

August 9, 2015 – Barabbas Rd. Church – Professor Thomas A. Rohm
“LIGHT” AND “LIFE” IN JOHN’S GOSPEL

PLEASE INDULGE ME... Please allow me to say a few things before we open our Bibles. Number 1, I want to say, What a special blessing it is for this old professor to preach here at this church, which was begun by two of my best students...

THE SECOND THING I WANT TO SAY: OUR OBSERVATIONS OF THE CHURCH... I’d like to say to you in this introductory message that Merry and I like it here. That’s a compliment to you. Even though we don’t yet know many of you personally, we like you. We look forward to this “new chapter” in our lives as members of Barabbas Rd....

I ALSO WOULD LIKE TO SAY AT THE START THAT SERMON NOTES AVAILABLE... I’m not going to be using the screen as I speak...

AND SOMETHING ELSE: THE BIBLE IS A BOOK OF CONTRASTS... From the first page to the last, the Bible is a book of contrasts. Consider: good and evil, right and wrong, light and darkness, life and death, saved and unsaved... And think of the contrasting personalities: Abel and Cain, Sarah and Hagar, Jesus and Satan; and then there are complimentary contrasts, such as Martha and Mary, Paul and Peter. The Bible is a book of contrasts. As I preach to you this morning from God’s Word, try to keep that fact in the back of your mind, OK?...

I HAVE ENTITLED THIS MESSAGE, “LIGHT AND LIFE IN JOHN’S GOSPEL”...

THE MAIN THOUGHT I’D LIKE TO LEAVE YOU WITH THIS MORNING IS, “Without Jesus, You Have Nothing”... That’s what I want to say about the title. That’s what I’d call in my classes on exegesis, the “complement.” That’s the “bottom line” of this message, the *sine qua non*... “*Sine qua non*” is another Latin term that means literally *without what none*: a complement is literally something that fills up, that completes. Think of the complement as something absolutely indispensable or essential to understanding. Let me expand a bit on that by approaching the complement from another direction...

“THIS SERMON IS ABOUT _____.” If you can’t fill in the blank in a word or a few words as a pastor, you probably don’t know what you’re talking about. And, of course, if you don’t know what you’re talking about, it is highly unlikely your audience will know. Well, I want you to know that I know what I’m talking about, and I want you to know what I’m talking about...

MY TITLE IS “LIGHT AND LIFE,” BUT I’M TALKING ABOUT CONNECTION... In order to have light and life, you must be connected to the Lord Jesus Christ... Think of **“CONNECTION” AS SALVATION**... And think of *connection* in two ways: **FROM HEAVEN** and **TO HEAVEN**. Connection from heaven is salvation; connection to heaven is us today, our Christian lives, our response to the salvation we have been given... To emphasize this critical connection, think of the **INTERNET**. Is there anything worse than not being connected? Without being connected to the internet, it is hard to play the game in our culture today. You could say you have nothing. Without this all-important connection to Jesus, you really have nothing. **WHETHER YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN OR NOT, I ASK YOU THIS MORNING TO CONSIDER YOUR CONNECTION TO GOD...** “Consider” in a biblical context does not mean just mental; it means also to act upon what you are thinking about...

ONE MORE IMPORTANT THING ABOUT CONNECTION I NEED TO MAKE CLEAR... If you are connected from heaven to Jesus, you are connected forever. From the moment you place your faith in Christ, you are saved eternally. But it is possible to break this connection from our end. We can't lose our salvation, but we can through a variety of ways break our fellowship with God (cf. 1 John 1:6-7). When we "grieve" the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30), for example, we don't lose our salvation, but we temporarily, from our earthly, human perspective break out fellowship with God...

LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING... Turn in your Bibles to the first page...

WE'LL SPEAK ABOUT "LIGHT" FIRST, AND THEN WE'LL SPEAK ABOUT "LIFE"... If you get the sermon notes you will see that I have quotation marks around the words light and life. That's to emphasize the fact I'm not talking primarily about common solar or electrical light, neither am I talking about physical life – although I am definitely talking about them indirectly. I am, of course, talking about spiritual light and spiritual life. The spiritual and the physical are distinguishable but intimately connected. (Notice the intentional pun: "**connection.**" ☺)...

^{ESV} **Genesis 1:1-4** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³ And God said, "Let there be **light**," and there was **light**. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the **light** from the darkness.

NOTICE THE CONTRAST... Everything was dark until there was light... **IF YOU ARE HERE THIS MORNING AND YOU'RE NOT A BELIEVER, I MUST TELL YOU, YOU ARE IN THE DARK...** No matter how smart or experienced in worldly terms you may consider yourself to be, you are in the dark. **THINK ABOUT HOW IT IS WHEN YOU'RE IN THE DARK...**

THE FUNDAMENTAL BIBLICAL CONCEPTS OF LIGHT AND LIFE ARE most pronounced in the Gospel of John... The title of this message again: "Light and Life in John's Gospel"...

THROUGHOUT THE PROLOGUE AND THE ENTIRE GOSPEL, John consistently – if not always – refers directly or indirectly to O.T. passages and images. Two of the most prominent images taken from the O.T. are "light" and "life." The O.T. concepts of "light" and "life" are intimately related to one another in John's Gospel, and by extension the entire Bible. This brief study underscores this fact, which is crucial to an accurate exegetical perspective of John.

THE TWO FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF LIFE AND LIGHT ARE perhaps most pronounced in John's introduction, his "Prologue," vv. 1-18.. Listen again to vv. 4-9 of chapter one...

^{ESV} **John 1:4-9** In him was **life**, and the **life** was the **light** of men. ⁵ The **light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the **light**, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the **light**, but came to bear witness about the **light**. ⁹ The true **light**, which gives **light** to everyone, was coming into the world.

“LIGHT” AND “LIFE” ARE WITHOUT QUESTION KEY WORDS IN JOHN’S GOSPEL...

Listen to these facts: In Matthew, the word “light” is found 24 times, Luke 15 times, Mark only twice, but 24 times in John. “Life” is found 16 times in Matthew, 15 in Luke, 8 in Mark, **47 in John...**

“BOTH (LIFE AND LIGHT) ATTEST TO THE INCOMPARABLE BLESSING RESULTING from Jesus’ coming into the world 2,000 years ago: new, eternal life made available through His substitutionary death to ‘everyone who believes,’ issuing in believers crossing over from death into life and from darkness into light.” – Kostenberger

“BEING ‘LIFE’ PUTS JESUS ON PAR WITH GOD, who alone is the Life-giver. And being the ‘light’ has both messianic overtones and sets Jesus against the dark moral backdrop of a reprobate, rebellious world that has rejected God’s rule and His law and therefore will also reject His Messiah.” – Kostenberger

^{ESV} **John 11:25** Jesus said to her (Martha), "I am the resurrection and the **life**. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he **live**,... **Whoever believes in Jesus has life... How do you get light and life? By believing in Jesus... No other way...**

JOHN’S EMPHASIS ON LIGHT AND LIFE HAVE AN O.T. FOUNDATION... Almost everything in the N.T. – if not everything, if not directly then indirectly – has an O.T. **connection** (another intentional pun: **connection**)

700 YEARS BEFORE JESUS WAS BORN, THE PROPHET ISAIAH spoke of a coming Deliverer, the Messiah, who would bring about unprecedented change in the world

^{ESV} **Isaiah 9:2** The people who walked in darkness have seen a great **light**; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has **light** shone.

ISAIAH USED THE WORD “LIGHT” 32 TIMES! (Jeremiah 5 times, Ezekiel but twice)... It is a beautiful and, forgive me ☺, *illuminating* thing to study the close **connection** between the O.T. book of Isaiah and the N.T. book of John... And not just John...

THE GOSPEL WRITER MATTHEW, 700 YEARS AFTER ISAIAH, QUOTED this very verse as he spoke about Jesus...

^{ESV} **Matthew 4:15-16** "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles-- ¹⁶ the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great **light**, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a **light** has dawned."

“ONE OF THE MESSIAH’S DISTINCTIVE WORKS WAS TO BRING LIGHT into darkness, for He would be a light to both Jews and Gentiles.” – *Bible Knowledge Commentary*... Although I have not been able to verify this statement, I have read that the ancient rabbis used “Light” as a name for the Messiah. (cf. Morris, p. 389)...

INCIDENTALLY, THE ENGLISH WORD “LIGHT” (according to BibleWorks) IS FOUND 229 times in 200 verses in the Bible... That’s a lot. The English word “life” is found 550 times in 503 verses. Even grammatically, the Bible may accurately be described as a book of *light* and *life*...

ONE SCHOLAR WROTE, “LIGHT IS NOT A NATURAL HUMAN POSSESSION. It comes only from Christ. And it is not a separable entity that may be possessed in itself. It is not an objective revelation that people may receive and hug to themselves. Jesus *is* the light. To have the light is to have Jesus. There is no light apart from a right relationship to Him.” – Morris

“LIGHT” AND “LIFE”... CONSIDER THE OBVIOUS: If you do not have light, you are in darkness. If you do not have life, you are dead...

“LIGHT” AND “LIFE” ARE DIRECTLY TIED TO BELIEVING IN JESUS, being **connected** to Jesus (notice I worked the word in again 😊), and consequently are major features of John’s Gospel... Consider, for but one of many examples, **John’s Purpose Statement**...

^{ESV} **John 20:30-31** Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have **life** in his name.

AND LET ME REMIND US, FROM PAUL’S WRITINGS...

^{ESV} **Ephesians 2:1** And you were **dead** in the trespasses and sins

BACK TO JOHN AND ONE OF THE PINACLE VERSES IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE...

^{ESV} **John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the **life**. No one comes to the Father except through me.

ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION, WHEN “LIFE” IS MENTIONED IN THE N.T., it is eternal life, not physical life, that is meant, although, of course, the two are intertwined...

“‘ETERNAL LIFE’ IS THE SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION IN JESUS’ INTERCHANGE with Nicodemus in the third chapter of John.” – Kostenberger...

^{ESV} **John 3:14-18** And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal **life**. ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal **life**. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

AND THEN LISTEN TO THE VERY NEXT VERSES AND HOW JOHN IMMEDIATELY AND intimately connects this eternal “life” to “light”...

^{ESV} **John 3:19-21** And this is the judgment: the **light** has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the **light** because their works were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the **light** and does not come to the **light**, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹ But whoever does what is true comes to the **light**, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

THE INCOMPARABLE SIMPLICITY AND PROFUNDITY OF GOD'S WORD!... I never get over how incomparably exquisite Scripture is...

AND NOW JOHN'S CLIMACTIC WORDS IN CHAPTER 3...

^{ESV} **John 3:36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal **life**; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see **life**, but the wrath of God remains on him.

LIGHT AND LIFE ARE DIRECTLY TIED TO BELIEVING IN JESUS... When you are a Christian, you have both. When you are not a Christian, you have neither...

"WITHOUT JESUS, YOU HAVE NOTHING!"... You're dead in the dark: no light, no life...

"WHOEVER BELIEVES IN JESUS HAS ETERNAL LIFE" COULD ALSO BE READ, "He who believes in Jesus has eternal *light*"... "whoever does not obey the Son shall not see *light*"...

"ALL TOLD, 'LIFE' IS THE SUBJECT IN VIRTUALLY EVERY CHAPTER in the first half of John's Gospel. The references in the second half of the gospel thin out somewhat, but 'life' features significantly in Jesus' dramatic pronouncement in 14:6, as we have seen, and in chapter 17, Christ's high priestly prayer." – Kostenberger/TAR...

^{ESV} **John 17:1-3** When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ **And this is eternal life**, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

"KNOWING" IS THE SAME THING IN THE BIBLE AS BEING "CONNECTED TO"... The Bible is most certainly a book of knowledge, a book of facts, but it is also the primary way to get connected to God...

"'LIGHT' AND 'LIFE' IN JOHN'S GOSPEL"...

OUTSIDE OF JOHN, CONSIDER ALSO, THESE KEY VERSES IN THE N.T....

^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 4:6** For God, who said, "Let **light** shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the **light** of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

^{ESV} **1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous **light**.

AND FROM THE WRITER JOHN – THE SAME WRITER OF THE GOSPEL – IN 1 JOHN...

^{ESV} **1 John 1:4-7** And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. ⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is **light**, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ 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 cleanses us from all sin.

LIGHT IS UNIQUE... Consider for but one example of this uniqueness that light, in a sense, bears witness to itself, though every other object in the world requires light in order to bear witness to itself. Light always illuminates; is never illuminated...

I FIND MYSELF OVER-USING THE WORD “UNIQUE” LATELY... I think you’ll agree it is easy to do when you are a Christian who talks constantly about Christianity, as I do. **UNIQUE MEANS:** 1. existing as the only one or as the sole example; single; solitary in type or characteristics. 2. having no like or equal; unparalleled; incomparable...

IF ANYONE OR ANYTHING WAS EVER UNIQUE, IT IS JESUS – AMEN?...

“HE STANDS IN THE SHADOW OF HIMSELF”...

SCIENTIFICALLY, LIGHT, OR WHAT WE WOULD CALL VISIBLE LIGHT, IS electromagnetic radiation of a wavelength that is visible to the human eye (about 400–700 nm). In a scientific context, the word *light* is sometimes used to refer to the entire electromagnetic spectrum. Light is composed of an elementary particle called a photon. Three primary properties of light are: (1) Intensity, or brightness; (2) Frequency or wavelength and; (3) Polarization or direction of the wave oscillation. The study of light, known as optics, is an important research area in modern physics...

THE SPEED OF LIGHT (186,282 miles per second) is, according to Einstein, the maximum speed in the universe... That seems to perfectly fit God, doesn't it? Consider that the physical property most closely identified with God is light, and that light is the most fascinating and most powerful “thing” in the world...

SOMETHING ELSE ABOUT LIGHT... Light can exhibit properties of both waves and particles. This property is referred to as “wave-particle duality.” This is an astounding fact. How can light be both a wave and a particle? How can it be material and non-material at the same time? This violates the law of non-contradiction. Yet that is what light is; it is both a wavelength and a particle. I wonder if you have ever heard of the word...

“ANTINOMY”... 1 : a contradiction between two apparently equally valid principles or between inferences correctly drawn from such principles 2 : a fundamental and apparently unresolvable conflict or contradiction

“HYPOSTATIC UNION”... The connection of Jesus and light grows even stronger when you consider the hypostatic union. The hypostatic union may be briefly described as the union of two natures – human and divine – in the person of Jesus Christ. Essentially it is a theological term used to attempt to describe the indescribable... *Antinomy* could be described similarly. *Antinomy* could be used to describe Jesus Christ. In the gospel of John, we see Christ as both human and divine...

AND WE SEE CHRIST AS BOTH LIGHT AND LIFE VIVIDLY IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN...

LIGHT IS ENERGY, luminous energy or radiant energy... And in great part, **LIFE IS ENERGY**. As a matter of fact, you can accurately, scientifically define life itself as energy...

THE WORD “LIGHT” IN GREEK IS φως (*phos*)... You might be interested to know, we get our English words *photo*, *photograph*, and *photon* from this Greek word...

OBVIOUSLY – BUT IT IS NEVER WISE TO OVERLOOK THE OBVIOUS – light removes darkness... Light makes things visible. Light reveals danger. Consider when you turn the light on in a dark room or a dark stairwell how helpful and comforting light is. Consider how a street light can aid your travel.... Consider how the Bible lights your path in this world...

^{ESV} **Psalm 119:105** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a **light** to my path.

WITH ALL THIS SAID, LISTEN TO JESUS’ OWN WORDS IN JOHN 8:12...

^{ESV} **John 8:12** Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the **light** of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the **light** of **life**."

CAN ANYONE HONESTLY SAY THAT ANY OTHER BEING in the history of the world could have legitimately uttered these words but Jesus?...

JESUS SAID IT AGAIN IN 9:5...

^{ESV} **John 9:5** As long as I am in the world, I am the **light** of the world."

AND AGAIN IN 12:46...

^{ESV} **John 12:46** I have come into the world as **light**, so that (**PURPOSE**) whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

THE WORLD TODAY, AS IT WAS IN ANCIENT TIMES, IS IN DARKNESS without the Light; Jesus Christ is the Light. He truly is the Light of the world...

“O SOUL, are you weary and troubled? No **light** in the darkness you see? There’s **light** for a look at the Savior, And **life** more abundant and free! Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim In the **light** of His glory and grace.”

^{ESV} **John 1:4** In him was **life**, and the **life** was the **light** of men.

“**LIGHT**’ AND ‘**LIFE**’ IN JOHN’S GOSPEL”...

LIKE LIGHT ILLUMINATING THE DARKNESS, OUR LIVES IN CHRIST are to reflect the mind and will of God to our pagan society...

^{ESV} **Ephesians 5:8** for at one time you were darkness, but now you are **light** in the Lord. Walk as children of **light**

AND DO YOU KNOW THAT – SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING – YOU ARE LIGHT? Christians are God's reflected light. We are in this way like the moon. The moon doesn't have its own light. The sun is the source of light that the moon reflects. Light is not a natural human possession; we have no light of our own. Our light comes only from Christ. God is the source of light and we are to reflect that light to others...

CAN'T LEAVE THIS VERSE OUT...

^{ESV} **Matthew 5:16** In the same way, let your **light** shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

BUT WE CAN ONLY DO THIS IF WE ARE CONNECTED TO CHRIST...

...“**PROLIGHT HANGERS**”... Thousands upon thousands of lights in the warehouse... **WITHOUT POWER, LIGHTS BY THEMSELVES ARE NOTHING BUT GLASS...** Lights, in order to fulfill their purpose, must be connected to a power source. Behind every light must be a source of power. Without power, there is no light. Without connection, the power never reaches the light bulb...

CONNECTION... THE BOTTOM LINE IS CONNECTION... This final verse – from the old KJV – does not mention either “light” or life” but it directly relates to both...

^{KJV} **John 15:5** I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for **without me ye can do nothing**.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY SOURCE OF POWER... He, and He only, is the “Light” and the “Life”... Jesus’ words here are powerful and unforgettable: “**without Me, you can do nothing**”...

IF YOU’RE NOT CONNECTED TO THE POWER, YOU CANNOT SHINE... You cannot fulfill the very purpose you were created for – to shine and to live for God’s glory...

*This little light of mine
I'm going to let it shine
Oh, this little light of mine
I'm going to let it shine...*

TO THE UNBELIEVER: GET CONNECTED... TO THE BELIEVER: STAY CONNECTED...

