



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

April 14, 2024

Pastor James Enderle

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter

First Lesson: [Acts 3:11-20](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 118 CW

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [1 John 1:5-2:2](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 24:36-49](#)

### Resurrection Reality: We Have a Meaningful Message to Share A Message of Light

1. **Darkness in the \_\_\_\_\_ and in \_\_\_\_.**
2. **Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_. He is \_\_\_\_\_.**
3. **Jesus is our \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**
4. **\_\_\_\_\_ brings us into the Light.**

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:

I'm going to propose something and you can see if you agree with me or not. I think we take light for granted. Why would I say that? Any of you involved in that snow storm about a week ago, if you were in this area, you maybe saw some people posting and saying "Man, what's wrong with these flickering lights? Why is the power going on and off?" As they were saying this and complaining about the lights flickering on and off, our house was without power for about 40 hours. I know some people had no power for longer, about 3-4 days. You don't really think about how much light means to you until it's gone. Until you don't have that power and that electricity and you think of all the things that you do and you need light for and then it's gone. It's hard. I think it's true that we don't think about how important light is and how blessed we are to have the light that we have. But when it's gone, we notice. Someone told me last week that they're never going to take electricity and light for granted after having that power gone for so long.

I want us to think a little bit about the world we live in and what we have. Think about how we've been given **a message of Light**. Do we take it for granted? Do we take for granted this message of Light we have and not see how special it is and not always understand the darkness that we're in and what we face?

We know that as John is writing he is talking about who God is. We saw last week that he explained the message that they were coming and that they were witnesses of Christ and His resurrection. He is going to share today about this message that they have and are declaring. He starts out by saying: **God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.** If God is Light though, where is the darkness? In Him there is no darkness at all. But we see a few verses later: **If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.** In the verse right after where it says "in him there is no darkness," it says: **If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness...** Where is the darkness? That *darkness is in the world and in me and you.*

Would you say as you look at the world that you see it's a dark place sometimes? I think if you follow any sort of news, it's very easy to not want to watch the news because of the darkness and the reports of this thing and that thing. Last night again, it sounds like there's another war. There is darkness all around. There is hatred and it doesn't seem like there is any light out there sometimes. The glimpses of light in the world that we see are so small and few.

It's easy to bemoan the world, though. There is darkness out there, but one of the most important things is that we have to look at ourselves and see that there is darkness in me, in you and me. **If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves...** Why is it so important that we say that there is darkness in me? I think in Christianity it's so important that as we look at the world, we understand the world in ways that the rest of the world doesn't.

In a political year of election, what is the answer to fixing everything? "We have the answers. We are on the right side. Those people are wrong. Vote for us." Or, "Everything would be fine if those people changed. They are the problem." Do you hear that? I think that's a pretty common thought. Do you do that, not just in politics and big things but maybe in small relationships, in work, in family? "They are the problem. It's not me! It's their fault." Or what we so often do in our world today is we like to make ourselves the victim. "Even if I know I did something wrong, they caused me to do that." But the darkness is in me. So as Christians we don't say "They are the problem." We say "The problem starts with me." It's very clear. **If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.** The darkness isn't just out there; it's in you and me. We need to see that and understand "They are not just the problem. I'm the problem."

But the blessing is there is light. We are not just living without power and hoping and stumbling around. There is light. As it says, **"God is light..."** We understand what He has done, who He is, **in him there is no darkness at all,** but then we see what it means for Jesus and God to be Light. He says in Verse 9: **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.** God is

the Light. *Jesus is this Light* that brings truth. He is the way, the truth and the life. ([John 14:6](#)) But what is so important is not only is He Light, but *He is faithful*. What we just said, what we confessed at the beginning of the service and what we read here, is that we fail. We make mistakes. We fall short. We know that those we love, they are going to fall short at times. We are not faithful. But who is faithful? Jesus is faithful. When we look and we confess our sins, it says ***he is faithful and just***. It doesn't say "Confess your sins and therefore, you need to be so faithful and make up for it." It says ***he is faithful and just and HE will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness***.

How does that happen? We see what this is when he says: ***My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin***. Does he mean that we don't sin? We just talked about that. He says if we say we don't sin, we're a liar, so he's saying "I want you to walk in the Light." We'll get to that in a second. He then says, "If anyone does sin, I know you're going to fall short." That's what we just talked about. ***But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world***. Notice what it says Jesus is. Not only is He Light and He is faithful, it says that *Jesus is our advocate and our atonement*. What does it mean for Jesus to be our advocate?

Have you ever been in a car accident? What do they always tell us? Even if it's a small accident, you never claim responsibility. Who are you supposed to call? You're supposed to call your insurance carrier and they are going to be your advocate. They are going to speak on your behalf. When you go to any type of court case, you usually want a lawyer. You want someone to be advocating for you, to be fighting on your behalf. If you have ever had a problem with a friend where maybe you are accused of doing something wrong and you know you didn't do it, you need another friend to be your advocate; to stand out for you and say "No! They didn't do that! They weren't even there." When you have that person stand up for you, to advocate for you, to be on your side, what does that mean for you? It means everything! It's someone to come to your defense, to stand up for you, to protect your name, and to prove your innocence.

For Jesus to be our advocate, it's not just speaking to what we've done, but what does Jesus actually do? He speaks about what HE has done for you and me. That's far better than someone speaking on your behalf to say "Well, yeah, he's pretty good." When God now looks at us and judges us, He looks at our Advocate. Jesus stands in front of us and says "You can't even look at them. You have to look at me. I'm the righteous one. I am the atonement. I have paid for their sins." He is the atonement. Some translations talk about this as a big, religious word—the propitiation, or the satisfaction. When Jesus was on the cross on Good Friday, what did He say? He said ***"It is finished."*** ([John 19:30](#)) It's done! The debt has been paid. There is no doubt that you are forgiven.

So when you stand before God, when you are doubtful of what you've done, when you know that you have failed, you have an advocate, the one that says "Look at me." When we are baptized, we know that we are clothed with Christ and forgiven. So to understand that Jesus is that perfect sacrifice in our place and you are totally forgiven and you don't have to fear at all, there is no guilt; it's all removed and you're at peace. That's what this is all about; to have that Light and peace and forgiveness to know that Jesus is there on your behalf.

Notice that he talks about what we are to do knowing this has happened. Even though we know we have sinned, he encourages us to do something. He says: ***If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*** And earlier he says: ***If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out 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.*** We know it's true of what God has done, so what does He encourage us to do? He encourages us to confess. *Confession brings us into the light*; the light of truth of what God has done and what is true about our sins.

What do people really want to do with their sins? They want to hide them, to keep them in the dark, from others and from God. We can do a pretty good job of keeping those sins in the dark from others, but can you keep those sins in the dark from God? No. That's kind of silly. So what does he encourage us to do? He encourages us to confess and to walk in the light and to put those sins out and say "God, I give them to you because you already know about them. And what have you done? You have purified me. You forgive them, so there is no reason to keep them hidden. So I bring them out because I know what you have done."

Part of that confession and that turning away is to say "I don't want to continue in that. I know these sins put Jesus on the cross, and I know my sins hurt God and they hurt those around me." We know that there is forgiveness, but sins carry baggage in this world. They carry consequences. So we don't want to walk in that darkness. We want to walk in the light. This is the joy we have of saying God's Word is good and true and the light. Understanding that there is so much out there but walking in His truth and knowing we are forgiven; what joy that brings!

I was at a conference in Green Bay yesterday and a lot of what we talked about was about reaching the new generation. We talked about our digital world. We talked about all the information you bring in, not just the younger generation. Think about you and everything you bring in. It's overload. What does that cause? It causes stress and depression. It causes us to be in a fog and darkness. I think part of that is because we aren't always getting that light of truth. We are getting all of this stuff, but I think in our world there is darkness. We don't always see and understand what darkness is. We just need the light of truth. What does that look like?

If you love the sunrise, if you love to be out, if you have ever gone on vacation and you get up early just to see that sunrise, that warmth it brings. What I think about now is I'm not a winter person, but as the days get longer and as we no longer have those overcast, gloomy days, those first days of spring where light and refreshing comes. This is what the Word of God does for us. This is what that forgiveness and confession does as we put our sins out into the light and know Jesus has forgiven them and we can walk in that light. It's not a burden. It is refreshing. Then for us to be able to share that with others, that we have this light and peace, and we want others to know as well. We don't share it as a burden but as a joy because we have this great Light.

How hard it is when you are in the darkness, when that power is off, when it doesn't seem like you have hope, but we do have hope. We have a Light that guides us today and forever. Knowing our God is Light and He has forgiven us and we have a true peace that comes through knowing our resurrected Jesus, both now and forever. Amen.

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