



*Light*  
*of*  
*the*  
*World*  
*christmas at new life*

*Welcome to the Christmas walk!*

*Our prayer is that your time here would be meaningful...full of laughter and memories with those you love. But even more so, we pray that your time here would be flooded with light...and not just from all the twinkling LEDs...but that you would encounter the Light of the world, the Hope in the darkness, the Prince of Peace. The One born in a manger who sees you and loves you and wants to shine his light into your dark places!*



## John 1:1-5

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.



*When John sets out to write the story of Jesus...he curiously doesn't start at the obvious place most biographies start. No. Why? Because Jesus' story doesn't start in a manger in Bethlehem. It begins a bit further back...*

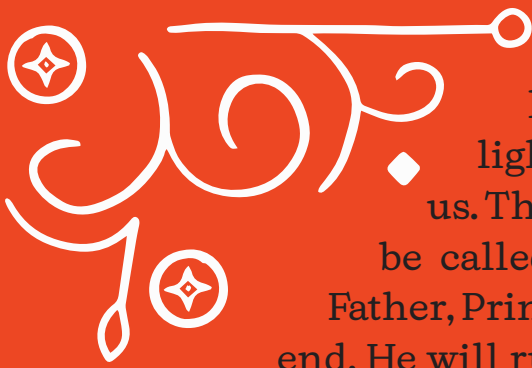
### **IN THE BEGINNING...**

*John believed (rightfully so) that we needed a bit of context in order to grasp the earth-shattering, world-altering Good News that descended into that lowly manger one silent night.*

*John took the story back to it's true origin...the moment of creation because the story he was about to tell was going to completely rewrite EVERYTHING! He was telling the story of re-creation.*

*The truth of the matter is, when John set out to account for the life of Jesus in his Gospel...he didn't set out to merely tell the story of one man's life. Because the story of Jesus is the story of EVERY human soul. It is the start of my story. Your story too.*

*When the wisemen so famously followed that star, they were naively unaware that the light they were seeking wasn't shining from a cosmic body...but from a God-become-human-body that was about to bring the true LIGHT into the world. A light that would shine in the darkness. A light that would bring life to everyone. A light so profoundly bright that no depth of darkness would ever be able to extinguish it!*



The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine. For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity.

Isaiah 9:2,6-7

The unfortunate reality of our world is I don't need to waste a single line of text convincing you of the presence of darkness. We can feel it. We can sense it. We can read about it in the news and see it in the downcast faces of our loved ones...or in our mirrors. It might not bring any real comfort knowing that these words of Isaiah were written hundreds of years before Jesus' earthly life began. Darkness, although manifested in novel and disturbing ways, is nothing new. The people of Isaiah's time knew darkness. The people in Jesus' day knew darkness. We today, know darkness all too well.

Do you feel like you're walking in darkness? Has a land of deep darkness become your home? Maybe you're standing here simply because you saw thousands of twinkling lights and your soul just needed a reprieve from the darkness that seems to be creeping in.

Well, my friend, I have some good news for you today. Just like God saw the people in Isaiah's day...God, yes THE God, SEES you too. He truly sees you and he loves you and he has the same words for you today. "The people who walk in darkness will see a great light." There is light and there is hope.

Oftentimes instead of perpetually running from the darkness around us, we simply need to slow down long enough to look for the light. Because Jesus IS the light. He IS your Wonderful Counselor, your Prince of Peace. Seek the light and you will find it.

Jesus:

Things feel really dark right now. I feel like I am walking in darkness. Please give me eyes to see your light. I'm desperate for it. Our world is desperate for your justice and your peace. Shine your everlasting light into the shadowy corners of my life.

Amen.



Light is sweet; how pleasant to see a new day dawning. *ecclesiastes 11:7*

Send out your light and your truth; let them guide me. Let them lead me to your holy mountain, to the place where you live. There I will go to the altar of God, to God—the source of all my joy. *psalm 43:3–4*

How precious is your unfailing love, O God! All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings. For you are the fountain of life, the light by which we see. *psalm 36:7,9*



*Why light? Why does God choose so often the imagery of light to showcase his character and nature? Well, if you've ever woken in the middle of the night and stumbled toward the bathroom, only to bang your shin into the bed frame...you know the importance of light. If you've ever experienced a power outage, yet found a candle, you know the importance of light. If you've ever found yourself in a dark and desolate parking garage alone and late at night, you understand the importance of light. And if you've ever experienced the joy of a sunrise after a long, hard night...you know the power of light.*


*Light helps us see. One of the greatest modern conveniences is the ability to have a flashlight as part of a phone, in your pocket at all times. Without light, we are lost to fumble and guess our way through.*

*Light expels darkness. Our experience shows us that light always wins. When you light a candle, the darkness subsides...yet darkness alone cannot snuff out light.*

*Light brings safety. When we turn on the light we can see the dangers that encroach.*

*Light brings new-ness. Like the sunrise, light promises a new beginning, a do-over, an assurance that the night doesn't get the final say.*





For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. For the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

*ephesians 5:8-12,14*

*Hello darkness, my old friend... Have these words from Simon & Garfunkel rang true for you? (No, that song was not written by Trolls) Have you become so well acquainted with the darkness that you welcome it like an old friend?*

*Please allow your heart to receive these words today. If you are someone who has decided to follow Jesus, you are a child of THE LIGHT. While darkness is an unavoidable reality until the day Jesus arrives again to establish his everlasting kingdom (oh how we long for that day!), you are no longer defined by the darkness. That is NOT who you are anymore.*

*This is the beauty of the Christmas story.*

*The light has come into the world and into your life to redefine who you are. This light that now burns within you produces goodness and truth. That is who you are.*

*So LIVE as a person of the light. It's time to shake off some of that residual darkness. Awake, O sleeper. Rise up! Christ wants to give you his light. It's yours for the taking!*

*Jesus:*

**I am sorry for the times I became too comfortable with the darkness. Forgive me for perpetuating darkness instead of exposing it and embracing your light. Help me to live as your child of the light. Remind me of who I am.**

*Amen.*

## John 8:12

**Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”**



*What a promise!*

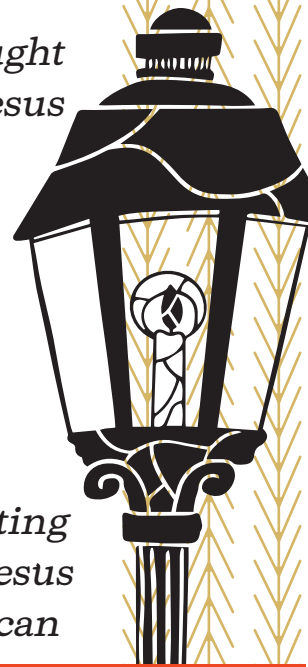
*When John started his gospel, he claimed that Jesus’ life brought light to everyone and that light brought LIFE. Here we have, Jesus himself, in his own words, saying the same thing.*

*This is quite the claim (and you better believe it raised a few eyebrows). If you follow Jesus, you no longer have to walk in darkness. You have the LIGHT that leads to LIFE.*

*LIFE.*

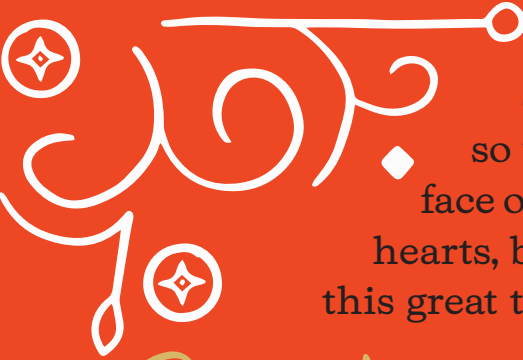
*This is what Jesus wants for you. And not just any life. When Jesus says his light leads to life, he doesn’t simply mean a beating heart and air in your lungs. No, mere survival is not the life Jesus intends to give. In fact, a little later Jesus says, “I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.” Other translations say a “rich and satisfying life”.*

*This is the whole point of Christmas! The reason Jesus, who was there at creation, full of divinity, elected to take on flesh and be born to a human mother. Jesus came so that YOU can live FULLY ALIVE in him! So that you no longer have to walk in darkness or sleepwalk through life. He longs to see you thriving, living into the fullness of who he created you to be. Will you reach out and take hold of this life?*



*Jesus:*  
*What you are promising is what I want! I want life! I want a rich and satisfying life...more and better than I’ve even dreamed of. Out of your abundant grace, grant me this life. Draw me into your loving presence so I can get a glimpse of your light.*

*Amen.*



“For God, who said, “Let there be light in the darkness,” has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.”

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

So we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

HARK! The herald angels sing. GLORY to the newborn king!

GLORY to God! GLORY in the highest! O Come let us adore him.

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light. Radiant beams from Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace. Jesus Lord at thy birth.

Christmas is about God's glory unleashed on the earth...yet somehow contained within the small body of a baby. Oh the wonder of it all!

Glory. This is a “churchy” word that we throw around sometimes without really considering the implications. Literally, “glory” means “weight”...the heaviness of something, the power of it's gravity. God's glory is God's God-ness... and up until the point of Jesus' birth, witnessing God's glory came with a serious health warning. Even more so than looking directly at the sun, looking at the glory of God can damage more than just your eyes.

And yet.

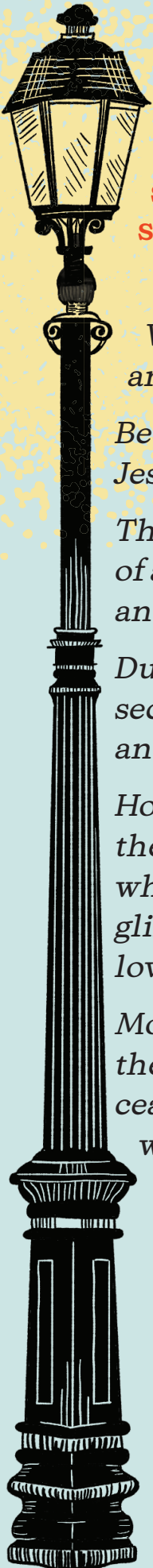
WE now have this light shining in OUR hearts. WE are fragile clay jars containing a great treasure. You are a carrier of God's heavy, radiant, substantial, unwieldy light...and without the power of Jesus in us, it would be too much to bear. What an honor to carry such a treasure.

Jesus:

You are glorious and mighty and powerful and too much light to adequately contain. I may never understand why you choose to allow your light to dwell within me, but I will carry it with reverence and awe.

Amen.





**“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.**

*matthew 5: 14–16*

*We started this journey with Jesus being called the “Light of the World” and we finish it by Jesus naming US the very same thing! WHAT?!*

*Because we now carry God’s eternal light within our fragile clay jars, Jesus has entrusted us with the task of world-illumination.*

*The light entered the world when Jesus carried God’s glory into the body of a human baby. However, the light didn’t leave after his resurrection and ascension to heaven. God isn’t finished yet!*

*During the advent season, we look with anticipation to the day of Jesus’ second arrival...when he will flood our whole world with his light, once and for all. When he will wipe away every tear and make all things new.*

*However, until that day, right now, in the in-between-times, WE are the carriers of the light. We are the signposts, illuminating the places where God’s power is at work. We get the amazing responsibility to show glimpses of heaven’s glory to a world in desperate need of God’s light and love.*

*Moreover, we are not called to this task alone. One candle can diminish the darkness...but fill a room with a thousand candles and the darkness ceases to exist. May we, in this divided and broken world, find oneness with each other, united by the common purpose of igniting our world with God’s love!*

*Jesus:*

**Here I am, use me. May I be an agent of your light and an ambassador of your love. Use me to bring hope to my neighbors and joy to my community. Help your people to carry your glory with honor and unity.**

*Amen.*