



# MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

March 12, 2023

Pastor James Enderle

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent

First Lesson: [Isaiah 42:14-21](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 143

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [Ephesians 5:8-14](#)

Gospel Lesson: [John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39](#)

## Islands in The Son: The Son Brings All to Light

1. \_\_\_\_\_ leads to \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ of being \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ on you
4. You are no longer \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

If you were to look outside today, you might see a picture similar to this (snow-covered trees and ground). It's a picture I took out the back door in January. Before I was preparing this sermon, I didn't know if the weather was going to be quite like this, but it pretty much looks like this right now. If you're in Wisconsin in winter, you can expect this, some snow. Along with that snow in winter there is a lot of darkness. Even though this picture is taken in the morning and the sun has been out, it doesn't look very bright. The snow is bright, but the sun is not shining. As the snow falls and as the days become short, darkness is all around us. Seasonal depression and the effects of not getting sun can take a toll. It's something that is serious and we have to watch out for it. There are people that even get the therapy lights to get the light that we need to have because it does help with your emotions.

Now think about what most people like to do around this time. Some schools are on spring break. Our spring break is coming soon. Let's look at the next picture here (sunset in a tropical area). This was taken just a few weeks before that first picture was taken. This is when my wife and I were in Thailand, on an island. What do many people in Wisconsin love to do in winter? It's not "Oh, this is the time to go up north" where there is more darkness and more cold. What do we do? We want to get to where the sun is; to those islands of sun (even if it's not quite an island) where it is warm and there are longer days so we can be refreshed with that light and see those sunsets and

sunrises and to soak in the heat and sun that we so desperately miss when we're in the midst of winter.

That's a little bit of what these Sundays are meant to be as well—to be islands of refreshment and to see in the midst of Lent as we journey to the cross, in the midst of winter and darkness, how God can make us refreshed. Today we see that in light—that **the Son brings all to light.**

What does it mean that the Son brings all to light? In order to look at that, we have to see what has to be brought into light. What is hiding? Why do we need light and what is the danger of not being in the light? What does it mean for us that Jesus, the Son, brings all things to light for us?

When Paul is writing to the Ephesians, he writes this letter that everything is in Christ and we're in Christ. As we get to [Chapter 5](#), he is really talking about how we interact with one another. We see his instructions and how sin affects us and how sin affects one another. Right after these verses in [Ephesians 5](#) you start to get to the section about marriage, how husband and wife interact with one another and then we see how families, parents and children interact with one another. But right before that is our section. He is talking about what sin and darkness does and why it is important for us to be in Christ and in the light.

He says this to begin: ***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. It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.*** Notice what it says here about darkness. If you look, there is actually some mixture of metaphors because it is talking about light and darkness, but then he throws in these things about fruit. We hear Jesus and the Bible often talk about fruit and how the Holy Spirit helps us to have good fruit, fruits of faith. But here he talks about light bringing fruit and darkness bringing the wrong fruit, ***fruitless deeds of darkness.*** The truth for us and the first point I want you to think about is that *darkness leads to bad fruit.*

If you come into our house, you'll notice that we don't have a lot of healthy plants. We have a couple plants, a spider plant and an aloe plant, and we know what is unique about those. They don't take much care and they don't need much light. Most of the other plants in our house have all died. I don't know how to take care of plants. Often in our house there is just not enough light. If you don't have enough light, you can't really produce the fruit you need. The garden out in the back has shade and if you put the plants in the wrong place, they are just not going to grow.

Think about that for our own lives. The darkness that is around us and in our lives that when we are in darkness and not in Christ and not in God's Word, that darkness leads to bad fruit. Paul writes and tells them to find out what pleases the Lord. How do we do that? How do we find out what is good? We read and hear God's Word. This is so often what happens with a Christian. They learn about Jesus and they want to learn and they say "How do I please God?" But there is also the opposite, where we know God and His Word, but what do we do? We put it down, put the light of His Word aside, and we stay in darkness that leads us to bad fruit.

I think of that saying people often say, and maybe you've told this to your kids, and kids if you haven't heard it yet, it's good advice: "Nothing good ever happens after midnight." Have you heard that before? When you are with friends and it gets later and later in the night, do you get smarter? Usually not; usually the later it gets, that's when you get the great ideas. Often darkness leads to bad deeds, to bad fruit, and the things we don't want to do.

I think we have to look and ask how we apply this to ourselves because what is very easy to do in this section is to say there is lot of darkness out in the world. It even says this. He says in Verse 12, ***"It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret."*** Is it even done in secret anymore? There is so much darkness out there and people are proud of everything and everything is sexualized. There is a lot of darkness in the world. While it's so easy for us to preach on what is out in the world, on Wednesdays we are talking about this very thing—that we look at the world so often but fail to look at ourselves. But really, should we be shocked that unbelievers act like unbelievers? They don't have the light. They don't have the truth. Do they know how to please God? We shouldn't be shocked. So what should we actually do with this verse?

I think it was a few years ago there was an NFL Coach who had his private messages and emails leaked out. Shortly after that, he lost his job and he really hasn't been able to be on any TV shows. He used to be an NFL analyst after he was a coach and then before he was a coach again. What about you though? What if all of your texts, all of your emails, all the things that you've said to other people were exposed? What would happen? Would you fear of losing your job? Would you fear of losing your marriage? Would you fear losing the respect of your children or your friends? I think the truth of it is that each and every one of us is *terrified of being exposed*. We do not want other people to know the true person we are. There is the concept of imposter syndrome. We don't want people to know who we really are, even our closest loved ones. If they really knew who we were, would they still love us?

***"It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret."*** What do we, when we're disobedient to God, do in secret? What are the things that we are putting in darkness and in secret that we would be devastated if they came out into the light? We

don't have to look into the world and be talking about the shameful things the world does. We only have to look to ourselves. I think each and every one of us knows those things we would hate to be exposed. Not just those text messages or emails or things but even more, think about those thoughts. Who knows all of these things? Your God does.

It talks about here that ***everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. That is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*** The truth is that God knows what you've done. You can't hide those deep secrets from your Lord. But what still happens? *Jesus shines on you.* The first thought is we are so fearful that God knows everything that I've done! But what is the truth? All of those sins and all those things that we've done, when we look to the cross, what put Jesus there?—every one of those sins. Jesus shines on us because He has put every one of those sins upon Himself and they are exposed. They were exposed when He went to the cross and died for every single one of them. So that changes that fear that says “I am justly declared to be in darkness and disobedient and afraid” to say “I have no fear before the Lord because Christ has taken upon Him the sins that I've committed, every single one of them—the deepest darkest ones to the littlest fib and the littlest thing that I keep on doing, to the darkest thing that I don't want to tell another person.” God knows. Jesus knows. But what did He do? He died for you and redeemed you and His blood was shed for each and every one of those sins. Those sins are laid out and forgiven and God says, “I don't remember them anymore.” He changes that darkness into light.

What is interesting is it doesn't just say you once were in darkness and now you are in light. What does it say? ***For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.*** You no longer were just in darkness but you were darkness and now you are light. What does that mean for you? He says it there: ***Live as children of light (for the fruit of light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)... But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.*** Jesus, as He says in our Gospel Lesson, says He is the light of the world. He is the truth, the peace, the forgiveness, the hope that we need.

We live in a dark world with much darkness around us. But we have a Savior who came into the world to give truth and peace and forgiveness; a true light and hope. He doesn't just say “Okay, now you are in that light.” He has changed us. He has changed our dark hearts. He gives us the Holy Spirit and He changes us. He says *you are no longer darkness but light*. We are able to walk in the light and to have these deeds of light, goodness, righteousness and truth. We get to walk as light.

It's almost impossible not to use the metaphor of the sun and the moon. Jesus is the sun, the Son of God but the Son that brings light, and what are we? We are the moon.

On our own, do we have any light? Not really. But because of what Christ has done and because He gives us light, we reflect that light into the world.

If you live out in the country here or you've been away from lights at night, on a really dark night, without the full moon, it's pretty dark and scary. But when that moon is bright and full, it makes such a difference! You, brothers and sisters in Christ, are lights to this world. We don't pretend that this world is not full of darkness, but we can act with love and kindness to others and be that light. He doesn't say you SHOULD do this or MAYBE this is how you are. He says you ARE light. This is what God does to us and in us as He redeems us and forgives us. He makes us a child of God and that Word works in us. We become light as He does—a light that doesn't point to ourselves but reflects the light of Christ.

Why do we want to illuminate things? This talks about how we should expose things—expose the deeds and point out the things in this world. Another translation is not just “exposed,” but to “bring them to light.” As we are light, as we share the deeds of kindness and truth and peace and forgiveness, what do we do? We are bringing others to the light of truth and Christ. Not to ourselves, not to point to us, but to bring them to Jesus and their forgiveness, to help them know that there is hope and peace in this world. But not just for this world, this world that is filled with darkness and sadness and sin and death, but a light that leads to peace and truth and life eternal—a place in heaven where it says we will no longer need a sun but Jesus Himself and God will be our Light. What a joy it is that we have Christ as our Light and He makes us a light of this world as well, to share His joy, to share His Gospel, and to bring others to the Light of salvation. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.