



# LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS – The Light that Transforms 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020 Mark Wiltshire

This Study Guide provides a summarised study with additional discussion questions based on the scriptures mentioned in the sermon.

## Connect:

**“Christmas Message is about “today” Knowing God is a now experience...not just an historical event.  
God’s light is just as powerful today.”**

Pastor Mark Wiltshire

1. God’s light will attract us by the Holy Spirit, but NOT all light is God (devil imitates as Angel of Light). Some things dazzle and glitter to draw and distraction attention.
2. What kind of light distracts you most?

## Engage:

1. Read [John 1:1-5](#)
  - Light has the power to expel darkness in every human situation:
    - a. Physically
    - b. Emotionally
    - c. Relationally
    - d. Spiritually
  - As God’s light draws our attention, we need to move towards him. He will bring us His strength!

**“It’s not what you look at that matters, it’s what you see.”**

Henry David Thoreau (Harvard Graduate, Philosopher, Writer, mid 1800’s - a man who influenced Martin Luther King Jr)

2. Read [Luke 2:3-7](#)
3. Christmas is about the birth of Christ –
  - The vulnerable arrival of the son (light) into our world
  - Brings out the rawness and vulnerability in humanity
  - God can relate to life’s most difficult experiences

4. Bethlehem shepherds took great care of the sheep that would be offered in the Temple (Jerusalem) – in particular the Passover sacrifices.
  - a. 2 lambs sacrificed every day in the temple.
  - b. Many more were sacrificed by individuals and at religious events.
  - c. Shepherds protected the new-born lambs; they wrapped them in swaddling, and put them into a manger to protect them.
  - d. Only spotless lambs free from marks or blemishes could be sacrificed under Hebrew law.
5. Read [Micah 4:8](#)
6. Thirty-three years later, Jesus, the ultimate ‘sinless, spotless’ sacrifice, which would carry away not only the sins of Israel but of the whole world, was born.
7. Read Hebrews 10:10

### Framework:

8. Read [John 1:6-9](#)
  - The TRUE LIGHT can be carried in who we are and what we do
  - God’s light will shine in the PRACTICAL and the SPIRITUAL areas of our life (both important)
  - It always pushes back the darkness...
  - God’s light will always draw others to us as we trust in Him.
9. Why does light have the power to push back darkness?
10. What areas of our lives do we try to hide from God’s light?

**“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.**

**Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”**

Martin Luther King Jr

11. As we serve in community, God’s light can shine. Why is ‘serving’ an important part of our spiritual walk?
12. How does God’s light transform us?
- 13.

<b>God’s light shapes us: INWARDLY</b>
<p><b><u>GIVES UNDERSTANDING – God’s presence is revealed</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the <a href="#">light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.</a>” 2 Corinthians 4:6 ESV</li> <li>• <i>Why do ‘occasional churchgoers’ go to church at Christmas?</i> Research shows... 55% want to feel close to God. 52% want to find the true meaning of Christmas</li> <li>• We need to be willing to keep learning, during every season of life.</li> </ul>

- We can't rely on old experiences – we need fresh insights daily!
- ***What kind of knowledge does God want us to have?***

#### **MAGNIFIES TRUTH**

- “All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.” John 3:20-21 NLT
- Facing internal truthfulness is tough! We need to be willing to confront what is not truthful in who we are.
- We need to bring our sins and mistakes into God's light with a genuine heart for change.
- ***How does our personal integrity and truthfulness impact what others see?***

#### **God's light shapes me: OUTWARDLY**

##### **REMOVES FEAR**

- “The Lord is my light and my salvation— so why should I fear?! Psalm 27:1a
- Many are fearful about 2021... so much uncertainty.
- Fear thrives when we lose confidence in God. A sign is the loss of inner joy. eg King David... Psalm 51:12
- Confidence is lost when we lose sight of the magnitude and meaning of our salvation... we need to trust God 100%
- ***How can we strengthen ourselves in practical ways?***

##### **SAFE NAVIGATION** - Safe steps into 2021

- “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.” Psalm 119:105
- Movement is part of life; some steps take us through very challenging circumstances.
- We need God's word to help us navigate well. We will see clearer and walk faster which builds confidence and progress.
- ***How is God's word able to become a light to our path?***

#### 14. Read [John 8:12](#)

- We choose to follow Christ
- Remember the Child grew to be a man – A spotless lamb
- Our one sacrifice for all time brings FORGIVENESS and FULLNESS
- As we step towards 2021, may next year be one that transforms.

### **Conclusion:**

***God's light will always transform US both inwardly and outwardly – Every situation can change – Pray!***