

LIGHT + LIFE

Jesus is the light of the world. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind" (John 1:4). Light is associated with knowledge. There is knowledge to share, insight to gain. When we are in the dark, we are blind; but when we are in the light, we see. Light is purifying truth. Life is a little different. When we think of life, we think of activity. Jesus brings a new way of life, a new way of living in this world. His ways are actually life-bringing instead of life-sucking. Following the mission of Jesus means being those who convey His light and His life to the world.

LIGHT AND LIFE • Luke 5:17–32 • Tim McConnell • March 3, 2019

What's our mission? What are we about? We believe we have been called to be **Light and Life for the City** in Jesus' name. A few weeks ago, we handed out flashlights on Vision Sunday. If you didn't get one, we have a few extras and you can pick one up. We lifted those flashlights at the end of the service and made a commitment. We want to be light-bearers. We want to be life-givers. We want to be for our City a reflection of the coming City of God. We want to carry light and convey life. If you are a believer, you are on mission. We want to be on mission, missionaries to Colorado Springs, joining Christ to seek and to save, to reach and redeem, to make a difference in our time for the Lord. We want to be **Light and Life for the City**. Have you been shining your light anywhere?

There's an old sermon illustration that has stuck with me. A boy on the coast finds a piece of mirror among the rocks. He picks it up, wonders what ship it came from now on the bottom of the sea, but then spends the rest of the day crawling around the smelly rocks and crags of the shore figuring out where he can get the sun to shine, if he can angle it just right to reflect sunlight into these dark spots and holes. He challenges himself to get light where he imagines it has never been before. See what's happening there? That's us. Where can you reflect the light of Christ? Somewhere it rarely goes? I bet so, because that's why Jesus has you in some of the situations He has you in. To get light in there. Where will the light of Christ reflect off you? Work. School. Friends. Family. It may just happen, as you faithfully orient yourself to Christ, His light reflects off you into dark it has never penetrated before.

We live in a time that says we are fine without Jesus. In fact, it's near criminal to say you need Jesus because Jesus is a Savior from sins and if you say someone needs Jesus you're implying they have sins that need forgiving. "We're fine without Jesus, thank you. To suggest a simple carpenter from Galilee is the solution to the sin of all humanity sounds nuts to me." So, what should we do? I don't believe people are fine without Jesus. Isaiah 59 talks about life separated from God. "We look for light, but all is darkness; for

brightness, but we walk in deep shadows. Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like people without eyes. At midday we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead" (Isaiah 59:9–10). What's your heart for the lost? "We found Jesus, so that's enough. Leave the rest behind. They're not interested anyway." This doesn't seem like the errand of Jesus, or the errand He has for us. "Jesus answered them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance'" (Luke 5:31–32).

Here are two great stories about being light and life for others, the man on the mat and Levi the tax collector. The man on the mat is not left behind by his friends. I want you to watch for a pattern here, because I think this gives us a picture of how to be **Light and Life for the City**. The progression goes like this: Trust, Risk, Faith, Life, Praise. **Trust**. The man on the mat had a problem, a life problem, and his friends cared about this problem. His friends also heard of Jesus and believed He might have some power to change the life problem their friend was facing. So, instead of just leaving him there, they decided to get him to Jesus. Here comes the trust. Will the man trust his friends to take him to Jesus? Will there be enough trust in the friendship to allow for any light of Christ to be conveyed? Listen now, we gave out flashlights for a reason. There is only so much we can do as a staff to make First Pres a great place to meet Christ. You are first contact. You are where the light penetrates darkness. You are the ones on the front lines. Is there enough trust in your friendships with non-believers to tell them something about Jesus? Well, in this case there is; there is trust enough. "Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus" (Luke 5:18).

Now the fun part. **Risk**. "When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus" (Luke 5:19). There is always going to be an awkward moment. I'm telling you. In any relationship where the light of Christ

is about to shine, where you are trying to help someone see Jesus for the first time the way you see Jesus, there is always going to be an awkward moment—you have to risk it. Can you imagine them selling this idea to their paralyzed friend? “Hey, uh. So it’s crowded. We didn’t expect that. But we’ve got a plan. Um. We’re gonna tie these ropes...Gary found some ropes, out by the trash...Uh, you know some good knots right? Like a figure eight, sheep shank...Yeah, so, then we’ll lower you down through the roof in front of the whole crowd...It’s gonna go great!” Risk. Vulnerability—imagine how the man felt suspended in mid-air. Exposure. A little dash of mischief. It’s worth it to get a friend to Jesus.

Trust. Risk. **Faith**. “When Jesus saw their faith, he said, ‘Friend, your sins are forgiven’” (Luke 5:20). You have to imagine the man on the mat is a little confused now. “My sins? That’s not really what I was coming in for. I don’t want to get into a big thing here in front of everybody, but you can see my problem. I’m hanging here all exposed, and now you want to talk about my sins?” Jesus has authority to forgive sins. For Jesus, again and again we see if the spiritual is right, you can handle the physical. The physical problems are this life problems; the spiritual problems are eternity problems. Get the spiritual right and you can handle the physical. Jesus has authority to forgive sins, restore a person to God, and grant eternal life. The religious authorities don’t think He does. Forgiveness is invisible; physical healing is visible. So to prove that He has the authority to do the invisible thing He does the visible thing, “Hey man, get up.” Now, Jesus first responds to the faith of the man’s friends. Where is the man’s faith demonstrated? Well, it’s not with words. It’s with deeds. “So he said to the paralyzed man, ‘I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.’ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God” (Luke 5:24–25). Where is this man’s profession of faith? Jesus said to get up, pick up his mat and go home. He stood up. He picked up his mat. He went home. Faith.

Faith is trusting Jesus with your life. Life started for that man. Life started all over again right there. Faith leads to **Life**, when he believed

Jesus. New life in Christ leads to **Praise**. The man praises God. The people praised God. Worship erupts. Trust. Risk. Faith. Life. Praise. Maybe you are in a relationship right now in one of those thresholds. The progression starts all over again with Levi. This is Matthew, who goes on to write the Gospel of Matthew. Same guy, two names. Jesus comes up to him and addresses him, a tax-collector, a despised social outcast, and he gets up, leaves everything and follows Jesus. Trust, Risk, Faith, Life, Praise—it all happens just like that! Then see how it repeats again. Here goes Levi. His response, immediately, is to throw a party. But he doesn’t throw a party just for his newfound Christian friends, he doesn’t hole up in the Christian bubble and leave his old friends behind. No. His whole intent is to throw a party and introduce his cherished, beloved friends to his cherished, beloved Savior Jesus Christ. Do you know how Jesus feels about that? He loves it. He shows up. Levi is ready to risk it with his trusted friends to maybe show them the light of Christ, that maybe, they too could have faith, life, and praise become part of their story.

Jesus goes. Jesus shows up at parties like that. When He gets grief for it, for mixing with sinners and tax collectors, Jesus takes the opportunity to define the mission once again. “But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, ‘Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?’ Jesus answered them, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance’” (Luke 5:30–32). Hey, who are you eating with? Who do you break bread with and share table with and invite into your home? Chuck and Katie Fowler are headed up to Denver to plant a new church starting this summer. One of the models for church planting they are considering is called dinner church. Meet over a meal. Build Trust. Move to Risk. Find Faith. Know Life. Enter a life of praise. Who are you eating with? Jesus didn’t come to reward the pious and congratulate the healthy; He came to heal the sick and make sinners whole. When He says “I have not come to call the righteous” we should almost read “the so-called righteous.” Jesus knows there are no righteous. We have all fallen short, but we cannot

fall out of the reach of His loving grace.

We are called to be **Light and Life for the City**. To carry light. To convey life. Maybe you don't feel like much of a shining light. Life gets hard, the disappointments get heavy, and the spark fades—the twinkle in your eye is more of a welling tear than a spark of joy. What do we do then? Well what Christ has called us to do is not a “you” command, it's a “we” command. When you can't carry another, maybe they can carry you. When your light is dimmed, maybe they can share God's light with you and with others. That's the church. Keep pointing your mirror where you can, and today, come to the table where we are filled again. Jesus said: “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:51). For your life, Christ has come. For your life, Christ has given His.

STUDY GUIDE

LIGHT AND LIFE • “Carry Light, Convey Life”

Luke 5:17–32

UP: Connect With God Through Spending Time in His Word

Read aloud the passage for the week: Luke 5:17-31. Allow a few moments to silently reflect on what you heard. Underline or note any words or phrases that seem meaningful.

1. Reread verses 18-19. The friends go to great lengths to get the paralyzed man before Jesus. What do you think about their methods? Can you imagine having the audacity to tear through a roof to get someone to Jesus?
2. Reread verse 20. This declaration was probably a bit of a let-down for the man and for his friends who had worked so hard to get him in front of Jesus. What do you think about Jesus's initial response here?
3. Reread verses 22-24. Jesus elevates forgiveness of sins over physical healing. What can we learn from these statements?
4. Read verses 30-32. We are called to love others as Jesus loved (John 15:12). What can this whole passage teach us about how to do that?

IN: Connect with Each Other

Who in your life currently has something that is getting in the way of the full life that Christ brings? Take time to pray for this person and these things.

OUT: Connect With the World Around Us (Join God in His Mission)

It is our mission as a church to carry the light of Christ. It is our responsibility to bear witness to the life found in Jesus Christ. Where will you carry light? Where can you convey life?