

Are You Following The Light of Life?

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Date: 05 February 2023

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[0 : 0 0] our sermon text begins there and it goes until verse 30 of chapter 8 and I believe this is a good way to read John because he's taking a theme and he reads in a story illustration he sets up this amazing setting and then the revelation of who God is through Jesus Christ comes through with power so as you hear me read God's word and follow along in your bible remember listen to me inspired, inerrant, insolubles clear and sufficient word of God the Holy Spirit breathed out the word and the Holy Spirit in Christian received it as truth hear the word of the Lord after Christ had gathered around by the disciples and one of the children and the demon said wait we have to have a child and the last verse I knew from Galilee too they said to make a meeting

Christians see that no prophet and Rises came down in they said to the Lord and they went and reached to his own house but Jesus went to the Mount of Harlan early in the morning he came again to the temple all the people came to him and he sat down and taught him the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman who had been taught in the gospel and placed in the earth in the midst they said to him this woman has been taught in the act of the door through now in the wild Moses God commanded to stone such women so what did you say which they said to text him that they might have some charge to bring it against him Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground and as they continued to ask him he stood up and said to them let him he would whip out sin among you he was first to throw a stone at her and once more he bit down and wrote on the ground but when they heard it they went away one by one and Jesus supported them and Jesus did run for one of the witness and of the witness he supported them

Jesus stood up and said to her women why are where are they have no one to continue he said no no anyway and Jesus said neither do I can leave you so and from now on sin no more and then 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 so the Pharisees said to him you are bearing witness about yourself your testimony is not true and Jesus answered even if I do bear witness about myself my testimony is true for I know from where I came and where I am going but you do not know where I came from or where I am going you judge according to the flesh I judge no one yet even if I do judge my judgment is true for it is not I alone who judge but I and the Father who sent me to your law it is written that the testimony of two people is true

I am the one who bears witness about myself and the Father who sent me bears witness about me they said to him therefore where is your father he said answered you know neither me nor my father if you knew me you would know my father also these words he spoke and them tread me as he talked in the temple but no one arrested him because his hour had not yet come verse 21 so he said to them again I am going away and you will seek me and you will die in your faith where I am going you cannot come so the Jews said will he kill himself if he said where I am going you cannot come he said to them you are from below I am from above you are of this world I am not of this world I told you that you would die in your sins so unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins so they said to him who are you Jesus said to them that's what I have been telling me in the beginning

I have much to say about you and much to judge but he sent me it too and I declare to the world that I have heard him they did not understand but yet I'm speaking to them about the father so Jesus said to them when you have lifted up the same as man then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing of my own authority but speak just as the father taught me and he who said me is with me as he was big out of sight is with me he has not left me alone for I always do the things that are feeding me in time with me as he was then being saved many in time this is the word of the Lord let's sit down and do the news of the Lord would you pray with me oh Lord your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path give us grace to receive your truth by faith and strength to follow on the path that you set before us through your son

[5 : 33] Jesus Christ amen the beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ I have just one question for you from today's text are you following the light of life the Bible says that if you're a Christian you're a children through this present realm of death and darkness but we have that glorious promise throughout all of scripture for example Psalm 112 verse 4 life dawns in the darkness for God's people behold Jesus he is righteous and gracious and in the gospel of God he reveals God to us with seven things we know the number seven is the number of perfection of completeness Jesus is the full complete image of God the invisible God made visible to us in the person of Jesus and these seven

I am statements captured out we've seen just the first one so far I am the bread of life and in today's text we have number two and this is the focal point of this entire sermon text Jesus says I am I am the light of the world I believe that Jesus has just one point from this long sermon that we just said and this is what in verse 12 put your eyes on this one if you are following Christ you will not walk in but you will have the light of life so today's sermon is just one point and that's it so my question then is are you walking are you following the light of life Jesus said I believe that everything that he gave us up to this well was sending this really colorful stage for this great revelation and then the part after that after he made this great revelation he's showing you why this matters and why everyone needs to hear this pronouncement so that's what so it was so it's one message one point the whole way through but first we'll start with the sending and then the big revelation what Jesus declares he is and then finally why this matters for his audience and for you and for the end of the world alright what we saw at the very end of chapter 7 that one of the great feasts of Israel there were six feasts three in the spring three in the fall the last one in the fall is called the

Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Luke or the Feast of the Nation so the children come and they're setting up tents all over Jerusalem that feast things went in I told you a couple weeks ago that in the morning every day the seven days during the Feast of the Nation there was a water pouring ceremony what I didn't tell you is there's another ceremony that took place at night and it was called the Illumination of the Temple so if you first of all I just want you to try to try to imagine Jerusalem ancient Jerusalem in the dark and have you ever had that sensation when you get on an airplane and you get that window seat and it's a night flight and you're going up into the air and you just start to see like oh there's a time you kind of look out where the moon roads are and then you leave and then you're over Montana or something and it's really picked black so if any business you like to do there must be a little town right there so try to picture ancient Jerusalem from that vantage point of the sky and the darkness this is before electricity so to talk about light and really to talk about torches and fire so just keep that in mind so Jerusalem the temple is the center of the city and the temple is up on the hill

Calvary is a little hill right next to the temple so from the cross our Lord Jesus could actually look up at the temple it's very very close and behind Calvary is the hill of the soul so the dead body and the filth would be taken so picture at night time that study those hills in Jerusalem they would do this ceremony where they had these 75 foot tall basically candelabra these big oil lit lamps and every lamp had 20 gallons of oil so the priests would do the ceremony people would gather and they would light those and there were four massive towers of lamps on the corners of the temple the people every night would get to see that and historians have written how that illumination of the temple that ceremony for seven days it would light up the entire city so the rest of the year Jerusalem is dark but during the feast of the nation the whole city is lit up even at night well we read in verse 53 that each man went to his own home as this feast has come to a close we're going to go another year with the city being in the dark we'll find out that at least one woman and one man were not married to each other did not go to their own home instead they walked in the darkness of that night after the feast was over we're told that

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives Mount of Olives was really close to Jerusalem and very short walking distance and that's really near where Mary and Martha's home was as well they're good friends of his dear friends and so on so he could often retreat their rest and then from there he could go out and even more solitary than to the garden and have time alone to pray well look at verse 1 in chapter 8 Jesus came to the temple now where was he in the temple we know that in just a moment here in the same setting a woman will be dragged to him by the keepers of the law so he's in a part of the temple where women can be brought we have other clues from the text itself in verse 20 put your eyes down at verse 20 you see a goodness descending that where Jesus was teaching was called the treasury so the treasury were these three chests with like a horn shaped funnel and that's where people would bring their alms and their tithes and their money gifts so the court of the women was a busy place there's money changers there's people bringing money there's women and men it's a big loud men on the other side of that wall in this court of the women is a big hall like picture almost like a senatorial meeting room that's where the same

[12 : 02] Hebrew would be so Jesus is teaching in this court and within earshot is the same Hebrew the powerful elite of this church just the day before they had tried to come and arrest him the officials were hearing this teaching said no one speaks with such authority and if the demons ends up would we arrest him without giving him a trial that's the setting from the day before and this next morning the feast is over and the crowds gather around him and form a circle once again and what is it that Jesus is doing what does the Bible say he begins to teach you see that Jesus begins to teach these people once again who are starving spiritually he is feeding them these people were not being fed by the teachers of the law they shouldn't even be called that they were more like self-promoting parasites on a religious system he is not we can hear the Lord Jesus has compassion on this crowd they are begging him to come back and show us the plan of redemption in all of our history these people were blind to the promises they did have in their law like

Isaiah 42 it says behold my servant says God the father whom I uphold and whom my soul delight I have put my spirit upon him and he will bring forth justice to the nation and I will lead the blind in a way they do not know in paths they have not known I will guide them I will turn the darkness before them into light and the rough places I will make level ground Jesus is teaching them the plan of redemption throughout the history of their nation they're starving and teaching them I want to pause even here we need Christ to be our teacher just as much now as they did don't we our cities are lit up by electricity but we live in the dark realm and unless Christ speaks to us we live in that darkness and we will not be overcome by the darkness if we're with his people we just read

James read for us in Ephesians 5 do not be given to drunkenness but be filled by the spirit and what comes next is you do it with the church you sing songs together you admonish one another so even as Christ is teaching us together as a church he is serving that purpose in our life to be the light over us are you following the life of Christ in his life are you walking as a pilgrim through the death and destruction and darkness of this world blind like the Pharisees or are you walking by the light of Christ he teaches you his Holy Spirit illumines the scripture to you as you read it you say for yourself with your loved ones with your family Jesus says if you listen to me you will not walk in darkness but you will have the light of life well his teaching gets interrupted look at verse 3 the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman who had been taught in adultery placing her in the midst so you need to picture now in this court of women two circles and this is important so it sounds confusing what happened so the first circle is the outer circle away from

Jesus this is where the crowd has gathered and from there he teaches him now picture the Pharisees and scribes grabbing this woman bringing her now into the middle of that circle forming a second tighter circle closer to Jesus so in their midst of this crowd that surrounded people several questions come to mind that we don't have the answers to here one is why was it only the woman brought not the man God law is very clear you shall not commit adultery doesn't just say you you God's people will not do that now here's another connection is that Deuteronomy 22 says that if a betrothed girl she has found guilty she is to be stoned it's not saying it needs to be a quick murder like a capital punishment it's specifically calling for stoning and when you think of a betrothed girl who is large with child which is evidence that you were caught in the act of adultery who comes to mind

Mary is another of Jesus himself right of course Mary did not commit adultery but this scene is very powerful I think a great insight comes from a broader context from all of the gospels Mark chapter 10 we get another hint of what's going on with these corrupt lawyers some lawyers are very good but some obviously they were very corrupt they make a case of Jesus in Mark 10 they say Moses would allow a certificate of divorce and then we could just send the woman away when we're done with it Jesus looked them in the eye and said you are committed adultery you're the ones who deserve to deserve so picture the other thing that's set up here the outer circle represents the masses of the people the poor the peasants the ones who are spiritually striving they're the ones that are so desperate that they will follow Jesus all around just to get food just to have them heal their loved one who had this horrible disease or maybe a demon but on the inner circle

[17 : 38] I think they're weak and this is a massive power struggle within Jerusalem and all of this is so you see what trap they're setting up there it's a couple different things going on number one it's basically that are you with the filthy dirty people who don't know the law and stand condemned them or are you going to take the side with the woman that's who you're siding with but if you say no don't stone her let her go free then you're saying you don't care about the law of God they're trying to trap you either way they're going to try to arrest him ultimately their goal is not to even kill her it's kill him can they trap him look at verse 7 they continue to ask him so over and over they're pressuring him pushing in first time Jesus bows down and writes on the dirt verse 7 says again he stood up and said to them let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at him once more he bit down and wrote on the ground a couple observations about our

Lord's reply he wrote on the dirt he was silent silent there's two things I think are very interesting he's writing on the dirt well we told that in the Bible that the Lord formed the man from the dirt on the ground we know that every one of us when we die to dust we shall return we don't know what he wrote there's no form of speculation but he did it two times he breaks down break by contact with him and he simply left in silence to fill the temple and in that silence the law of God was written on every single image bearer of God working on the conscience Romans 1 2 and 3 the silence of God is a terrifying thing we celebrate how God speaks that's something to celebrate we're not left in the darkness listen to what the

Bible says about the silence of God Habakkuk 2 20 describes the Lord in his holy temple what is that called for let all the earth keep silence before him in Acts 8 32 here's the passage that the Ethiopian unit was reading from Philip is sent to St. David and helped him out of his hand like a sheep he was led to the slaughter like a lamb before his shears in silence so he opened his mouth and he began teaching he he knows his goal is to be that silent lamb before he achieves but now is not his time it doesn't end with Christ being slain of the lamb this is how his glorious kingdom talks about silence in the eternal state revelation 8 1 when the lamb opened the seventh field there was silence in heaven for about half an hour we will all hear the silence of the lamb of

God one day look at verse 9 when Jesus gave his answer they couldn't scrap him they went away one by one beginning with the order and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him well we do know that the Pharisees are going to talk with him again in verse 15 so they didn't go too far so again just picture that inner circle dispersing mainly back into the crowd and now Jesus now is going to everyone's eyes looking wrong him and the woman what will he say to her can Jesus be accused of hating the law of God is he really not one who's going to teach licentiousness look at her sin Jesus stood up and said to her woman where are they has no one to condemn you he said no one see the light shining again in the darkness the darkness pushing in the darkness cannot overcome his light the light of

Christ has shielded this sinner she cannot be condemned by fellow sinners but she also can't be justified by any sinner Jesus stands near her and says I am your shield I will stand by you I will be condemned in your sin if you're in Christ that's the same promise as you that's what we see in this beautiful hymn there was a woman bearing shame and scoffing guilty and hopeless where that woman caught in the eyes of sin but now because of Christ we can see bearing shame and scoffing rude in my place condemned he stood sealed my pardon with his blood hallelujah what a savior guilty helpless lost were we blameless lamb of God was he sacrificed to set us free hallelujah what a savior so

[23 : 20] Jesus says to her neither do I condemn you from now on go and sin no more what is the motivation for obeying your savior what is your motivation for walking in the light of life it's gratitude it's gratitude you are not condemned go and sin no more out of gratitude in Christ there is no license for sin in Christ there is perfect love you are under the rule of Christ which is love you obey as a child whose father loves you and son and his son has adopted you because of Christ standing in your place love to are are you walking in the light of life as many days as God gives you on this earth you are called to be a pilgrim in the present realm of death and darkness

Have you seen death and darkness this week? I have. Hold on to the promise that the light of the kingdom of heaven has dawned in Christ.

He is the light for his people. He is gracious, merciful, and righteous. Behold Jesus. He commands you, go and sin no more.

Jesus says, if you obey me, you will not walk in darkness, but you will have the light of life. So that's the sentence.

Now come those words from the lips of my Savior himself. Everyone in the crowd, maybe some of you today are standing there, I haven't figured out who Jesus really is.

[25 : 15] And that's okay, you're hearing his gospel, his own words from scripture. Who is Jesus? You need to answer this question. In verse 12, Jesus says, I am the light of the world.

To those in his audience, this would have brought to mind several images. Why did they have this illumination ceremony? Why did they raise up these porches way up high in the sky like this?

They were reminding the people that God is their leader. He will lead them through the darkness of the wilderness like a pillar of fire. They had to dwell in booths and tents and pack it all up every day and sojourn and travel and be pilgrims.

But they were not alone. God's very presence was with them. No one brought along oil. This was not a man-made magic show. This was the glory cloud, the glory fire of God himself with his people.

And when the cloud of fire moved, the pillars would move at night, they would march. They would follow him through the wilderness. That's what's on everyone's mind right now.

[26 : 25] And the promise of the Messiah will come. And he will dwell with you, the glory fire of God with his people. Jesus said, I am the light of the world.

I am the glory presence of God. I am the pillar of fire. I am that flaming cloud that leads you. I am the light of God to all nations, not just Jerusalem, not just Israel, to the ends of the earth.

I am the one who fulfills Isaiah 42. It's through the justice of my kingdom that all the coastlands will have the law of God.

They've been waiting for the one Redeemer, just as you have. It's for all nations that I have come. He says, I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, and in paths that they have not known, I will guide them.

Whoever follows me, Jesus says, will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. You will have the light of life, Jesus promises.

[27 : 32] He promises to turn the darkness into light before you. The rough places he will make level ground. Jesus promises to guide you, church, his people now, through this wilderness.

He is the same light that led the people of Israel as a picture, so that you can have faith now today, church. He is the Shekinah glory of God, always represented as light.

This is who Jesus Christ is. He's not like John the Baptist who was a torch pointing to the one who would come. He's not just a spotlight serving that purpose as an instrument.

Jesus is the essence of light itself. These man-made torches were putting out light into the darkness. Jesus is not the fire. He is the light, the essence of God himself.

See, God is spirit, and our physical eyes can't see God. But the glorious attributes of God, all that he is, they are radiated and refracted out through the person of Jesus Christ.

[28 : 38] He is light. He is the light of light. Who is Jesus to you?

If Jesus is not your light of light, then you are still under the bondage of sin and death and darkness. Jesus, Jude 1 says, we read that God has put the rebellious fallen angels, demons, in eternal chains, under gloomy darkness, until the judgment of the great day.

See, the demons, the powers of darkness, are in chains now. And they're still causing damage and destruction, but they're under the chains of God, and they will be judged one day, finally and fully.

And if you are not in the light, in the light of Christ, you are still under the destructive power of those dark forces. Ephesians 6.12 says, Ephesians 6.12 says it this way.

When true Christians wrestle against sin, Satan, and death, you are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, the authorities, against the cosmic powers.

[30 : 00] Listen to how God's going to do. Those powers rule over this present darkness. You are too weak outside of Christ to live.

You will be devoured. You will be devoured by sin in you and by sin in the world, and the wages of sin is death. But if you are in Christ, if you are following the light of life, you have the promise that he will show you how to live in such a dark world.

He will be your light for you, and you must follow him, Jesus says. And if you follow me, you will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

That's what Jesus is. He is the light of God given to the world. So what? First part. So what?

I break down the next verses, 21 through 30, into four responses. Four reasons why you cannot leave here without responding to Christ.

[31 : 10] Number one. Number one. What Jesus is preaching is that you must trust me. He says, my testimony is true.

I am my own witness. I am God self-revealing to you. Look at verses 14 and 15. I know where I came from. I know where I am going.

Verse 21, he says, you will seek me. Where I am going, you cannot come. Verse 22, the Jews said, will he kill himself? Will he commit suicide? Because we know that's illegal. No, it could be that.

Jesus said to them, you are from below. Verse 23, I am from above. You are of this world. I am not of this world. Do you trust what I am doing?

You must trust what I am revealing is true. 1 Timothy 3.16 Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of Godliness.

[32 : 12] He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

And we trust how God has revealed himself in Christ. Here's the second, so what?

Without Christ's light, you are blind, and your foolish, fleshly mind is darkened.

In verse 18, he says, I have a divine nature. The Father bears witness to me.

But you don't know the Father. So your minds are darkened. You can't believe me. You're outside of me. How can you see my glory? Colossians 1, this is this way, that Christ's ministry through his church is exactly that, to make the word of God fully known.

[33 : 18] The mystery hidden for ages and generations, but now revealed to the saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Jesus says, trust in me. And I open your eyes. See, the Father bears witness. You hear the gospel. My spirit gives you life, so you can behold me.

And when you behold me, you believe. But without my life, you are in darkness. Here's the third, so what? If you are still in darkness, you get a stern warning.

Without Christ's light, here's his warning. Look at verse 21. He says, you will die in your sins. In verse 24, Jesus says, unless you believe that I am God, you will die in your own sins.

See, the light of God, that fire, glory, light, it's meant to illumine and to draw you. But those who approach God without reverence, without a contrite spirit of repentance, that same fire, that same glory of God consumes.

[34 : 39] Deuteronomy 4.11, Moses told the people, your forefathers came and stood at the foot of the mountain. Listen to how this mountain of God is described. The mountain was burned with fire through the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud in gloom.

Leviticus 9.24, fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offerings and the pieces of fat on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

See, God's glory, God's shining glory, is refracted through Christ as justice. The justice of God is shown nowhere more clearly than in the person of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 33 says it this way, that the sinners in God's kingdom who were afraid, who trembled at God, and who were seized by their sins, they knew they were godless.

When they approached God, they knew that His justice would consume those who did not walk righteously and who did not speak uprightly. So God's people, when they behold His glory and His justice, they respond by saying, who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?

- [35 : 57] Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings? If you behold God's glory in Jesus, you will know you cannot stand before Him by your own merit.

2 Thessalonians 1, When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, as that image again, He will inflict vengeance on those who do not know God, on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

See the glory cloud of God, the consuming fire, that Jesus says, I am that firelight to the world. It's Jesus coming with the angels like a flaming army.

And those who are not in His kingdom will be devoured because God is most just. There is no middle ground. You bow the knee to Christ now by faith in a contrite heart, repenting, confessing your sin, your need for Him as your Savior, and you have life by His life.

You reject Christ. You remain under the bondage of darkness and death and redeemers. Jesus said in verse 21 and verse 24, you will die in your sins.

- [37 : 19] But the promise is just as glorious. If you know me as your Savior and your Lord, you will not die in your sins, but you will have the light of life.

This is the fourth so what for you? Believe that God is most gracious through Christ. See, through Christ, it's the glorious grace of God that shines forth.

He pictured the temple and the hills, the people ascending. He pictured Calvary with the cross. And on Good Friday, darkness.

In a spiritual sense, the cross becomes the pillar of fire. The cross becomes the torch ablaze so the world can look on at Christ. And you see the justice of God on the cross and you see the grace of God through Christ.

poured out, proclaimed, declared, lifted up on that mountain, that glory light shining out now of the grace of Jesus Christ. Look at verse 28.

- [38 : 28] Jesus said to them, when you have lifted up the Son of Man, see, a light is not meant to be tucked away and put under something. The light is meant to be put on display.

And the cross of Jesus is on display on Calvary for all the world to see. Then you will know that I am he, Jesus said, and that I do nothing by my own authority.

He's fulfilling what Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 53, 9. There was no deceit in his mouth. He only speaks as the Father taught him. Look at verse 29.

God, he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.

God being just and God being gracious was pleased to offer his Son, his only Son, on the cross. Isaiah 53 says, it was the will of the Lord to crush him.

- [39 : 27] Surely, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we have seemed him stricken, smitten, afflicted by God. Who has believed what he has heard from us?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and by his wounds, we are healed.

Are you following the light of life? Jesus says, believe in me, and you will not walk in darkness.

You will have the light of life. How do you know if you have the light of life? If you have the very essence of God with you?

[40 : 33] Well, Jesus promises that after he's lifted up, many who are hearing him teach will believe. And look how our passage is today. Look at verse 30. As he was teaching, many believed.

You can believe today as well. And you can have that assurance that you have the light of life. That assurance is a gift to you when the Holy Spirit of God himself made available to you, poured out through the cross of Jesus, the Holy Spirit in the people of God.

And as we gather as a church of saved sinners, that's exactly who we are, nothing more, nothing less. We rejoice because that Holy Spirit gives us the assurance that we have his light in us now.

He does not leave us alone. He is physically, bodily, resurrected in heaven, but in his majesty and in his spirit, he is very near to us and you will never leave his people alone.

Do you see the glory fire of God lifted up on the cross of Jesus Christ, put on display so you can believe? He took the just wrath of God in your place so that through that same cross you can come now freely and receive the life everlasting of the age to come.

[41 : 56] It's been inaugurated now. His kingdom has dawned in this dark age. Behold King Jesus, there is no other Savior. Be sure that he is your Lord.

Listen to him. Believe him. Obey him. Trust him. And keep following the light of life. Let's pray. O loving God, you are faithful to keep your covenant.

We confess that you, Lord Jesus, are the great I am. You are the light of the world. We trust that Jesus Christ was consumed on the cross as the Lamb of God so that your judgment might rightly pass over your people.

You were crushed for our sins. You were lifted up on the cross that we might believe. May the gospel of your life, death, and resurrection now be lifted up through your church, through our lives, as a torch for the world to see and have faith that Jesus Christ alone is our only hope in life and in death.

We trust you, Lord Jesus. Amen.