

## ‘I AM The Light of the world’

One afternoon a little boy was playing outdoors. He used his mother's broom as a horse and had a wonderful time until it was getting dark but he left the broom in the back garden. His mother was cleaning up the kitchen when she realized that her broom was missing. She asked the little boy about the broom and he told her where it was. She then asked him to please go get it. The little boy informed his mom that he was afraid of the dark and didn't want to go out to get the broom. His mother smiled and said "The Lord is out there too, don't be afraid." The little boy opened the back door a little and said, "Lord if you're out there, please can you hand me the broom."

And I guess the moral of that story is that we should never be afraid of the darkness when we have Jesus the light of the world in our lives.

Now before we actually get into our main text today I think it's important to lay some basic foundational truths down concerning the 'I AM's' claims of Jesus. Please turn your Bible to **Exodus 3:13-14** "Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" God said to Moses, "I AM THAT I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Now remember the Bible doesn't use names for God in the same way as we use names today. God doesn't have a name as such but He uses certain words to describe His character or nature. For example, the word **El-Shaddai** describes His nature as the all sufficient one, the all-powerful One. The word **Adonia** describes His character as Lord, Master, the One with all authority. The word **Yahweh** describes His nature as the everlasting, self existing One.

And so, when God speaks to Moses, He is not giving Moses a name as we understand it. But He's telling Moses to tell His people that **Yahweh, 'I AM THAT I AM'**, the self existing One has sent you. God is basically saying to Moses I don't need a name but I will give you one to tell my people.

Now remember the Israelites have been in captivity in Egypt for 400 years and so God goes on to say in **Exodus 3:15** just in case my people have forgotten who 'I AM', tell them "The LORD, (The One with all authority), the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.'

Now let's fast forward a couple of thousand years. We know that the **Gospel according to Matthew** focuses a lot on prophecy where Matthew points out time and time again that Jesus is the promised Messiah. The **Gospel according to Mark** focuses a lot on Jesus' miracles and Mark uses the word 'immediately' regularly. The **Gospel according to Luke** focuses a lot on Jesus' humanity and shows Jesus as being the Son of man.

And finally, the **Gospel according to John** focuses a lot on Jesus being the Son of God which shows the Deity of Christ. **But have you ever wondered why all the 'I AM' claims of Jesus are found in John's gospel?** John writes in **John 20:30+31** "Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name".

Now John never uses the word **miracle** in his gospel but he does use the word **sign** regularly. And there are **16 signs** recorded in John's gospel, **8** are things which Jesus did and **8** were things which Jesus said. John is basically saying that the 'I AM' claims of Jesus are **signs**, selected from many other signs. And he says these signs are selected with a purpose in mind and that purpose is that you believe that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be.

And so just as 'I AM' is God's own identification of Himself in **Exodus 3:14** to Moses. Remembering that strictly speaking, it is **not** a name, but a declaration of His Nature. When we come to the 'I AM' claims of Jesus, we need to remember that Jesus was not giving Himself a Name or a title, but was asserting His Deity. In other words, every 'I AM' reveals some aspect of His nature and purpose.

Now some people may not recognize or understand Jesus' claims but the Jewish leaders certainly did. In **John 8** when the Jewish leaders were accusing Jesus of being demon possessed and asked Jesus if He was greater than Abraham. They go on and say to Jesus in **John 8:57-59** "You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham!" "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" At this, they picked up stones to stone him". The Jewish leaders had no doubt that Jesus was claiming Deity, that's why they were going to stone Him.

So now that we have the foundations laid properly let's go ahead and look at the text I've been given to speak about. Straight after Jesus has just helped the woman who was supposedly caught in adultery and the leaders wanted to stone her. John shares with us a sign from Jesus where He claims Deity once again by making a clear statement in **John 8**. **John 8:12 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."**

Let's begin by looking at what it means to walk in darkness. I've got a good Christian friend named **Glynn** and when he was over here in the **UK** we invited him to preach for us one time. His sermon was very powerful and very thought provoking but during his sermon he said something which I have never forgotten to this day. He said, **'there is one thing worse than being physically blind and that's being spiritually blind.'** You see loved ones **Glynn** was physically blind and has been all his life but he totally understood that there are a lot of people in this world who are worse off than he is because they are spiritually blind.

Now if you're not a Christian today you may not want to hear this, but the Bible tells us why you can't see Jesus the way many Christian do. **2 Corinthians 4:4 "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God"**. Paul says that the god of this age, the devil has blinded the minds of unbelievers.

In other words, if you're not a Christian today and can't understand why others around you are. Paul says it's possibly because the devil is stopping you from hearing and seeing the beauty of Jesus. And he does that by placing doubt in your mind and whispering in your ear, **'oh you don't need to listen to this guy, you don't need to read the Bible, you don't need Jesus in your life'**.

You see if you're physically blind, you can put all the lights in your house on you want but it makes no difference to you, **does it?** If you're physically blind, light is useless and ineffective. Well in much the same way, you won't and can't see the light of the Gospel spiritually speaking because the devil has blinded you spiritually. Because the Bible clearly tells us that **hearing** and **believing** the gospel is only possible through God's Word.

In other words, it's only when a person hears and reads the Bible and gets help to understand it, can the good news of Jesus be clearly seen. And if you're not a Christian today then let me plead with you to open your ears and hear. If you're not a Christian today then i plead with you to open your eyes and see.

**T.H. Huxley**, a well-known agnostic, was with a group of men at a weekend house party. On Sunday morning, while most of them were preparing to go to church, he approached a man known for his Christian character and said, **"Suppose you stay at home and tell my why you are a Christian."** The man, knowing he couldn't match wits with **Huxley**, hesitated. But the agnostic said gently, **"I don't want to argue with you. I just want you to tell me simply what this Christ means to you."** The man did, and when he finished, there were tears in **Huxley's** eyes as he said, **"I would give my right hand if only I could believe that!"**

Let me tell you loved ones; now you may not believe in Jesus today but you don't have to give anything to believe that the world we're living in can be a dark place at times, because we can see it. Just turn on your TV screens and watch the news, we hear about terrorism, war, oppression, sexual abuse, greed etc. We read it in our newspapers where pornography and filthy language is rampant. We hear it from our friends and neighbours, where there is adultery, physical and verbal abuse, false religions etc.

Loved ones whether you're a Christian or not, don't tell me you can't see these things, because they are very real. **Ephesians 4:17-19 "So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed"**. Paul says there are many people who walk around in the darkness and don't even know it.

In the film **the sixth sense** **Bruce Willis** plays the part of a child psychologist named **Malcolm Crowe**. And the whole film is based around him helping a young boy named **Cole** who says he sees dead people. Now the twist to the film is at the very end because although **Malcolm** was helping this young boy, he didn't realise that he himself was actually dead. Now let me tell you loved ones, I see dead people. I see people who are dead in their sin, people who are walking around in the darkness. People who are busy trying to keep busy and filling their lives with all sorts of junk for what? Pretending that our lives mean something, pretending that what we do is really important.

What about you? Does your walk involve walking around in the darkness or are you seeking the light? And if you're still dead in your sins today, then it's not all bad news, Jesus the Light of the World offers hope. In **Luke 2** we find a man named Simeon who was foretold that he wouldn't die until He saw the Messiah coming first.

And when Jesus' parents took Jesus to the temple courts, Simeon instantly recognised Him and said in **Luke 2:30-32** "For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."

In the very beginning of John's Gospel he says this in **John 1:1-5** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

And claiming to be the light of the world wasn't a new thing for Jesus, He was always the light of the world. In fact in **John 9** after Jesus heals a man who was born blind, He goes on to say in **John 9:5** "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." So, Simeon knew Jesus was the Light to the Gentiles, John knew Jesus was the Light to all of mankind and Jesus Himself claimed to be that Light.

Now let's go back to our main text and remind ourselves what Jesus says. **John 8:12** "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Now first of all notice where Jesus made this statement. **John 8:20** tells us that "He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put."

Think about it! You can imagine Jesus walking through the treasury part of the temple which was a part of the Court of Women. You can imagine Him just looking around and there over in the corner were two huge lamp stands on which hung a number of lamps. Now these were usually lit after the evening sacrifice during the feast of tabernacles and historians tell us that they were so bright they could light up most of the city. And so, as Jesus is looking around, He sees the two huge lamp stands and says, "I am the light of the world."

Now remember that Jesus is not a light among other lights, He is The Light. The Light which Isaiah prophesied about in **Isaiah 49:6** when he writes, "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

Isaiah also wrote in **Isaiah 60:1-3** "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn".

And so, Jesus is not the light of Israel alone but the Light of the world. You see loved ones; people don't have to walk around in the darkness anymore because Jesus offers hope. He says because He is The Light of the world, He is the source of life. In that great chapter in John's gospel, where Jesus gives another sign, He says, "I am the good shepherd", He says in **John 10:10** "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full".

You know before I became a Christian I used to think I was living life to the max. I had a car and a nice home. I had a good job and lots of good friends. We did all the usual things like getting drunk and sleeping around with various women, yep life was good and full. But then I asked myself a question, **what is the point of me being here, surely there is more to life than all this material stuff?**

And for a long time, I struggled to answer that question and it wasn't until I took the time to sit down with someone who kindly explained their thoughts on God and the Bible that the penny dropped. There is more to life than alcohol, drugs and having sex. There is more to life than owning a nice house and car and having a well-paid job.

Jesus says, 'you don't have to settle for a wishy washy life, I am the source of life and when you come to Me, I will give you life like you've never experienced before'. Jesus says, 'I will give you abundant life, a life full of real peace, not the fake peace you get from smoking a joint.' Jesus says, 'I will give you real joy not the fake joy you get after drinking a few bottles of lager.' Jesus says, 'I will give you real love not the fake love you get from having sex with a total stranger on a Saturday night.'

You see loved ones, Jesus offers more than anyone on this earth can offer, and not only does He offer abundant life here and now, He also offers eternal life. And so, Jesus is The Light loved ones but we need to be careful of others who offer some other kind of light.

That's why I'm always sceptical of people who go around saying, 'I've seen the light, I've seen the light'. Listen, the apostle Paul saw the light on the road to Damascus but that experience didn't save Him on that road. According to **Acts 9:18**, he wasn't saved until he was immersed into Christ later by Ananias.

Now we may find this difficult to accept but there are other people going around pretending to be something they are not. The apostle Paul warns us in **2 Corinthians 11:13-15** "For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve."

I heard a story about a woman who lost her car keys in the street in the middle of the night. A stranger walked by and asked her 'if she was ok'. The woman explained that she had lost her keys and so the man asked, 'where do you think you dropped them?' To which the woman pointed over the over side of the street. The stranger then asked her, 'then why are you looking over this side of the street for your keys?' to which the woman replied, 'because the light is better.' And I guess the point of that story is that we all need to be very careful where we're looking to find salvation.

Turn your Bible to **Matthew 5:14-16** where the Light of the world tells us that "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Jesus asks, do you want to know what our role is in this dark world? He says, our role is simply to shine. He says, "You (all of us, all Christians) are the light of the world." And why is it important for all Christians to shine? It's important for us all to shine so that the world can see our heavenly Father's glory.

Now you might be wondering if Jesus is The Light of the world, how can we be the light of the world too? Well we need to remember that we are not a light in and of ourselves, we have no light of our own but the light we possess is a reflected light. Paul reminds us in **Ephesians 5:8** "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light." In other words, because we are in the Lord, our lights are simply illuminating lights.

**2 Corinthians 4:6** "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ." In other words, just as the moon reflects the sun, we're supposed to reflect the glory of God's Son Jesus.

Now notice that the Light of the world says in **Matthew 5:14+15** "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house." Jesus says your reflecting light is supposed to be visible, that's why He talks about a town and a lamp stand.

He also says that that we all should be radiant, that's why He talks about us giving light. You know when you think about a lamp, its whole design purpose is to give light. And if you were to light a lamp and stick it under bowl, its purpose would be useless. And I think the church would be much more effective if all Christians shined every day of the week. It's just sad that some only shine on Sunday mornings. Jesus says, 'you're the light of the world', not just your place of worship. He says, 'let people see that light, "let your light so shine before men."

Paul says in **Philippians 2:14+15** "Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky." Do you know that song, "this little light of mine" that children sing? Did you know that the Bible never says, "That you are a little light?" The Bible never talks about this little light of mine, the Bible says, "You are a big, old awesome star". You're a big huge light, shining in a dark universe.

And as one of God's stars, I've to reflect the brilliance of God's holiness in this dark world. The Bible says, "That the world is crooked and perverse," in other words, it is full of crooks and perverts and God needs some big old stars in it.



How's the world going to know it needs redeeming unless it strikes out hard against people that's living a radically different kind of life? Ephesians 5 talks more about letting the light out. Paul said to that church in verse 8-14, "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 of 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, for it shameful to even mention what is done in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible for it is light that makes everything visible. That is why it is said, wake up oh sleeper, rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you."

God wants big stars in this dark world we live in, loved ones. The Living Bible says, "Once your heart was full of darkness, now it's full of light from the Lord and your behaviour should show it."

Now people are not always going to like the light because the light exposes their evil deeds. That's why sometimes they are going to criticise the light and sometimes they are going to argue with the light. Sometimes they are going to mock the light, but you've got to keep on shining.

I heard a story about a judge that was being mocked by an arrogant lawyer and someone asked him why he didn't discipline the young man. The judge said, "Well, in my town there is a widow with a dog, and every time the moon comes out that dog barks all night long". Then he changed the subject. Then the man said, "yeah, but what about the moon and the dog?" The judge said, "Oh well, the moon keeps right on shining that's all."

And that's what Paul said friends. You just need to keep on shining because it's not going to be hard to shine in the holy city. When we experience our future salvation and we're taken to heaven and God himself is going to be the light of heaven. It's not going to be hard to shine. But God said, "I want you to shine now in the midst of a very ugly world".

The question is, are you shining? Let me ask you a hard question. Besides going to worship, what is it about you that is totally different from your non-Christian neighbour? Despite the fact that you get out of bed earlier on a Sunday, what is noticeably different about you? People are always fussing about how evil the world is, about all the sinning going that goes on. Listen loved ones, sinning is what unbelievers do, that's their job description.

The problem in the world is not that sinners are sinning; the problem is the light isn't shining. You see, it bothers me when I hear that there were one million new pornographic videos for rent last year. But what really bothers me is that some Christians will rent them. Yes, it bothers me when I hear rude and racist jokes but what really bothers me is that Christians will listen and laugh at them because they are afraid to stand out and let that light shine. Yes, it bothers me when I hear that billions are lost with income taxes but it bothers me even more when Christians are just as guilty as anybody.

The real issue is, is the light going to shine in the midst of a dark world? We don't need isolation loved ones, where everybody gets together away from the world. What we need is some salvation getting worked out in the midst of the world.

Peter says in 1 Peter 2:11+12, "Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us".

We've got to be in the world so we can shine loved ones. Yes, we'll be criticised but we've got to make sure there's no just criticism against us. In fact, we've got to live such bright lives; we shut up some of that criticism. Have you ever noticed when you were young and you were having a party with lots of noise, and when a minister came into your house everything would just go quiet? The idea is that there is nothing that will shut up a good party like a clergyman.

Peter says in 1 Peter 2:15 "It's God will, that by doing good you silence the ignorant talk of foolish men." It is God's will to let our lights shine so bright, that some of the nonsense and sin gets spewed, some of the venom being poured out in this world, just gets shut up because it just can't stand the heat of the light.

The question is, are you willing to step out of the darkness and become a part of the Light of the world today? It's a very simple process really, if you're willing to open your eyes and see it. Now remember that Jesus says, "I am the light of the world" not for the Jews only, but for everyone else as well.

And Jesus doesn't care where you come from or what your background is, He says eternal life is available to everyone and anyone who would believe on Him. Jesus Himself says in **John 12:46** "No one who believes in me should stay in darkness". He says in our main text in **John 8:12** "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness." And so, the gospel is for everyone, regardless of where you are from or what your past has been like.

You see, it all begins with faith, **Romans 10:17** says, "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." In other words do you believe that the Bible really is the one and only inspired book from God?

It was Charles Spurgeon who once said, 'I would recommend you either believe God up to the hilt, or else not to believe at all. Believe this book of God, every letter of it, or else reject it. There is no logical standing place between the two. Be satisfied with nothing less than a faith that swims in the deeps of divine revelation; a faith that paddles about the edge of the water is poor faith at best. It is little better than a dry-land faith, and is not good for much.'

And so, when your reading your way through the Bible, ask yourself, do I really believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? The Light of the world says in **John 3:36** tells us that "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

And maybe a little later you begin to believe that Jesus Christ really is the Son of God and you get to the point where you just want to tell others that you believe this. And so **Romans 10:9+10** says, "That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

And whilst you've been reading your Bible you've become more and more convicted that you're a sinner and you need to change. The Bible calls this repentance, Jesus, the Light of the world says in **Luke 13:3** "Unless you repent, you too will perish". And so now you're at the point where you don't want to walk in the darkness anymore but want to walk in the light.

But you've still got a sin problem, how are you going to deal with all the things you've done over the years, things that were wrong in God's eyes? Well you can't right your wrongs, but Jesus, the Light of the world can and He says in **Mark 16:16** "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned".

Now it's amazing to me how people struggle with the whole concept of baptism, so if you're a little confused about the topic, please let me give you a little history on the subject of baptism. For **1300 years** after the church was established on the day of Pentecost baptism was uniformly practiced by the immersion of a person under water. In other words, for **1300 years** after the establishment of the church baptism was practiced as we still practice it today.

Every single person who became a Christian in New Testament times were immersed into water. And notice what I said, every single person was immersed, not a single one of them was sprinkled or poured upon. **John Calvin** says that 'in the early days, baptism was administered by immersion but the church did grant unto herself the liberty to change the rite somewhat'.

Do you understand what's he's saying? He's saying that the Roman Catholic Church changed the rite, changed the practice of baptism, from full immersion to sprinkling or pouring. And in the year **1311** the catholic council met in **France** and decided that sprinkling or pouring may be used as an alternative mode for baptism.

Now people often say, 'oh you church of Christ people you're always going on about baptism'. Well loved ones if it's important for Jesus to preach it, if it's important for the writers of the New Testament to practice it, then it should be important for us to preach and practice it too. Baptism is just as important as faith and believing Jesus is the Son of God. Baptism is just as important as confessing Jesus as Lord in front of witnesses and repenting. **But did you know that the Bible speaks about baptism 126 times?** And in every instance in the Bible it means to dip or immerse or plunge and not once does it mean to sprinkle or to pour.

And let me tell you something which may come as a shock to some of you. I don't believe in infant baptism and I don't even believe in adult baptism, but what I do believe in is believer's baptism. The gospel is designed for people who have the ability to believe or not to believe. That's why Jesus says in **Mark 16:15+16** "Go into all the world, and preach the Good News to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who disbelieves will be condemned."

It's a believer's baptism, someone who believes and is baptised will be saved, and someone who doesn't believe will be condemned. Listen loved ones; a scriptural baptism is the immersion of a believer in water with a view to receiving the forgiveness of their sins, acceptance by Christ and addition to the body of Christ, the church. And if your baptism doesn't match up to that biblical standard you need to re-examine what you went through, because this is really important in God's eyes.

Now what I find amazing these days is that many people don't preach about the importance of baptism in some religious circles **but did you know some of their best teachers used to? The Church of England** for example, in their prayer book, it says, that **'baptism is the ordinance where by a person becomes child of God, a member of Christ and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven'**. And if that doesn't tell us that baptism is important I don't know what does. A child of God, a member of Christ and inheritor of the kingdom of heaven is what you become by means of baptism.

**What about John Wesley?** We know what the **Methodist** today practice and preach but **John Wesley** on his notes on the **New Testament** says this, **'all who believed in New Testament times were baptised'**. Wow that's certainly not true today, **is it?**

**Campbell Morgan** who was a **Congregationalist** says **'in the rite of baptism there are two movements, an immersion and an emergence. Immersion is the symbol of death and burial and emergence is the symbol of the resurrection and life of that work of the Holy Spirit there is no symbol so perfect as that of water baptism'**.

**Harry A. Ironside** who was an active member of the **Plymouth Brethren** says, **"To the lover of the Lord Jesus Christ there can be nothing legal about baptism. It is simply the glad expression of a grateful heart recognizing its identity with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. Many of us look back to the moment when we were thus baptized as one of the most precious experiences we have ever known."**

**Martin Luther** says in answer to the question, **'What gifts or benefits does Baptism bestow?'** **Luther** replied, **'It affects forgiveness of sins.'** He also wrote concerning the sinner, **'Through baptism he is bathed in the blood of Christ and is cleansed from sins.'** And finally, he said, **'To put it most simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of baptism is to save.'** And for those who argue by saying that baptism is working for your salvation, he says, **'Yes, it is true that our works are of no use for salvation. Baptism, however, is not our work but God's.'**

Now the point I'm trying to make is that sprinkling and pouring to replace full immersion is a relatively new thing. And because its practice has only been around for **300 years** or so should warn us that this is a manmade ordinance.

Now you might be wondering **what has this got to do with the Light of the world?** Well, it has everything to do with the Light of the world because He commanded it; we need to obey Him to be saved. If you haven't been baptised into Christ your still in the darkness. Paul says in **Colossians 1:13** **"For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."**

The question is, **has He rescued you?** You see loved ones, not only do you receive the forgiveness of our sins at our baptism but we also receive the gift not the gifts but the gift of the Holy Spirit. **Acts 2:38** **"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."**

Now the point I'm trying to make is this, Jesus knows it's going to be difficult living the Christian life and making the right decisions to please Him the rest of your life. That's why when a person becomes a Christian they receive the Holy Spirit to live within them. Because as Christians we have role to play with the Light of the World. We can't just be baptised and then go and live however we please.

God's love is unconditional that's why the Light of the world says in that famous passage of **John 3:16** **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"**. In other words, God sent Jesus for you, no matter whom you are or where you come from. But if you want to come out of the darkness and into the light, after baptism, you need to remain in the light if you want to get to heaven.

So, God's love is unconditional but salvation is conditional because it's based on free will. **1 John 1:5-7** **"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 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.” That word ‘if’ means we have a choice, God won’t force you to remain faithful, because faithfulness is up to you.

And so, when a person is immersed into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, they also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit who will help the new believer make the right decisions for Jesus and live a life which pleases God as long as they remain faithful. So, becoming a Christian is your choice and remaining to be a Christian is your choice.

I want to thank you all for inviting me to speak today; it’s always humbling to be asked to speak anywhere. Let me finish by sharing with you a story I heard a few years ago. **Two Indians who were deeply in love used to send each other smoke signals to tell each other of their undying love. And one day a way off in the distance the army set off a test for an atomic bomb. And as that big mushroom cloud went up into the air, the Indian said to his wife, “Wow, I wished I’d said that.”**

Loved ones I hope this message has been just as clear, there’s only one true Light and His Name is Jesus the Christ. Let me leave you by asking you this question, **where are you? Are you still walking in the darkness of the world?** If so let me encourage you to ask someone here today, how to get out of the darkness and into the light.