

Love Is God's Light in the Darkness

by Jack Hayford

The true light in the darkness is God's love, which is the only thing that can touch people in a world blinded by sin.

Scripture: John 3:16, Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 1 John 2:8

Topics: "Gods Love", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Jack Hayford preaches on the importance of shining the light of Jesus' love in a world darkened by sin, emphasizing the need for believers to show love and compassion to draw others to Christ. He highlights that God's heart breaks over human bondage and that the power of prayer and spiritual warfare is rooted in genuine love for others. Hayford stresses that the ultimate measure of a Christian is how the love of God is manifested in their lives, reaching out to the world with tenderness and power.

Transcript

... the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. (1 John 2:8-11)

Twenty centuries after the words of 1 John 2 were written, one might ask: "How is it that the darkness was passing away then, but today the darkness seems to be intensifying?" Scripture is not talking about the quantity of darkness but rather the darkness of the human heart and the erosion taking place in the lives of people as a result of it. People are aware, if they are honest with themselves, that this darkness is taking something away from them and leading to a dead-end. Though unbelievers are not our brother or sister in Christ, the Bible refers to God as the Father of all spirits; we are connected to all in the body of humanity. When Jesus was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" He could equally have been asked, "Who is my brother?" Yet many of us who come from a church background don't feel the need to show sinners any love--just preach the Gospel to them, and they can come in on our terms.

The only thing that will touch people in a world blinded by sin is evidence of what they want most: love. Where people see love's vitality, worth, and attractiveness, they will inquire into the Truth that produces it. We will not win the world by persuading people how pure and holy we are but by how loving we are. By being the incarnation of the goodness of Jesus, and showing them love as He did, people will be drawn to Christ.

God's heart breaks over human bondage, just as His Son's body was broken to provide redemption and deliverance from it. God's "wrath" is His fury against the self-destructive things done by His children that hinder Him from fulfilling the good He intends for them. When the spear was thrust into Jesus' heart, blood and water came forth--the medical sign of a broken pericardium. It is literally God's broken heart that provides salvation to mankind--the same heart breaking in frustration over those who insist on their own self-imposed program of death. We have not been made agents of our Heavenly Father's anger but of the love behind it.

You and I have no power in spiritual warfare if we don't love what or who we're praying for. The raw power of prayer and ministry in the Spirit have to do with authority born of loving that comes from the transformation of your heart--first toward the Lord, then toward those around you. The flow of power in our lives is directly proportionate to the flow of love, and the call of Scripture is always redemptive. God demonstrated His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). God so unconditionally loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). Jesus did not come executing judgment; He came reaching in love. This doesn't mean He had no discernment about people or that He was indiscriminate in His conduct. It means Jesus was not here to raise up a standard for people to rise to, but that He came to reach with the long, loving arms of God to draw people in.

Further, in those of us who've come to Him, there is something of the recovery of what God has in mind for all of humanity. God intends that recovery be manifest in us so others will desire it. The light of Jesus' righteousness enables us to examine our own lives and to attract others to Him by warming them with His love. We are not called to shine it as a searchlight in their faces, telling them to measure up. When we grasp this, something different will take place in the Church today. We are called to holiness, but we are not called to apply that measure to the world. It's a measure we're called to require of ourselves as we grow in the life of Christ. The ultimate measure will always be how the love of God is manifest in us. This is the love that will reach out to the world with tenderness and power--not mandating repentance, but offering a people glimpse of God's mindset toward fulfillment and purpose for their lives.

Begin with your own family by cultivating a climate rich in the resources of spiritual discernment and loving discipline (1 John 2). Teach morality on the basis of its promise and hope...not as a system of fear and taboos. "Speak truth in love." Then, shine as light in a "crooked and perverse world" (Phil. 2). Watch for people who manifest a hunger for understanding and a longing for spiritual reality. There are always God-seekers among the lost.

Writing to the Corinthians, Paul said, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" meaning they will never receive the fullest benefits of God's purpose in their lives. Listing a battery of horrible sins, Paul tells this church of committed believers, "and such were some of you, but you are washed... sanctified... justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Remember, no one is beyond deliverance.

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