


The True Identity of Mankind and the Believer

2025-11-02 – Various Scriptures

	<p>The Bible is abundantly clear about the human condition: though we were created in the image of God, our every aspect is corrupted by sin. This is the reality for everyone who has ever lived. The good news of the Gospel is that in Christ, God regenerates us and makes us new. This morning, we will seek to better understand our salvation by considering how deeply sin affects us and recognizing our total dependence on God.</p>
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Good morning. Pastor Matt is in Iowa with his family for a family wedding, and I'm filling in for him today in leading Communion. I appreciate your grace. Allowing me to leave this time with our elders and deacons, we're very grateful.

Our God is a God of mercy. He's a God of mercy. And just as he calls us to the table of grace, in the book of Hebrews, he says, "Let us come boldly to his throne of grace to receive mercy and grace in our time of need." (Hebrews 4:16) We have many needs. But there's no need greater than to be forgiven and reconciled with God. We have no need that's greater than for our sins to be forgiven. And we have a God of mercy. It's a God of mercy.

And the author of Hebrews wrote that verse on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. People who heard it had in mind the tabernacle imagery in Israel. God had told Moses, "Be very careful to follow the pattern I give you for the construction of the tabernacle. What I show you on the mountain, build precisely." (Exodus 25:40) And God gave the instruction to the Israelites through Moses, and they constructed the tabernacle, this tent where God would come down and dwell among his people as they tented and camped around him.

But because he is holy, he set it up very specifically with an outer court, an outer tent, and an altar where the burnt offerings would be sacrifice, the animals would sacrifice, and the wash basin, and then the tent's curtain, the initial curtain, and the inner room with the table of showbread and the lampstand, the golden lampstand, the furniture, and then the inner curtain into the Most Holy Place, the Holy of Holies, inside of which was the Ark of the Covenant, the throne of God on earth.

The Ark of the Covenant was made of acacia wood and dipped in gold, with the cherubim looking in on either side of this approximate four foot by two, two and a half foot throne seat. The seat of which the lid was not of acacia wood, dipped in gold. It was of solid gold. Because above that seat, the presence of God, met with Israel specifically once a year on the day of atonement when the priest would come in the high priest with blood, blood for his own sins and for the sins of the people and he would make atonement for the people according to the prescription God gave

because we have no greater need than to be forgiven to be reconciled with God but our God is a God of mercy.

Do you know what that lid, that solid, pure gold seat is called? The place above which the presence of the God of creation may manifest to Israel. Is it called the judgment seat? Is it called the wrath seat? No, it's called the mercy seat. To show you something about God. It shows me something. It proves to us that our God is a God who loves mercy.

When Moses asked to know who the father was, he said, "I'll put you in the rock and cover you with my hand and let my glory pass by. The good and gracious God who shows mercy to thousands and compassion to those who confess." (Exodus 33:22; 34:6) And so the priest would slaughter the animal and there was one that went that went off. Okay, but the blood that he entered by, he entered into the presence of God, because "without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness." (Hebrews 9:22)

Our God of mercy is holy, and his wrath is a terrifying thing, and his wrath is against sin. In order for us to be reconciled, the blood of a sacrificial animal had to be shed. And our sins had to be imputed on the sacrificial animal, transferred from us to that animal. The priest would put his hand on the animal, and the sins of the people were imputed, transferred to the animal.

And what happened through the death of the animal, the bloodshed, was that there was what's called "expiation of guilt," a removal of guilt from the people, from me, from you, from the people, because of the imputation or transfer of our guilt onto the sacrificial animal, which expiates our guilt from us, removes it from us, so that by the blood that was shed and the removal of the guilt through the imputation of that guilt on the sacrificial animal, the holy God of mercy, his wrath is appeased, it's propitiated. It's the appeasement of wrath.

God designed this beautiful, glorious process so that through the imputation of our sin on the sacrificial animal, our sin is expiated and removed, and the Father's wrath is propitiated. It's appeased. All this for us to have our sins atoned for. We are at one with the Father. Reconciliation comes when, by faith in Jesus Christ, we put our faith in the one upon whom our sins were imputed. And our guilt is removed. The Father's wrath is appeased, and we are reconciled with God. Praise the Lord.

And it says in Corinthians that when we come to the table of grace, the table of the King of communion. "We proclaim his death on our behalf for the forgiveness of our sins until he returns." (1 Corinthians 11:26) Because he didn't die like an animal that remained dead, but he was buried and he rose again. He is Lord and he is coming again. We proclaim his death until when he comes again to bring us to him.

We have a God of mercy, and our greatest need is to be reconciled to him. And he's made the way through the sacrificial animal. Have you trusted Christ by faith for forgiveness for your sins? Have you trusted that when he died on the cross, your sins were placed on his shoulder so that your guilt is removed, it's expiated. And on behalf of that work that Christ did, the Father's wrath is appeased. He is not angry with you. "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1)

This is the table of grace. And this is why Paul says, "Do not come to the table in an unworthy manner. A person must examine oneself" (1 Corinthians 11:27-28) when we come to the table. So we're going to take a moment in quiet communion as the elders and deacons pass the elements to pray and ask the Lord for forgiveness for our sins, that we would come in a manner worthy of the Lord, knowing that it is by grace, through faith, that we enter this living way, because the beautiful thing about that curtain is that when Christ died on the cross, it was ripped from top to bottom. God ripped it from the top. Just like he closed the door of the ark, God ripped that curtain from the top, and he made a new and living way for us to enter through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Brother Steve, would you please pray?

Let's take a minute and close our eyes at this time in reflection of the message we just heard.

Our Father, our dearest Father in heaven. Holy, holy, holy. High and lifted up and merciful is your name. Only you. Only you can provide a way of escape for a sinful wretch like me. Like us. Let's remember today your body broken. Your blood spilled. All for us. We're thankful and grateful as we remember today. Amen.

On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:24)

In the same way he took the cup after supper and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:25) ***"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."*** (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Father God, we thank you for reconciling us to yourself through your Son, Jesus Christ. We thank you, Lord Jesus, for sending your Spirit to fill us. Lord, we pray now, that we've been reconciled, that we've been brought back into close community and fellowship with you, Lord. Lord, we pray that you'll open our hearts to hear from your word now, all to your glory and honor, in Jesus' name. Amen.

**From the Darkness to Light:
The True Identity of Mankind and the Believer**

Good morning, church. Hope everyone is well. Today, we're going to focus a little bit on moving from darkness to light and what that exactly means from the scriptures, right? Show of hands, how many of you guys have been a Christian for more than five years? Praise God. How many less than five years? And how many maybe are on the fence like, okay, what exactly, you know, I'm here, I like following the Lord, but I'm not sure about when you ask this question, right?

A lot of times, we as believers, we kind of forget where and what we are, where we came from, and why it's important when we say from darkness to the light, okay? So today, by the grace of God, we're gonna go through a few things. We're gonna talk about a few things, right? I have the privilege and honor of being up here. My name for some of you, I'm looking at some faces that I've never seen before. Praise God, right? My name is Ninos Dekelaita. I am not important. Christ is more important. I'm one of the elders here. So I have the distinct privilege of being up here and proclaiming God's word?

Pastor Matt Johnson is in Iowa and, you know, I get the privilege of preaching with the new chairs. So sorry, Matt. You got to deal with that. And we can't take that one back either. But no, in all honesty, I did want to say something. I believe that the true pastors and the men of God deserve a double portion of honor. And I want to say that we are privileged here at Cornerstone to have Pastor Matt. And I do want to say that because he is a wonderful, wonderful brother and as an elder I get the privilege of even being closer to him and what you see up here is reflective of the man in private which is a wonderful thing, alright?

That being said, Matt owes me 10 bucks for that introduction but we're gonna go to the Lord in prayer and then we're gonna come out and we're gonna hopefully by the grace of Jesus show something today, okay?

Father God, we come before your throne of grace and mercy on this wonderful Sunday morning. Father, let your word ring true. Let your spirit move. Guide the hearts and minds of the people. Guide my heart and my mind so that the things that we do and the things that we say and our actions, complete, bring glory to the name of Jesus. Because at that name, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that he is God Almighty. So Father God, I submit this time to you because it is your time. I submit the people and myself to you because you created all of us. We ask in the powerful name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

So the sermon title today, and I love playing weatherman here, right? So the sermon today is **moving from darkness to light**. Well, what does that mean? Let me just tell you some notes that

I've got here that I want to kind of bring full circle to you today, right? So the Bible has this big concept, right? And the Bible wants us to embrace what is said is emphatically true, apart from opinion, apart from man apart from you and me, right?

Let me give you an example. In Genesis it says in the beginning there's darkness, it was formless (Genesis 1:2) and God spoke. It doesn't apologize for anyone to say do you believe that there was nothing and out of nothing something formed and out of that something formed all of creation, no matter how you look out here today, came from Adam and Eve. That's what the Bible says and it compromises not for the human opinion because it never originated in the will of man, right?

So in that concept there's another concept that the Bible wants us to embrace as believers. The Bible wants us to embrace position over nature and it's a big concept. What is your position in Christ? You're a saint. What is your nature? You're a sinner. And the Bible wants us to wrestle with this in saying, if you embrace only your nature, you will continue to do the very same things that you've done. If you embrace your position and be aware of your nature and be aware of your limitations and go to the God who delivered you from your nature and your position which was hell bound. The power of God works in your life that's the big, big, big idea of the scriptures.

A lot of us we get narrow with it right we think "me, my life." So today we're going to unpack a lot and the other thing is as we get theological, right, there has been a Christian knowledge explosion since the first century. You think about the early church primarily were illiterate. I'm going to say that again. The early church primarily were illiterate. Yet you couldn't tell these men and women that they couldn't live for Christ. Acts 11:26 is the first time we hear the terminology Christian, right, and it was probably said not in a positive way because it was said by the outsiders watching these folks. It's not like they were revering Christ but we'll leave that to Ninos's side opinion let's say okay.

So that concept, now, today, what happens a lot is we sometimes duck and dodge with theology. Theology is beautiful. It's wonderful. It's the study of God, right? At the same time, we are not absolved of our actions. Because I can justify anything at all times. So first what we need to do is this morning we're going to go to the doctor's office and we're going to get a spiritual physical. We first have to be aware of where, what we actually are and then the challenge will come. Right? Praise God. So let's go.

1. The Darkness of Man: Fallen Nature
 - Sin affects all areas of human nature: mind, will, heart and desires.
 - Humanity is spiritually dead and unable to seek God on its own.

Scripture: Genesis 6:5, Psalm 51:5, Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 8:7-8

- Confess your inability to save yourself; acknowledge your dependence of God.
- Rejoice that salvation is entirely God's work, not yours.

So the darkness of man and the fallen nature of man. Sin affects every area of human nature, mind, will, heart, and desires. Humanity is spiritually dead and unable to seek God on its own. Genesis 6:5, ***Every intention of the thought of his heart was only evil continuously.*** That has not changed. I know some of us think we're a little more noble than others, but even that is an evil thought. Even that, to elevate yourself over someone else, is an evil thought. Think about that. What I just said, you would think is a good thing if I said, well, I'm not as bad as Betsy. Sorry, Betsy.

Psalms 51:5, ***Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*** So even at birth. Ephesians 2, 1 to 3, ***you were dead in your trespasses, by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.*** And then Romans 8, 7, 8, ***the mindset of the flesh is hostile to God. Indeed, it cannot please God.*** These are not open to interpretation. These are what the scriptures say about us.

And then there's two parts here, right? For the non-believer here, because I saw some hands that did not go up, right? Confess your inability to save yourself, acknowledge your dependence on God. For the believer, rejoice that salvation is entirely God's work and not yours. Two different streets.

2. The Darkness of the Heart and Thoughts

- No part of the heart is untouched by sin.
- Spiritual blindness keeps humanity from understanding God's truth without His intervention.

Scripture: Jeremiah 17:9, Mark 7:21-23, Romans 1:21, Proverbs 6:14,18

- Pray for God to illuminate your heart and mind.
- Trust that your renewed desires for God are His gift, not your own work.

The darkness of the heart and thoughts. No part of the heart is untouched by sin. Spiritual blindness keeps humanity from understanding God's truth without his intervention. And then here we go. Jeremiah 17:9, ***the heart is deceitful above all things...*** Haven't you ever heard people say, listen to your heart? Listen to your heart. Follow your heart. Well, if you follow your heart in a spiritual sense, you're doomed.

Mark 7:21-23, ***From within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts.*** So, and this is very important because I'm sure you guys have read stories about monks that went into the mountains, right? And what they would do is, not to get graphic, but they would castrate themselves. And they would say, well, I don't want to lust anymore. So therefore, I'm going to castrate myself. And then

they found out that the lust that they had was here (heart) and here (mind). It continues. And lust has many different forms.

Romans 1:21, this is the opposite side. ***Their foolish hearts were darkened***, darkened, excuse me. And then here on the application side, pray for God to either illuminate your heart and mind or trust that your renewed desires for God are His gift and not your own work. Again, two streets. We're just moving along. We haven't really gotten to where we want to get to yet.

3. The Darkness of Human Deeds

- Human deeds apart from God are offensive and lead to death.
- True righteousness comes only from God's work in us.

Scriptures: Isaiah 64:6, Romans 3:12-18, Micah 7:2-4, John 3:19-20

Application:

- Examine your actions: are they reflecting God's work or the old nature?
- Turn daily to God for forgiveness and the power to walk in righteousness.

The darkness of human deeds. *All our righteous deeds are like polluted garments.* (Isaiah 64:6) That means everything that we have done good by our definition is not good by the definition of God because the object doing it is evil, It's like, imagine Saddam Hussein and Hitler opened up a daycare. Okay. And said, hey, we're the nicest people ever. We would love to take care of your children. Even if they decided to take care of children, would you give your children over to them? Of course not. Because the object is corrupted. So the object thinking they're doing good is corrupted. And remember this last part, the standard of good is not ours. It's not a subjective type of goodness. I have a level of goodness, you have a level of goodness, you have a level of goodness. For me, being nice to my neighbor and asking him about the weather is my good deed for the day. For you, it may be helping your neighbor change a tire. Together, these are nice things, but they don't equate good in the eyes of God. Because the object doing them is still flawed, right?

And then John 3:19-20, ***people love darkness rather than light because their works were evil.*** And this is, listen, this is not one of those sermons, you ever been to church, right? And you're like, boy, this sermon is for this guy. I can't believe this guy. Yeah, what did you learn from that sermon? Right or vice versa your spouse might be next to you saying boy I hope he gets it. This is all of us. No one is untouched by this. The guy up here, the guy and the gal sitting up there nobody's untouched by this. No one comes away unscathed. We all have to give an answer.

Ephesians 5:8-10 ***For once you were in darkness, but now you are in the light of the Lord. Walk as children of the light and find out what pleases the Lord.***

Here is the paradox. This is where now we're going to examine something. I hope it was clear who we are. And the reason I didn't over-focus on these things, because I think you know them by your life. Do you not? Do you not know that the actions that you have aren't so hot. We live in a day and age where sin is masqueraded as not doing well. We live in a day and age where it's not clear what sin is. We go to church and we walk in no different than we walked out. And we think that it's like, you know, it's like a jackpot thing. Oh Lord, heal me. Lord, help me. Lord, answer me. Lord... And that's not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible wants examination from the individual calling on his name.

Aspect	Darkness (w/o Christ)	Light (In Christ)	Key Scriptures
Nature	Fallen, Corrupt, hostile to God	New creation, spiritually alive	Eph. 2:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:17
Heart/Thoughts	Deceitful, darkened, enslaved to sin	Renewed, desired God's will	Jer. 17:9; Romans 12:2
Deeds / Works	Wicked, polluted, self-serving	Pleasing, holy, fruit-bearing	Isa. 64:6; Eph. 5:10
Identity	Child of wrath, lost in darkness	Child of light, born against, saint, child of God	1 Thess. 5:5; John 1:12; 1 Cor. 1:2
Spiritual Condition	Dead in sin, blind to God's truth	Alive in Christ, illuminated by the Spirit	Eph. 2:1-5; John 8:12
Relationship with God	Enemies, rebellious	Adopted, reconciled, intimate with God	Romans 5:10; Gal. 3:26
Out Come	Condemnation, slavery to sin	Salvation, sanctification, eternal life.	Romans 6:23; 1 Pet. 1:3

And two things are going to be true so I've got this chart for you. If somebody wants to take a picture, I'll get out of the way since I'm so tall so I won't block the screen. This is your nature, your hearts, your deeds, your identity, your spiritual condition, your relationship with God, and the outcome, without Christ and then with Christ and it's very important that we understand the dichotomy here between the two. We are not advocating good works. What we are saying is the proper way and the proper understanding.

4. The Contrast: Believers in Christ
 God regenerates believers, giving a new nature, a renewed heart, and the ability to produce good works. Believers are transformed from darkness to light.

New Identity Scriptures: Ephesians 5:8-9, 1 Thessalonians 5:5, John 12:36, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 Peter 1:3, John 1:12, Romans 8:14-17

And then I want to now say let's talk about the believers because I started with a thought here, I started with the Bible wants us to embrace our identity. Our position.

If I told you, tomorrow, you're going to have dinner at the White House, or tomorrow, you're going to have dinner with a king, how would you prepare today? Would it change your preparation? Would it change the clothes you decided to wear for tomorrow? Would it change your habits? Would you put on or do everything you could do to say, I have a sitting with a king? So let me not sound ignorant, let me brush up on world topics in case I'm asked. Let me brush up on these things from that country so that if they ask me, I can answer.

Well, here the scripture wants to see something. ***For you were in darkness once, but now you're in the light.*** Ephesians 5:8-9. ***You are sons of the light. Sons of the day*** 1 Thessalonians 5:5 and so on and so forth right. You see the verses they're up there for your edification and for God's glory, alright. So if that's the case and the Bible wants us to make a fundamental shift in the way we think. You know the scripture says ***whatever is good whatever is noble whatever is praiseworthy think of these things*** (Philippians 4:8) Well why? Because if I focus on my sinfulness all the time that's all I focus on. Some of us have been Christians let's say for five and ten years and still doing the exact same thing, behaving the exact same way. Think about that. If we say that the power of God, the Spirit of the Almighty, the Holy Spirit of God lives in you, how is it that there's no change.

It's not just, here's what Christianity is not! It's not, let me just call on the name of the Lord because I don't want to go to hell! That's not Christianity! That's, let me escape. Christianity, biblical Christianity, is being aware of your nature. And also being aware of your position. Because, look, two things have happened in our life, right? When Adam sinned, you weren't there. Amen? Nobody was there, unless there's somebody that's really old, right? Nobody was there. But, but the actions of Adam are felt throughout mankind. His nature that we inherited we feel it. How do we feel? It by the way we've lived. By our broken relationships, by our own ways, by our own thoughts, by the impact of a fallen world right. So that's a spiritual reality that happened outside of us but we see it. Well the Bible wants us to say just as that reality is real, and you see it in time and space, even though you weren't there, the position of being a saint is just as real, should be just as felt while in time and space.

It should be, listen, here's who I am, here's who I am in Christ, and this is how I move. Because the power is not from me it's from the God who enables me that dynamic has to be happening in time and space remember the early church they couldn't write you a thesis on the faith but they were led and given to the lions and fed time and time again and they would not recant. That's the dynamic here, right?

5. The Contrast: Believers in Christ

God regenerates believers, giving a new nature, a renewed heart, and the ability to produce good works. Believers are transformed from darkness to light.

Truths:

- Believers are **no longer enslaved to darkness** but walk in light and truth.
- **Hearts, thoughts, and deeds** are renewed and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- Salvation is not merely a change in status but a **transformation of the whole person**.

Applications:

- Walk intentionally as children of light in every area—your speech, habits, relationships and work ethic.
- Embrace your new identity—stop identifying with your failures or your past. Identify with your Savior.
- Model transformation—let your left preach what your lips confess. Encourage others by being a visible testimony of what Christ can do in a human heart.

Then you have... God regenerates a believer, right? Believers are no longer enslaved to the darkness, but walk in the light and truth. Hearts, thoughts, deeds are renewed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. And that's a very important thing. Empowered and moved by the Holy Spirit. This is not from within. It's not self-help. You cannot walk out of here thinking, well, I'm going to be a better Christian. I'm going to start with reading Psalms tomorrow and I'm going to go... It doesn't work that way. It is a complete, utter dependence on the Lord. It is a submittal of oneself. It is an acknowledgement of who you are. It is an acknowledgement of what you are. Where the Lord has brought you from. All these things have to be true, and all these things have to be acknowledged all the time. Left to ourselves, we are a mess. Amen?

So, application. Walk intentionally as children of light in every area, your speech, habits, relationships, work ethic. Embrace your new identity. Stop identifying with your failures and your past. A lot of times I talk to a lot of believers, okay? First of all, I talk a lot, so that's partly the problem. But the other part is I talk to a lot of believers. And you would not believe, pun not intended, how many are stuck in their past life? How many are selling the power of God short in their life? How many have not embraced their identity of being forgiven?

You were forgiven not on the account that you were cute, nice, appealing. You were forgiven on the account of the mercy God, as Danny wonderfully said it over here, at the heart of the law of God there's mercy and you received mercy and for you to not embrace that as a believer is dangerous, it's foolish, it's again reverting back to well maybe I need to or I have to or I must, No! Think about it this way and if I can give you an example, right?

Imagine you're a death row inmate, and at nine o'clock at night, you're scheduled for the electric chair. I don't know if they still do the electric chair, but I'm just, you know, I'm dating myself. So

let's just say you're scheduled for a state of execution. The warden and the state pardon you, and they say, we've absolved you. We found out you're not guilty. After 20 years or 40 years or 60 years, you're not guilty. We had the better tests today. We found out you were completely not there. It wasn't you. Would you stay in the jail cell? Would you? No, right?

If you've been forgiven, why are you staying your mindset on your previous life. Why? Because that showcases that my sins are greater than the one who forgave me. And it's not true. It's an unbiblical teaching. Listen, in heaven, and I hope to God that we're all there, okay? In heaven, there are going to be people that you never thought would be there because it's not your heaven it's his and the door to it is through the son it's not us and so ***if the son has set you free you are free indeed*** (John 8:36) amen so why act like a prisoner Why act like you're still there when you should be here?

Listen, there are things that I think about in my past that I cringe, but God is greater than my past because God has determined my future. So the Bible wants us to embrace that thought. And then it says, model transformation, let your life preach without your lips, what your lips confess. And that's the action to the statements that we make. We all, imagine if I told you, if you knew me in my work life or in my personal life, and you knew me to be a liar, okay? But I come tell you, you know what, Rich? Just say the truth all the time. Your reaction would be, this guy has no self-awareness. He lies all the time.

The paradox here is, if we choose to live by the power of God, our life has to be that living, walking, breathing testimony before we speak, before we have something to say. Listen, the standard is here because our calling is a powerful one. It's not works-based at all. At all. But it is about understanding and embracing what we're called to. We're called to live upright. It's not, Christianity's not a license to sin. Well, I've been forgiven. And? It's like no different than if I told you, I was so rich, I had all the money in the world. And you pull up and you're ordering a Diet Coke from McDonald's. How many of you like the Diet Coke at McDonald's anyway? There you go, good confession, two, three people. I know there are more, but it's okay, we won't judge you.

So let's say you pull up to McDonald's and you saw me in the drive-thru. And you say, "Hey Ninos, how are you?" "Good, good." "I thought you were a millionaire." "I am, but I like to work here Monday through Saturday." It doesn't make sense.

Conclusion

The contrast is dramatic: apart from God, man is dark, deceitful, and wicked. But in Christ, God gives new life—marking us holy, alive, and pleasing to Him.

- Salvation is a complete work of God, from beginning to end.

- Examine your life: are you walking in the new identify God has given?

Challenge:

Are you truly living as a child of light, or are you still letting the darkness of your old nature control you?

The last part of what I want to talk about is, I just want to make sure we're good on time. There are a couple of parallels that I want to draw us to, right? The first thing is there are two examples in scripture that always jump out at me, right? Where you have John 7:53-8:11 with the woman, right? Caught in adultery. And you have Luke 15:11-32 with the prodigal son. In both stories, here's what you have. The prodigal son, it says, when he looked up and he came to his senses and he went back home. And his father greeted him, right? Rejoicing, he says, **"My son was dead and now he's alive."** (Luke 15:24)

With a woman caught in adultery, Jesus says, **"Is there anyone left to condemn you?" "Neither do I. Now go and sin no more."** (John 8:11) Right? So no matter what you came in here with, let's say you came in here with heavy hearts, a week was disastrous. Do you believe that the power of God not only will move you, not only forgives you, not only empowers you, but is alive working in you even through your frailties? Do you believe that?

And then the last thing I want to talk to you guys about is we're not living Christianity as behavior-based. We are not talking here so that, again, you walk out of here saying, this is what I'm going to change. Because if you do that, you will fail. It's not about that in particular. Here's what it is about. Where is your heart? If you've been regenerated by God, if you're born again. What gives you joy? Are the things of the world still super bright and shiny? Or are the things of God brighter? That's the dynamic here. One has to be brighter than the other. You cannot serve two masters. (Matthew 6:24) And that's a sobering thought for all of us.

Does that mean you have to make better choices in music, in movies, in friendships, in workplaces, in conduct, in speech patterns? Absolutely it does. Absolutely it does. The scripture says **you were bought with a price. You do not belong to yourself.** (1 Corinthians 6:20) I don't belong to myself. And this is not one of those sermons where, you know, again, I tell you, it's not this way and like, yes, we got him. This is, all of us are infected. All of us need to sober up. All of us need to think, okay, what am I doing exactly?

And the other part that I want you to think about is this. I want to give you an example of something. During the year 1967, during the Six Day War, okay? Now, here's what I'm not preaching from the pulpit here. We're not preaching Christian Zionism. We're not doing that. We're talking about the land, okay? During the Six Day War, multiple things happen that are

unexplainable. When the Arab nations, if you don't know, the Arab nations wanted to attack Israel, the land. Okay? And so I looked at some things and I was fascinated, right? Look at how the Lord moves to protect things that he wants to protect.

So, the land is important for multiple reasons, right? That's where our Lord will return. And that's where our Lord was basically there from the beginning. That's the land, right? So I jotted down five, six things, right? On June 5th, the Egyptian radars went out unexplained. Over 400-aircrafts were damaged. Captured Egyptian soldiers, right, recounted seeing white images, men in white coming down from the hills, and they were troubled. A voice guided pilots. They thought it was their commander, but their commander was dead. Tanks died, wouldn't start. Multiple. And then the Egyptians and the Syrian armies, they said they felt surrounded by unseen forces, so much so that some of them left their areas. And retreated it wasn't like the army was amazing it was your God protecting the land.

Now why do I bring that up? I bring that up for this reason. If you or I set the Lord God as priority in our life and we seek him whatever it is that you're facing right now whatever struggle you're facing right now, it's not impossible for him. The scripture says ***a broken and contrite heart the Lord never refuses.*** (Psalm 51:17) We all have a lot of things that weigh us down. But the charge to you, more importantly, the scripture's charge to you and to me is, are you walking in a manner that reflects you've been forgiven? If so, it will be obvious to the people around you.

Even though, here's what I'm not saying, doesn't mean they're gonna accept what you are talking about. That's different. That's God's business. We are not here to change anyone's heart or mind. That's not our world. That's God's. But are we living in a manner that is praiseworthy? That's the charge.

I know we went through a lot of things, right? There's the challenge. Are you truly living as a child of God, or are you still letting the darkness of your old nature control you?

It gets really quiet because we have our idiosyncrasies, the things that we do. How many of them bring glory to God? And how many of them bring glory to self? And how many of them justify our ways? That's the challenge for all of us because who we are in private is who God sees. Who we are in public matters not. It really doesn't matter. We can fool each other all the time. But the person in private, it's not about living perfection, it's about acknowledgement.

Look, I'm a father of four, okay? Many of you are parents, many of you are teachers, many of you deal with children all the time, anybody who deals with children only wants one thing sincerity if they're sincere you can help them if they're in denial it's very hard it's very hard. As children of God we have to be sincere with our Heavenly Father. Lord I am really struggling in this area, and

I know I bring shame to your name. Lord God help me I don't want to do this anymore. And maybe that's the start of something in your life or in mine.

Now, normally we're done. I'm going to stay up here. If anybody wants to talk or anybody wants to pray or anybody wants to, I'll be right over there and you're more than welcome to come up and talk. All right, let's go to the Lord in prayer and we'll go on our way.

Father God, we thank you. We thank you for this time. We thank you for your goodness. We thank you for your kindness, Father God. All of us are objects of wrath who've received mercy. And for those of us, Father God, here that did not raise their hand, Father God, make it crystal clear to them that apart from you, no one sees the kingdom of God. So Father God, we submit to you our life, our ways, our hearts, our minds. And we ask that you move, guide, lead, teach, rebuke, and cause us to be stirred in our hearts. In Jesus' name, amen.



Digging Deeper – The True Identity of Mankind and the Believer

1. What stood out to you from the sermon?

2. The chart below was used in the sermon to look at who we were and who we are in Christ. As a group talk through each row and read the key Scriptures. What stands out to you as you read through them?

Darkness vs. Light: The Transformation in Christ

Aspect	Darkness (w/o Christ)	Light (In Christ)	Key Scriptures
Nature	Fallen, Corrupt, hostile to God	New creation, spiritually alive	Eph. 2:1–3; 2 Cor. 5:17
Heart/Thoughts	Deceitful, darkened, enslaved to sin	Renewed, desired God’s will	Jer. 17:9; Romans 12:2
Deeds / Works	Wicked, polluted, self-serving	Pleasing, holy, fruit-bearing	Isa. 64:6; Eph. 5:10
Identity	Child of wrath, lost in darkness	Child of light, born against, saint, child of God	1 Thess. 5:5; John 1:12; 1 Cor. 1:2
Spiritual Condition	Dead in sin, blind to God’s truth	Alive in Christ, illuminated by the Spirit	Eph. 2:1–5; John 8:12
Relationship with God	Enemies, rebellious	Adopted, reconciled, intimate with God	Romans 5:10; Gal. 3:26
Out Come	Condemnation, slavery to sin	Salvation, sanctification, eternal life.	Romans 6:23; 1 Pet. 1:3

Is it easier for you to remember who you are in Christ or easier to remember who you were before Christ? Why do you answer the way you do?

Why is it difficult to walk in the light? What prevents us from walking as if this transformation is true?

As you read through the aspects and the key Scriptures earlier, think about the key thing that stood out to you? Why did it stand out to you? What would it look like to walk in light of this truth this week?

Take some time to end in prayer by sharing prayer requests and praying for one another.