



Unbound

Sermon Growth Guide

March 5, 2023
Walk in the Light

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John 11:5-10 (ESV)

Key Verse: John 11:9 “Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.’”

Big Idea: We can find freedom and peace walking in the light of Christ.



Foundations

This week we continue our sermon series **Unbound**. We are spending Lent diving into one chapter, one scene with Jesus: John 11.

The Gospel of John is written by “the disciple whom Jesus loves,” the John we see in many of the narratives in this book, and at the end of the book John tells us why he writes. He writes this book “that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31). John focuses on Jesus’ true divinity and true humanity because John believes this Jesus can transform our lives.

One way John does this is by highlighting metaphors. And in our verses from this week, we see the metaphor of light. Spoiler alert, this metaphor might have something to do with the miracle that happens at the end of the chapter. But before we get to that miracle, we have Jesus hearing that Lazarus is sick, and He curiously decides to wait to go see him.

When we see Jesus wait, we see how this light of the world is never in a hurry. And something about this can lead us to life.

Understanding God’s Word

Together, read John 11:5–10 and Genesis 1:1–5. What do you notice about these themes of light and darkness?

Applying God’s Word

Tim talked about the different types of time. “Chronos” time, which is linear time, calendar time. There is also “Kairos” time, opportune time, the right time, a time that is rich in meaning. Chronos is quantitative. Kairos is qualitative.

Have a conversation about how you might weave in Kairos moments in our Chronos days.

Witnessing God’s Word

God delights to invite us to follow Him with all of ourselves, all our days. Jesus came “so that they may have life and have it in abundance” (John 10:10).

Where in your life is God inviting you to lean in toward His abundance? How might hurry hinder you from inviting others to join you in finding life in Jesus?

Light changes the landscape. What you see depends on the light. I got my stepdad those new LED lights for your garage this Christmas. Wow! He was so excited he invited friends over to see it. "We could do surgery in here now!" Maybe don't, though. Once in Virginia my kids heard an owl at night up in a pine tree behind our house. They went out with tiny flashlights trying to shine them all around, but they couldn't see a thing. I came out behind them with one of those police-officer grade Maglights, remember those? I put in on my shoulder and switched it on and woosh, this beam of light like a spotlight lit up the top of the tree. And there it was! The owl was permanently blinded. The light makes a difference. C. S. Lewis said, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it but because by it, I see everything else." Light changes the landscape.

It's very clear in Scripture, God prefers light to darkness. Do we? There are things we want to do in the dark. We had a good long talk about sin last week. It's like the old adage parents give their teens, "Nothing good happens past midnight." Things that happen in the dark eventually come to light. Jesus said, "For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light" (Luke 8:17). That can feel pretty jarring, can't it? We are looking to be **Unbound** by Jesus. Here's the question: How many versions of you are you trying to keep spinning right now? Work version, church version, family version, friends version, party version, day version, night version... Integrity is being a whole person, one whole person. It's tiring to be split up and fractured. It's painful. One person. Integrity. That's what Jesus is offering. "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). You don't need to keep part of your life in the dark.

Walk in the Light. There two things really in our passage today that Jesus

is offering to help us feel, help us know, that we are, in Christ, Unbound. One is about light and dark, the other is about time. Time. Let's deal with that first. When is the last time someone said to you: "Don't worry, there's plenty of time." There's plenty of time. Does anybody say that? Jesus did. "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was" (John 11:5-6). What is Jesus' attitude about time? Was He ever in a hurry? The whole story puts pressure on Jesus to get into a hurry. Lazarus is sick! Hurry up! No. There's plenty of time in Jesus. Jennifer Holz, our Pastor for Spiritual Health, was teaching our staff about time and pointed out the two main ideas in Greek for time. The first one is "chronos," where we get chronometer and chronology. This is time on the calendar. Linear time, ticking away, second by second. In mythology, Chronos was a Titan famous for eating his own children. Time as a taskmaster, a hungry mouth that eats and eats and is never satisfied. Chronos. But the Bible has a different kind of time. It's called "Kairos." Like the coffee shop. "Kairos" is a way of talking about the opportune time, the right time, the moment. In the Scriptures, it's picked up as the fullness of time, the rich opportunity of time, the resting, peaceful, hopeful, rich moment. Kairos. When time stops.

With Jesus, there is always enough time. He's never in a hurry and He's always on time. Being Unbound definitely means living more into this sort of easy-breathing time that Jesus offers. Don't miss the moment. One of the heartaches for me about our life together is how we really do rush through our Sunday mornings here, don't we? We walk 1500 to 2000 people through four services in two venues, plus Sunday Schools for all ages, and there is hardly a moment we don't all feel late. With the limits of space and time, we get in a rush. Don't feel bad. I'm late to three out of the four services

I attend! It takes a lot of grace around here, and a lot of being late. But don't miss the Kairos of a Sunday morning. Kairos is what God is doing with the time, in the time, in the moment. Kairos is also a way to talk about seasons when God is particularly at work by His Spirit. I believe we are entering a Kairos moment right now. Not just us, but the "C" Church. I think the Spirit is pouring out His presence in power and we are about to see a rising church again. I see evidence of it, and I hope your eyes are open for it with expectancy. That's Kairos. There's plenty of time. Jesus is the Lord of it. "Are there not twelve hours in a day?" In fact, in Him we have eternity. Live into what He is doing with the time.

But the other image is light and dark. Walk in the light. "Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?'" (John 11:7-8). There's danger involved here, as we will take up next week. "Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him'" (John 11:9-10). Jesus is more concerned with what is inside you than what it out there. These things are tied together. Are there not twelve hours in the day? Jesus is saying there's plenty of time. But the unbinding, the liberation, also has to do with light. It's hard to get around in the dark, isn't it? When you walk around at night, you stumble. It doesn't matter if you know that room like the back of your hand, you still get disoriented and bang into something, don't you? I do. How much of your life are you willing to spend in the dark? How much of your spiritual life are you willing to spend in the dark?

God equates sin and being separated from Him as being in darkness, trying to live in spiritual darkness. The Scripture

to turn to here is Isaiah 59. Read the whole thing when you get a chance. What is life like separated from God, in spiritual darkness? Is it just as good as the other? "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear" (Isaiah 59:1-2). Sin causes a separation. Then look at this, "The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace. Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom. We grope for the wall like the blind; we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at noon as in the twilight, among those in full vigor we are like dead men. We all growl like bears; we moan and moan like doves; we hope for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us" (Isaiah 59:8-11). It makes a difference to live in the light. We stumble in the dark, especially when we rush. No wonder there is so much stress and fear! We live in spiritual darkness with everyone around us yelling, "Run! Run! You are almost out of time!"

Jesus is confident in the time and in the light. He has time to accomplish His ministry, and He's not worried about that being cut short by the opponents in Judea. He has the light, He is the Light, and He will work while it is still day. In the dark of night, we stumble. In the light of day, we walk upright. I quoted this verse two weeks ago from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:22-23). Jesus is concerned with what is inside of you. The offer of Jesus is

to fill you with His light, to be the light that illumines your darkness. With Jesus filling you on the inside with light, it doesn't matter what's going on outside. John kept going on this theme in his first letter to the churches, "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. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 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" (1 John 1:5-7).

Walk in the light, as He is in the light. What does that mean? One, it means not trying to hide anything from Jesus. You can't keep stuff in the dark from Jesus who is the light. The only option you have, if you are trying to hide part of your life from Him, is to run full bore into the darkness. Don't do that. It is nonsense anyway. You can't hide something from Jesus. The darkness is as light to Him. Let the light of Christ shine on every part of your life. We talk about this as confession. There is nothing to hide from Him. He knows it all anyway. Two, it means pursuing integrity as much as you can in your life. One person. One man, one woman, at home, at work, at play, at church. One person resting her identity on Christ. Three, it means sharing your life with others. Satan, the accuser, it is said, loves to get us alone and in the dark. Sharing your struggles and worries with trusted friends sheds light on the subject. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "Sin wants to be alone with people. It takes them away from the community. The more lonely people become, the more destructive the power of sin over them. The more deeply they become entangled in it, the more unholy is their loneliness. Sin wants to remain unknown. It shuns the light. In the darkness of what is left unsaid, sin poisons the whole being of a person... Sin must be brought into the light." Light is good. Light is purifying and cleansing. Light is healthy.

Walk in the light. Ask Jesus what it means. Let Jesus define that in your life. Keep close to the Word. The Word of God is a light to our path. Ask Jesus how He wants you to step more into the light. It certainly means stepping closer to Him. C. S. Lewis, who again said, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it but because by it, I see everything else," also gave an illustration about standing in a dark garden shed. The sun was coming through a crack in the wall and making a beam of light. You can stand next to the beam of light and examine it, and that's one thing. But if you step over into it, turn your eyes up it, and look along the beam...well, here's Lewis: "From where I stood that beam of light, with the specks of dust floating in it, was the most striking thing in the place. Everything else was almost pitch-black. I was seeing the beam, not seeing things by it. Then I moved, so that the beam fell on my eyes. Instantly the whole previous picture vanished. I saw no toolshed, and (above all) no beam. Instead I saw, framed in the irregular cranny at the top of the door, green leaves moving on the branches of a tree outside and beyond that, 90 odd million miles away, the sun. Looking along the beam and looking at the beam are very different experiences." Step into Jesus by faith. Walk in the light.

This is Jesus, the Light of the World. Jesus stepped down into darkness so we could step into the light. Jesus gave His life for ours. He is the one whose eyes closed in darkness as He hung on the cross. He is the one who lay for three days dead in the tomb, dark and still. He went there so you could stand in the light. Walk in the light of Christ.