The Saving Glory of God Beheld in the Person of Jesus Christ

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[0:00] And so then we want just to go back to the verse 6 of the chapter that we read. And think about it as we have it, the saving glory of God be held in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, I'm sure most of us who are followers of the Lord can go back to some time in your life when you didn't consciously reject the Lord Jesus and his claims, but you didn't really, it didn't make any difference to you.
You were keeping your distance. And by nature, of course, people don't want to think of living in a state of spiritual darkness.
We were reading there in the passage, those who are on Broadway are in darkness. The God of this world has blinded their minds.
They justify the road they're on. And we're told that there just earlier on.
[1:20] But even if our gospel, verse 3, is veiled, it's veiled to those who are perishing. In their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Now, there's a sense in which that is universally true. Sitting here tonight as believers, we've been brought out of that.
We didn't realize we were in that because we were, with most folk going down Broadway, careless, heedless. And what Paul is saying here is, what he's doing is, he's showing us that the saving knowledge we need is God's to give us.
And he himself, of course, was a classic example of that. Trained in the Old Testament scriptures.
Trained in the Old Testament scriptures.
Trained in our text. He says here, For God who said light shine out of darkness has shone in our hearts. It's about the power of God.
[3:06] The almighty power of God. Shining in our hearts. And effecting a change which only he can make happen.

And that is something we should, us who are believers, should value and reflect on pretty often.
The thing that makes us different is not that we're more schooled. Not that our nurturing in the Bible led us to salvation.
Not a bit. And there are those of us who can testify to that very thing. No amount of learning in biblical things can in and of themselves bring us to the foot of the cross.
It's about the creative power of the universe. And that's what he's saying here. He says, The 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 person of Jesus Christ.
[4:20] And that's what we want to look at first of all. The saving glory of God in Christ cannot be seen in us by nature.

As we are in this world untouched by God's power going forth in our lives. It's simply impossible.
It can't be done. We're not anything other than sinners from the womb switched off. Nurture can't do it.
I could ask for a show of hands on who was able among you to learn the shorter catechism off by heart at the age of. Or who could recite Isaiah 53 as Colin had there today.
Some of us were stuffed in our heads with it. But that made no difference. The nurture, the education in the Bible made no difference.
[5:27] And that's the Bible's message. We need God to be at work. Now at one level, this is for us who have been in the faith a long time.

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Almost elementary. But we can miss the point of it. We have to keep coming back to it. Especially in our witness to other people. Nobody likes to be told you can't do it yourself.
Ministers will know it very well. You try to get across to people who are just so self-righteous. And the only thing that helps you to get to them is you are like that too.
Just the same. And when we read that Satan is confirming people in that state.
Cosing them up into the state of darkness. Ensuring that they're stuck in it. They don't want the truth. I'll allow myself.
[6:33] Let me see the time here. I keep forgetting about the time. However, all right. So I remember the man who became my minister.

And I like to think the spiritual father. He came one night. And I had put in a good 16 to 18 hours of the day.
I can't remember which. And I was pretty fed up and tired. And who appeared? The bell went to the door. And in he comes.
And I said, what is he doing here? Because by that time my wife, Lena, had been converted, you see.
And the last person I went to see was him. And that in a sense is a flavor of what we are like. Once you're aggravated by somebody else close to you being converted.
[7:35] Or a neighbor or something like that. You're on edge. You're ready to put on the enemy's armor of darkness to keep yourself clear.

Of course, at one level it's nonsense. As Paul said, you can't fight against God and win. But I'm just saying here it reminds us that the light that we obtain unto salvation through faith in Jesus, we can't affect ourselves.
And what is coming across to us here is only God can remove that ignorance, that darkness, that prejudice, that sinner's prejudice against the claims of truth.
I remember for a period of time, I'm just using this because there may be others among us the same. I remember being obsessed with other religions, eastern religions.
I thought maybe they've got an answer that I can buy into. And somewhere along the line, I just saw that these things failed completely.
[9:01] There was no, God hadn't shown in my heart. But I realized they were taking me further and further away from what was needed.

And you remember Jesus himself said to the Jewish authorities, sort of taught people in the school, the rabbinical school, if the light that is in you, notice the word, if the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness?
You find it there in the gospel record. John 1, 5 it is.
He shone in the darkness, but the darkness did not apprehend. And these people schooled in Jewish religion refused him.
And Jesus gives an explanation for that. In that wonderful passage in John 3, after God so loved the world, he says, men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil and they will not come to the light.
[10:24] That's Jesus. Lest their true self be exposed for what it is. And we need to be aware of that.

We need to be aware of it if we're not yet converted. We need to be aware of it when we're witnessing to other people. We are entirely dependent on the grace that brought us into the fold.
And we need to deal with people reminding ourselves that in darkness, till God shines upon them.
And this is important, you see.
People will naturally want to leave things the way they are. I'm going to share a wee thing now about my own father. He had been through the war and saw things that a human being ought never to have seen.
And he was pretty cut up. And it just festered away in him. And Mr. Stone was the name of the minister. He came and he was speaking to my dad.
[11:32] And the old boy was boiling away, ready to erupt. And yet, in the process of time and in the patience of the pastor, God shone in his heart and changed him.

And in a sense, that's a message for us who are already in the faith. Not to forget that we're only in the faith because he shone. It was his power that changed us, that brought us out of nature's night.

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I remember this morning when we were reading in Isaiah. What was the problem in Isaiah 53? Who has believed a report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord?
That's Jesus, the Son of God. The arm of the Lord being revealed. There was no beauty in him that we should desire him.
That's the thing. We only see beauty in him when God shines into our hearts. And no amount of learning will make it happen.
[12:47] Only God can make it happen. Some of you will know very well the preacher.

He was Mary McShane, Robert Mary McShane. And he was among a school of very, very educated people who were educated in Christianity as well.
But I'm quoting from the famous hymn, Jehovah Sidkenu, the Lord of Righteousness. When friends spoke with rapture of Christ on the tree, Jehovah Sidkenu, the Lord of Righteousness, meant nothing to me.
That's what he had to say. Now, he was schooled in the Bible, stabbed with it, because he had grown up that way. And he tells us in that song, Jehovah Sidkenu, when free grace awoke me as light, there's the word, light from on high, and legal fears shook me, I trembled to die.
Suddenly there was a transformation. God shone into his heart. That is, he saw the real significance of the cross.
[14:13] He saw that Jesus finished that work, and what it was about, and why his friends were extolling Jesus so much.

And all that he fancied himself to be, he discovered to be completely wrong. But we've got another testimony, haven't we, about someone who saw how wrong he was.
I thought I ought to do many things against Jesus Christ and his followers.
And that was the Apostle Paul, Saul of Tarsus. When he was Saul of Tarsus, the high-flying rabbi, I thought I should do many things.
I persecuted them even unto death, and to foreign cities, of course, Damascus is very often in the news, and Damascus was one of them.
[15:19] He thought he was a search for heaven. And then, when God shone upon him, suddenly, he called all that he had achieved and attained to uttered down.

My friends, let us glory in this, that a saving sight of Christ is not down to our nurture or Bible education.
It's down to God shining in our hearts. And that takes us, really, just into the second point. God lets us see Christ's glory.
Now, when he talks about seeing it, in verse 6, the one who said, let light shine out of darkness as shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge, that's the experiential, the experienced knowledge, of Christ.
The glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ. Now, those of you who have studied the word, the language behind this will know that the Greek word prosopon can sometimes mean the face, but it can also mean the person.
[16:50] And that's the emphasis here. It is the person. It's coming to know the person who is the glory of God. And it's interesting that although Paul says here, the God who said, light shine out of darkness, takes us back to Genesis 1, verses 1 and 2.

In the beginning, God said, I'm jumping forward here a wee bit for time's sake, God said, let there be light.
light. But we, if we didn't know it from the Psalms or later on in the Old Testament, we soon discover in the New Testament that the one who created all things was the eternal word.
All things, John tells us in his prologue, all things were made through him. The word who was with God and the word who himself passed to his nature was God.
He created the universe. All things were made through him and apart from him nothing has been made that was made.
[18:08] And this is the wonderful thing. It had pleased, it pleased the Father, you see, that in him all the fullness should dwell. Not in himself, not in the Father, but in the Son.

all things were made by him. And so, in a wonderful way, the Creator is the one who recreates sinners anew.
That's what we are. If we're Christ tonight, we're recreated, we have been created anew in Christ Jesus. And that, you see, is also packed full of practical usefulness in sharing the faith.

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Because it pulls the stool away from anybody who fancies they're getting up a bit higher. It shows them you have to start on your face and with nothing to commend yourself to God.
And so, in a wonderful way, the focus is on Jesus. That's why the Savior could say, I am the light of the world.
[19:27] Whosoever follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the life-giving light. And we need to make more of this in our own experience.

obedience. It's interesting that in the passage we read in chapter three there, the end of chapter three, now the Lord is the Spirit, verse 17, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
And there's such a close interconnection between the Son and the Spirit in the application of the redemption that Christ purchased.
There is some harmony here, beautiful harmony. It's the Spirit who gives us light. It's the Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, but the Spirit, nonetheless, the Holy Spirit.
He effects that change. He brings us out of darkness. darkness. He, to quote Paul in Ephesians, he puts us into the position that we are light in the Lord.
[20:43] We are children of the light. We are called to walk as children of the light. And I think this is so important in a very real way, in a practical way.

Now, it's true that the world will simply scoff at the message, but we're not to give up just because the scoff. There's one standing here who scoffed, I can tell you.
But it's amazing what grace can do, isn't it? And that's the wonderful thing. And we're not to let, perhaps, if we're shading the gospel, we get whammed down, we get put in our place and all that. It doesn't mean we give up. It means we're back on our knees and we're looking for opportunities to show these folks the wonder of the saving love of God in Christ.
We are shown God's wisdom and God's power and His surpassing glory in a sin. that's the point here.
[21:57] He says here, as shown in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge, experiential knowledge, the experience of it, of the glory of God in the face, in the person of Jesus Christ.

Remember in that wonderful chapter in John's gospel, chapter 14, and they're puzzled that Jesus was claiming to be who He actually was, and there was a clever disciple, we'll call him, not so clever, said, show us the Father and that will be sufficient.
Remember? have I been so long a time with you? And do you not see?
He who has seen the Father, he who has seen me, rather, has seen the Father. He is the very image of the Father, the very glory of the Father, the outshining.
The writer of the Hebrews talks about him as the effulgence, the outshining. he that has seen me, said Jesus, has seen the Father.
[23:27] God has been pleased to do it that way, and we should be very pleased to accept it the way God intended it to be.

And so we look at the Jesus who is the one who gives us light on the way.
We were thinking earlier on today in Isaiah 53 about him being wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, and the punishment that brought us peace was laid upon him, and by his wounds we are healed, and so on.
And it's wonderful that that same Jesus who spoke light into the universe speaks light into our own hearts.
And if we're in that position tonight, let's rejoice in it, but let's see as well that there's a responsibility upon us to share that with others.
[24:37] Sometimes, I don't need to say it as if you've never heard it before, but sometimes witnessing to family can be really difficult, because they're going to fend you off, sometimes, in not pleasant ways.

But we can't let that stop us, we've just got to find a way. The Bible tells us that love finds a way.
And if we love the Lord who first loved us, then we will pull out the stops in there and find a way to talk to those whom we love, whether it's children or a husband or a wife.
We pull out the stops to help them to see the wonder of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. In him, we not only come to know the saving power of God, but we come to grow in him.
You see, he says here, a shone in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in him, in his person. And that's not something that's, oh, well, he's done it, so that's it.

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It's ongoing. The ministers here present will be able to tell you that for all their studying in the word, we're eager to know him better.
[26:11] We're eager to know him more. We need to tell the Lord, we need to cut the chase on it and just tell him that we thought we had progressed very nicely and then we discovered there's so much more to know, to experience of him.

and may we find that in our hearts tonight and may we be ready to ask that the Spirit of God will enlighten us in the wonderful knowledge of Christ.
Do I recall it says, he will take, said Jesus, the things that are mine and show them to you. And it's without encouragement of this wonderful connection between Christ and the Spirit, he takes the things of Christ and he lifts them up to our attention.
Now, surely, Christian friend, there have been times you've read a portion and you've said, I never noticed that before. and you're wondering how you never noticed it before.
I've read this hundreds of times. And the Spirit of God brings it to our attention and he enriches us by it and we see more of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and that's the way it should be.
[27:47] This is what the apostle is getting at here. We, verse 18 of chapter 3, and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed.

It's a spiritual metamorphosis from one degree of glory to another. And that is something that will go on and on until traveling days are done.
And let us never stop asking for more of that experience of light in the Lord. And I hope this might be of some benefit to any who are still hesitating or maybe on Broadway on a road that is a dark road.
Christian friend, and then I'm finished. I forgot all about the time here. All right. So, here's a wee one to finish with.
Jesus bids us shine. First of all, for him. Well, he sees and knows it when our light grows dim.
[29:09] Sin and want and sorrow, there's plenty of it in the world, so let us shine as lights in the Lord, you in your small corner, and I in mine.

Amen. Amen.

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