

Message: If the light that is in you is darkness

Hello and welcome to JesusFamilies.org's audio messages!

The title of this message is, "If the light that is in you is darkness".

Joshua has many sayings that are not well understood due to people being ignorant of his teachings, or by the religious leaders explaining them away.

Joshua was teaching about a very important concept – not caring more about money or material things than about other people. In the midst of that important teaching in Matt. 6, a saying of his was recorded. He said this:

"The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"

The saying has two aspects to it. There is the human eye aspect where he talks about how the human eye reflects the truth in the saying. The other aspect is the meat or truth he delivers in the teaching – that if the light that is in a person is darkness, how great is that darkness.

Perhaps an illustration will help. There was a man who grew up in one nation and he was going to travel and meet some people in another nation. The nation he was traveling to had a cultural tradition that said that a man should not shake a woman's hand upon greeting the woman, but rather should bow slightly instead. In the culture he was visiting, for a man to offer to shake a woman's hand was a great insult and sign of great disrespect. The man did not know this – he was ignorant of the tradition. So, he traveled to the other nation and so offended the people he was meeting with due to his offering – insisting- that the women he met shake his hand - that they left him alone and would not speak with him nor meet him any longer. The man's cultural tradition of shaking women's hands upon greeting was a guideline that was wrong and it caused him much trouble and rejection. He had the wrong information to guide his actions.

Here is another illustration. There was a girl who grew up in a nation and her parents had a religious practice which would make her unable to have children her whole life. The religious tradition said that every third daughter born to parents was to provide the sacrifice of not having any children, and that sacrifice was to be guaranteed by the parents physically maiming the girl so she could not have children. So, upon the girl's 7th birthday, the parents preformed the religious ritual which would make her unable to bear any children for the rest of her life as part of that family's sacrifice to God. The religious tradition that guided the family's behavior caused a great trauma to the 7 year old girl, which trauma had a life-long consequence of her never being able to bear children.

Can the listener see that the beliefs that guided the two people – the man who insisted on shaking woman's hands, and the parents who caused their daughter to never be able to bear children – were wrong beliefs? The beliefs which guided their decisions in certain circumstances were born out of the sad condition of ignorance, or lack of knowledge or understanding. They had beliefs which un-necessarily caused conflict, offense, physical harm or life-long shame or disappointment.

The light that was in them – their beliefs on how things out to be among humans – was wrong, it was ignorance, it was the lack of proper guidance or understanding, otherwise well stated as darkness.

A good metaphor for ignorance is darkness. Just as a person needs light to see where they are going, so a person needs the enlightenment of knowledge and understanding in order to navigate our lives in this world. Trying to walk through a forest to find something important with no light to guide your path is to be enveloped in the darkness, and you will have great un-necessary difficulty in trying to find the important thing you are looking for.

Physical light dispels physical darkness.

The one who calls himself “the truth” and “the light of the world”, dispels the metaphysical condition of ignorance - the lack of knowledge and understanding of how humans are to treat each other.

If the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness.

What aspects of the human experience claim to bring understanding of the most important issues facing both human kind as a whole, as well as my own personal challenges in navigating this life? Does not religion claim to bring understanding to the human experience? Does not religion claim to enlighten people with it’s beliefs and practices? Does not religion claim to make God known to people? Does not religion claim to bring knowledge and understanding of God – the light claimed by religion that people need?

How is religion doing? Please remember, dear listener, religion is the beliefs and practices people have about God, which beliefs they trust will enable them to be received by God once they physically die.

Do the religions of the world bring light and the freedom that comes with truth and love? If the listener has eyes to see, they will see that religion does not bring light, but rather the darkness of ignorance and conflict.

The world is filled with both religions and religious people. How is the world doing? Are the people of the earth caring for one another, free from fear and prejudice? Are the people of the earth living out lives of compassion, understanding and love? Are the people of the earth sharing their material things with others – are those with an abundance truly helping those with not enough? Can you see the darkness, dear listener? Or are you going to re-paint the reality to fit your beliefs? Are you going to believe the gross falsehood that humanity is doing well? What standard are you using to make such judgments?

Dear listener, there is one sure way to escape the darkness.

If the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness.
If your beliefs about the most important things of life like:

- What is my life’s purpose
- What brings fundamental meaning to my life
- Does God exist and if so, what is he like and what does he want
- How am I to live my life
- How am I to treat other people

If your guidance, answers to, understanding of - those things is wrong, then how great is the darkness caused by that ignorance. The greatest darkness is found in error addressing the greatest questions of human life and death. Please let me repeat that - The greatest darkness is found in error addressing the greatest questions of human life and death.

How can a person avoid the darkness of ignorance and error regarding the most important issues of human life? By having the truth regarding the most important issues of human life. Remember, truth is like light, even as falsehood is like darkness. Truth enlightens and illuminates one's understanding and path in life. What is right and what is wrong – what is true and what is false. We need guidance and answers to those questions – we need to be enlightened, or we need light. The lesser light of reason will lead a person to the greater Light of the one who calls himself the Light of the world.

So, why is there so much darkness in the world? Because those in darkness prefer the darkness to the light. The Light says it this way:

“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for the things they like to do are selfish and uncaring of others. For everyone who does what is wrong hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that the things he does will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that he does may be revealed as having been done through God.”

Joshua of Nazareth says that people prefer the darkness of life without him to listening to him in order to live a life pleasing to God. People with an unclear conscience due to their doing wrong things, do not want to change, or else they would...they would stop doing the wrong things. They would rather hide in the darkness than be exposed by the light and change.

What is the greatest darkness? The greatest darkness is to call something the light or of the light when it is in fact not, but rather goes against the light. And what might that be? It is religion, particularly religion in the name of “jesus Christ”, the label many give to the Light. Think about it.

If the light that is in us is darkness, how great is that darkness?

If that which guides us on the most important issues of life is what we call light but is actually false or darkness, then how will we escape such darkness? That great darkness will surely swallow many. Why? Because it is proclaimed as light, when in fact it is darkness. Such is religion, particularly bible based religion.

For example, the Light of the world says, “Love even those who consider themselves your enemy”. Light, truth, the King expressing the Way of the kingdom of God. Along comes bible religion to say, “no, we can kill those our government tells us to kill because Paul in Rom. 13 says...” The darkness masquerades as light.

The Light of the world says, “truly care for, or love one another, even as I have loved you”...shared life and helped each other in daily life with the things the world throws at us and with the things we struggle with. Light, truth, the King expressing the kingdom of God. Along comes bible religion, Christians and others to say, “no, love does not mean selfless behavior motivated by compassion which would certainly include caring for one another in truth...no, it means not hating others and not wanting to harm others, etc. How great is the darkness to substituted refraining from evil as somehow equaling living a life of selfless behavior – actually caring for others as part of my daily life. In like and analogous manner, how great is the darkness of saying “peace” means the absence of open conflict instead of the truth which is that peace is the internal state of a human heart desiring people to live in tranquil harmony.

If the religion you have nullifies the Light of the world, how great is the darkness of that Christian religion.

Can't you see that simple truth, dear listener?

Why not turn in your bible based religion and instead turn to the living person who can help you actually live a life pleasing to your Creator and Father?

If the light that is in you is merely intellect instead of your heart and soul, how great is the darkness of that pit. How great is the darkness of the deception that the things I believe about the 'christ' my religion pushes or I create for myself is what will bring me into greater light. Here is a common expression of the darkness. If you ask many Christian people what the most important thing is to them – and if you give away a God context in asking the question (for if there was no God context to tip them off, most would not give a God answer), they might say, "my relationship with Christ". But then you ask them about their 'christ', how he approves of killing one's enemies and how he approves of not loving other people or redefining love so as to avoid doing what the real Light wants; or how he approves of my ignoring him with most of my words to others, etc...what you will find is the great darkness.

If the light that is in me is 'Christ' religion...if that which provides light and understanding for me is myself creating a Christ to fit my life, or other people mis-representing the true light, which mis-representations I eagerly consume so as to avoid the truth light...then how great is that darkness!

All religion is darkness, dear listener, including the atheists and agnostics religion. All religion has some good elements to them, but they fail to change people to become people of Light, because only the Light himself has the power to change people to be more of what we are supposed to be. No religion or religious beliefs can do that...beliefs don't change people, rather a real Person and his Father's Spirit can change people.

The Light says a person must be born from above in order to see and enter the kingdom of Light. He says we need help in order to bring our own spirit's alive so that we can understand and be empowered to live the way human's were intended to.

What is your light, dear listener? What light is in you that guides your most important thoughts and behavior? Is it yourself? Are you willing to admit that? Is it some other person or some set of beliefs you hold? Is it your religion, including Christian religion? I exhort you to change to the true and everlasting Light...he is a person, not a religion. He is not associated with any of the organized religious systems that claim him as their head...not roman Catholicism or Protestantism or bibleism or any other religious church or system. Rather, he is the true Light of the world, and the only way for any of us to avoid the darkness is to become his follower, truly. Not listening to others to tell me about him, but rather my own diligent efforts to come to know the one who calls himself the light of the world by his own words and teachings.

If the light that is in us is darkness, how great is that darkness.

Please make the light that is in you the One who says this of himself:

"I am the Light of the world"

"I am the Way Home, all the truth that matters, and Life everlasting".

“If you continue in my words, then you are my follower, and then you will know the truth, and that truth will set you free from the darkness.”

Peace to you dear listener.