

Grace, mercy, and peace be yours in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. The title for today’s sermon is ‘White Light’ and is from the Gospel lesson, Matthew chapter 5. Let us pray...amen.

When I was young I used to love playing with flashlights. My favourite ones were the ones which had different colours of filter, or lenses. The flashlight would shine a white light through a couple of different colours; red, green, and if I was lucky one more. I would shine the light through the lenses to see what things looked like. I didn’t fully understand the science behind it, I just thought it was a fun game.

Later, while I was in high school, and even more so in a university physics class, I had the chance to use all kinds of lenses or filters to filter white light in order to achieve different effects. We also were able to use prisms to see what the full effect of filtering the white light. The prism would divide whatever light was shone at it into the base colours that were present in the light, kind of how you may get rainbows on a wall in your house if you have a prism hanging in your window, or is raindrops are on the window.

Anyways, one thing I realized was, once you a filter is placed in front of a white light source, that light will never be pure white again no matter how hard you try. It may sound simple, but in order to get it back to white the filter has to be removed so the white light is visible again. Leaving the filter in place usually is not a serious matter, unless you need to distinguish between different colours.

Yet, some people also try filter God’s Word. Now it can be, and is helpful to shine the White Light of Christ and God’s Word through something like a prism to better understand how it all works together and what we believe. In doing this you will see the 10 Commandments, the power of God’s Word, Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, God’s institution of marriage, the 2 natures of Christ, the Trinity, prayer, justification, Sanctification, ...and the list goes on and on, like looking at a rainbow. It is good and beneficial to dig into God’s Word, to get into it and really gnaw on it to better understand the whole of God’s Word, as separating white light into its components is beneficial.

But, as fun as looking at rainbows on the wall is and picking out which colours we like best is, when it comes to God’s Word this practice can be very dangerous. If we filter God’s Word so not all of it is seen, but just those colours or parts we pick and choose what we like, we miss the whole point of why Jesus came and why He continues to come and shine His Light on us. Jesus and His Word are not a buffet which you can pick and choose. Jesus is not a flashlight with coloured lenses for us to choose which we like best. It is probably summed up best in the book of Revelation: **“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book,<sup>19</sup> and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his**

**share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”**(Revelation 22:18-19)

Sometimes God's Word is not so easy to understand, but that does not give you, me, or anybody the right to ignore it, nor can we filter it. Instead, in those situations we are called to allow clear Scripture passages to interpret those more challenging ones. It may take some study, which is always a good thing, or it may take asking someone for clarification.

And so in reading the Gospel lesson today we hear Jesus says that we are light of the world. Light dispels darkness. Darkness makes it hard to find out way. It is much more difficult to find my way, and make the right turn on the grid roads at night than when the sun is up.

But when Jesus said we are light, He was thinking about the darkness of sin. Just as light dispels darkness and reveals the truth, so also Christ's church is to dispel the deception of sin and reveal the truth of Christ's salvation.

This is because the forces of evil, along with our own sinful flesh, likes to filter God's Word to make it easier to look at and hear. If they could, they would like to nothing better than to completely shut off the Light of Christ, but since they cannot, they are content with filtering it and causing people to not see the pure light. It is easy to do. We try to filter the Law to make it more palatable, or to make it not apply to us, or even better, to only apply to those other sinners. Our problem is when the Light shines on those dark recesses of our souls and reveals our most precious pet sins—those sins we pray would stay in the dark—when those sins, when all our sins are revealed it makes us feel very uncomfortable.

Despite our sinfulness, Jesus, the Light of the world, triumphed over darkness on the cross and 3 days later He proclaimed His victory as He rose from the dead. With His resurrection Jesus confirmed He really is the Light of the world. His resurrection also proves all His promises will come true, especially the promise that all who believe in Him have eternal life.

Jesus is the Light of the world and by His suffering, death, and resurrection; He has made you, me and all Christians the light of the world. All who believe in Him have forgiveness, life, and salvation. We regularly confess that we are poor, miserable, sinners who have sinned against God in thought, word, and deed. We also confess we cannot save ourselves. As we confess our sin, He absolves us, He gives us His Light. He first gave us His Light in our Baptism and we regularly come forward to His altar, and Christ gives us His very own body and blood to eat and drink in, with, and under the bread and the wine for the forgiveness of all your sins.

The devil, the world, and even your sinful self will always accuse you of not being the light of the world. They will tell you that you are not good enough, not smart enough, and that you definitely do not do enough. In doing so they try to put a filter in front of the Gospel. This

is their lie. They know all too well that you can never be good enough, never be smart enough, and most definitely never be able to do enough, but that you will discourage or kill yourself trying to be. They know this because in your sinfulness, as in mine, we are always doomed to fail.

But despite our sinfulness, Jesus still says, “You are light.” He says “you are the light of the world, but it is not your work, but Mine.” Don’t listen to your heart. Scripture illuminates it is full of evil. Don’t listen to the world for the world hates both you and God. Don’t listen to the devil for he is the enemy of God and wants you to burn eternally in hell. Instead listen to the simple and clear promises of Jesus. “You are light!”

Now, I should be clear, Jesus did not say you should be the light of the world; Jesus said **“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”<sup>15</sup> Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.<sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”**(Matthew 5:14-16)

Now as light, it makes as much sense for us to light a lamp and hide it as it does for us to hide our salvation. We are not some kind of super saints who live lives that others should envy. Rather, we are forgiven sinners saved by grace on account of our loving Saviour, Jesus Christ. And so, as light, we do not point to ourselves but to the source of Light, Christ Jesus.

Now there is a promise hidden in being the light of the world. It is a good news promise which is, the light we shine is not our own. We did not create it, produce it, or generate it: we simply reflect it. The light we shine is the light of Christ. Since we cannot be light apart from Christ and His pure Light, He must always be with us for us to be able to shine. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, He works in us and through us so we can shine the light of Christ wherever we go. We are light in our families as children of our parents and as parent of our children, as husbands and wives, as grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins and all the other ways we can be related to people. We are light in the workplace as employers and employees. We are light in our communities as friends and neighbours, as citizens of this great province and country. In all these roles Jesus has promised to be with us so we can be the light of the world.

Shining the pure white light of Christ pushes back the darkness of this world and allows those trapped in darkness to be led to Christ, His eternal Light, and to salvation. Rejoice in the White light of Christ, the light of life, the light of salvation. Amen.

\* This sermon belongs to Christ and His Church because it is taken from His Word. Please feel free to copy or use it accordingly. I expect people to copy my sermons otherwise I would not post them. I only ask that you quote accurately if you attribute anything to me. Should you decide to contact me, I would be very interested in knowing where you are. Please include the name of your city, province or state, and country when contacting me.