, we are given a hand of where our focus should be, as the psalmist says,

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalms 119:105).

In other words, the Word of God, its commands and its teachings illuminate our path, guiding us through life. And it’s good that we have a light for our path, we need that, but it’s not enough. It is good that the light shines externally, but it must also shine internally. And so, Jesus tells us,

“See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you" (Luke 11:35-36).

In other words, Jesus tells us, it’s not enough for God’s Word to be a light for our path, because for it to accomplish its ultimate goal, it’s ultimate good in our lives, it must also enter our bodies, into our minds and into our hearts. That’s why the psalmist said,

“The entrance of your words gives light” (Psalms 119:130, NKJV).

And so, we must let it in, it’s got to get inside, the light must be within you, because even the brightest sun cannot enable a blind man to see.

In fact, that is exactly the situation where we meet a young man named Saul in the Scriptures. He claimed to have light, he desired to be a teacher of God’s people, but he was walking in darkness. In other words, many people live in a spiritual vacuum, aching inwardly, struggling with the lack of understanding, because Jesus said,

“Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light…” (John 3:19).

And so, it is the absence of light that makes it dark, not that the light wasn’t in the world, but it is the entrance of light that gives understanding.

That’s why it’s so important that we glow in the dark because we recognize that in this world, in this media saturated, narcissistic world, everybody wants to be famous, everybody wants to be a star, everybody wants to be in the light, but the Bible says,

“The true light that gives light to every man… was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him” (John 1:9-10).

And so, we understand from a biblical perspective that God does some of his best work in the dark, behind-the-scenes, but the world didn’t recognize him.

In fact, when God prepared you for life it was in a dark place, he wrapped you in the darkness of your mother’s womb. As the psalmist said,

“You knit me together in my mother's womb… My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place… your eyes saw my unformed body…” (Psalms 139:13-16).

And there are some of you right now who are in a season of preparation. You may not recognize it now, you may have been praying for light, but God is developing you in the dark, preparing you for what he’s about to do in your life.

I know that today everybody is taking pictures on their phones, but there may be a few of you who remember taking pictures and having to go get the film developed. If you don’t know what I’m talking about, you can ask your parents later. But they would take their film to the Kodak shack, or CVS, or Walgreens, where they would take that film and put it in the dark, because what you saw in the light needed to be developed in the dark.

In Acts chapter 9, we are introduced to a man named Saul. He had been educated by one of the greatest Jewish teachers of his time, he was well respected among scholars, but just like when you get film developed, they take that film into a dark room so that it doesn’t get too much light, so that it’s not overexposed. Well, you could say that’s where we find Saul, he had been exposed to all of this light, but he was unable to see clearly. The Bible says that he was raised according to the law of God,

“Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee” (Philippians 3:5).

And so, he was very religious, he was a Pharisee, and concerning the law he was overly zealous. In other words, he missed the point, he didn’t see its intended purpose.

In fact, in spite of all that he had going for him, family, heritage, education, and status, he also had a lot that was against him. In other words, he was wrong, and we know from our own history, both as Christians and as Americans, that religion can be a dangerous thing. Because religion often hates, religion will fly an airplane into a building, religion will carry a bomb into a crowded supermarket, religion starts wars and kills in the name of God.

And that is the context where we find Saul. The Bible tells us in Acts chapter 9, verse one,

“Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem” (Acts 9:1-2).

Saul had been set apart, seeds of religion were planted in his mind, raising him above others so that he became a religious bigot. But early impressions of God, true religion, or pure religion, should never make you hate. God is love and therefore the knowledge of God should make you love.

However, Saul’s impressions of God caused him to become a terrorist who thought he was offering a service to God (John 16:2). And the Bible tells us in verse three that,

“As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him" (Acts 9:3).

Now, this must have been spectacular because the life from heaven was so much brighter than the daylight. The presence of God’s pure light was so powerful, this encounter with God so startling, that Saul who thought he was a light to a dark world, fell to the ground as he heard the voice of the true light saying,

“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4).

And so, Saul was laid out on the ground, just a little way from Damascus, he was almost there, when he had an encounter with Jesus. Unable to see because of the brilliance of the light Saul asked,

“Who are you, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5).

In other words, when you cause harm to another believer, when you say bad things about the church, Jesus takes that personally.

I know that because I have read through the Bible too many times to count and I have never seen anywhere that Saul ever persecuted Jesus. And so, that means when you’re fighting against us, you are fighting against Jesus, because we are the body of Christ. The Bible says the battle is not ours but God’s (2 Chronicles 20:15). And so, you may look like you’re all by yourself, but they better leave you alone, because you’re never by yourself, you are always covered, always protected, and you are more than a conqueror (Romans 8:37).

Saul had been humbled, he was down on the ground, and the Lord said to him,

"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes, he could see nothing. So, they led him by the hand into Damascus” (Acts 9:6-8).

And so, the last thing that Saul saw was a bright light from heaven, a light brighter than anything he’d ever seen before, because God was up to something. Everything went dark, because God had to take away the light so that he could develop what he was about to do in Saul’s life. In other words, it was dark for Saul, but it wasn’t over, because we live by what?

“We live by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

You see, darkness is just the absence of light. And so, even though Saul thought he could see, even though he thought he was a teacher of the blind, it was really he who was blind, but he was about to gain true sight, insight.

I’m afraid that some of you are spending too much time looking at things around you, focusing on the darkness, instead of looking inside and believing that he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). The keyword in this passage from Jesus in Luke chapter 11 is “look,” anyone who looks, because Jesus is most concerned with where we look. In other words, there is a vacuum in our soul and when we look at something other than God, it may begin as a glance, but over time it becomes a gaze, and turns into an obsession, passion, or addiction.

Like Saul, the key question Jesus wants us to wrestle with from this passage, is what are we’re actually filling ourselves with? You see, all through the Gospels Jesus is teaching, trying to help us learn how to live the best possible life, to experience the abundant life he came to give us. And so, he says,

“See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness” (Luke 11:35).

And we begin by simply taking one step of obedience, purposefully turning away from the darkness and looking toward Christ. And when we do, we soon find ourselves gazing at God rather than the things of the world, and where there was once darkness, the light begins to shine through.

Saul was in total darkness, but taking a step of obedience, he got up and began stumbling about in the dark. Those that he was leading are now leading him and they took him by the hand into Damascus. Verse nine says,

“For three days he was blind and did not eat or drink anything. In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight" (Acts 9:9-12).

Saul couldn’t see anything, he was just stumbling about in the dark, and I wonder if there are any of you who are thankful for the things that you stumbled into after meeting Jesus? You know, you didn’t plan on it, but God brought you to the right place at just the right time. You stumbled into this church, into that answer, into that job or that opportunity. The devil was hoping that you would never find it, but God led you right to it.

“Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord-Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here — has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength” (Acts 9:17-19).

Saul had no idea that he was on the verge of a supernatural breakthrough, receiving the power of the Holy Spirit, and in a split second, just a moment of time, this man who saw so much of the world wrong, was set right as he came to understand what it meant to have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Saul’s experience of losing his sight on the Damascus Road taught him the power of insight, that inner illumination, the ability to listen to that which comes from within. You see, true vision is not a sensual thing, true vision is a spiritual thing, and it doesn’t have anything to do with your eyesight. In fact, true vision often contradicts everything that you see, feel, hear, taste or smell because that is where the enemy will attack. The devil will attack you on the sensory level, he will try to come into your eye gate, through your feelings, and so your senses may contradict what God told you in your spirit. That’s why we live by faith and not by sight.

Many years later, Saul, now known as the apostle Paul, would write to the church in Ephesus. He says something very profound, he prays,

“That the eyes of your heart may be enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18).

In other words, that their hearts would be flooded with light, because that is exactly the area where the enemy attacks. In fact, Jesus quoting the prophet Isaiah said,

“He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts” (John 12:40).

And so, Paul prays for their enlightenment, that their eyes would receive light, seeing things that bring light, so that their whole body would be full of light, because he knows,

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

You see, Satan knows that when your mind is blinded, you cannot see the light. And when your eyes are bad, your whole body is full of darkness. And so, since the eye is the lamp of your body, and Jesus is the light of the world, his desire is for our lives to reflect and overflow with his light. That we would literally Glow in the Dark and that’s what Jesus was talking about in Luke chapter 11. And so, as long as he is in us, as long as he is in the church, darkness is no choice but to flee from the presence of light.

Now, I’ll be honest, I didn’t get much out of science class, but I do remember that technically there is no such thing as darkness, because it is just the absence of light. And so, wherever there is light, by definition there cannot be darkness. In other words, like David ran toward Goliath, we need to take the light within us, we need to take our lamp, and we need to run into the darkness because we Glow in the Dark.

Look at verse 19, look at what Saul did. Just like most of us, he is empowered by the Holy Spirit and the Bible says,

“He spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God” (Acts 9:19-20).

Of course, the followers of Jesus were fearful because they didn’t know what God had done in the darkness. They still thought that Saul was their enemy, looking to take them captive, but if we’re going to Glow in the Dark, exposing the darkness, running toward it, we can’t just open the door to our friends, we want to open it to our enemies too. In other words, we’ve got to leave room for our enemies to change, and so we need to put our lamp on its stand so that those who come in may see the light.

Today, I want to encourage you, because you are the light of the world, you might be in a dark season, but I want to speak this word over you. We have this treasure in jars of clay, in earthen vessels, to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. And so, no matter what you see within you or surrounding you on the outside, there is still hope because if your whole body is full of light your whole life will be radiant, glowing as though a floodlight were filling you with light (Luke 11:36).

Isaiah said you will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord. In other words, you are a seed planted, you may be in a dark season, it may feel a bit like a burial, but you’re not covered up because you’ve been buried, you’re covered up because you’ve been planted. In other words, you were not covered up to stay, but like a baby in his mother’s womb, you were covered to change, because God was developing things in the darkness.

I want to encourage you if it seems dark out, you will sprout again. In fact, Jeremiah said, that you will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream (Jeremiah 17:8). And so, you are a seed planted, your new shoots will not fail, and no matter what you are feeling today, you will laugh again. “He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy” (Job 8:21).

Not only that, but the Lord said you will dance again. He said, “I will build you up again… you will take up your tambourines and go out to dance with the joyful” (Jeremiah 31:4). When you see what God was doing in the dark you will dance.

What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight. What you have whispered will be proclaimed from the roof. When you see what God brings about in your life, you will rejoice again and no one will take away your joy (John 16:22).

You may have been hidden in darkness, hidden from everybody else, but it is time for you to Glow in the Dark. You are a seed planted, and so there is so much more potential in you, more life, more wisdom, more possibility than what anyone can see, but you know that the Lord is God. And so, when you go through those dark seasons, through those dark places, you know as the prophet Ezekiel said,

"THE LORD IS THERE" (Ezekiel 48:35).

And so, you can Glow in the Dark, because God is there. He is your ever-present help in time of trouble, he is right there right now, developing your next season, developing your next harvest, and it’s happening right now. But you can’t mess with it, you can’t touch it, because you don’t want to expose it too soon, it’s in the development stage, but you’ve got to trust that it shall come to pass. Wherever you are planted, whatever season you’re in, whatever it looks like or feels like, wherever you are Glow in the Dark.

Pastor John Talcott

Christ’s Community Church

303 West Lincoln Avenue

Emmitsburg, MD 21727

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(301) 447-4224

[www.cccaog.org](http://www.cccaog.org)

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