

Scripture Reading:

Luke 11:27-54 “27 And it happened, as [Jesus] spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!" 28 But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" 29 And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, "This is an evil generation.

It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. 30 For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. 31 The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here. 32 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

33 "No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. 34 The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. 35 Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. 36 If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light." 37 And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat. 38 When the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner. 39 Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. 40 Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you. 42 But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. 43 Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. 44 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over them are not aware of them." 45 Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also." 46 And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. 47 Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. 48 In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. 49 Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,' 50 that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. 52 Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered." 53 And as He said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail Him vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, 54 lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him.”

"Light for an Evil Generation"

This morning we continue our journey through the Gospel of Luke and I read a longer portion this morning so we would see the full context of what is being presented

- **We will not be going verse by verse, but rather focusing on the central teaching that I see here: The coming of the Holy Spirit to bring light to the world in the midst of an evil generation.**

The people of that time and down through all of Church history must choose whether they will accept this Light that brings life or whether they will resist this light which then brings judgment:

- **As we saw with the lesson of Jesus binding the strong man, there is NO third option!**

We are continuing to work through Luke this year during our celebration of Ascension Sunday, Pentecost and Trinity Sunday because the passages work nicely with what we should focus on each year...

- **Last week on Christ's bodily ascension to God's right hand**
- **This week on the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit to the Church at Pentecost**
- **And next week is Trinity Sunday where we celebrate the covenant wonders of our gracious Triune God**

We then begin the season of ordinary or normal time in the church calendar which reminds us each year that we are to hear & DO the Words of Christ, as we saw in our reading again this morning!

- **Last week our passage from Luke showed us the clear contrast and relationship between the Ascension of Christ and the defeat of Satan.**
- **Next week the beginning of Chapter 12 in Luke's Gospel will fit nicely with Trinity Sunday where we acknowledge that we worship and rightly fear the one true God!**

Now to be honest, as I began to work on putting these three Sundays together, I wondered if this week was just a bit of a stretch... How was I going to link Pentecost Sunday with this reading from the later half of Luke chapter eleven.

- **Well, the more I have studied this chapter the more I have become convinced that it is perhaps the best fit of all three!**

What we have here is the same picture as we see in Acts chapter two and most of Acts which has been rightly called the 'Acts of the Holy Spirit!'

- We should see clearly the contrast between a Holy People and a wicked generation
- A Church illuminated by the Holy Spirit contrasted with the nation of Israel that has become darkened by corrupt religious leaders!

The word 'light' is used 77 times in the New Testament alone:

- We rightly look to Jesus as the light of the world
- We think of us being lights unto the world: "This little light of mine..."

That song can still be sung and is useful to help us understand our sharing the Gospel, BUT we must also remember that the Holy Spirit does not just come to us only as individuals but He also comes to the Church, He comes to us corporately as well.

- That is the whole point of Pentecost and it is what we can see clearly here in Luke 11!

I began our reading this morning with the woman we ended with last week and the central teaching that Jesus wants us to remember:

"Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it!"

Jesus then turns to the crowd and said, "This is an evil generation"

We will see how the gentiles will rise up to judge this generation, then how this evil generation will bear the full brunt of the guilt piled up by the Nation of Israel as Jesus says, "it shall be required of this generation."

- AND right in the middle comes the teaching about a lamp!
- It is appropriate and I would even say necessary to stop and ask, WHY is this section here?

So let's see what is taught here at the center about light and then step back and see if we can better understand why Jesus brought it up at this place. Verse 33 is a lesson about lamps: You don't light a lamp in order to hide it in a secret place or under a basket... "but on a lamp stand"

*I can read my sermons SO much better since Mark put up these great lights...
They would not have done me much good behind the bar in the next room!*

What we must be careful not to miss is that Jesus makes application to us by turning to the eye, saying, "The lamp of the body is the eye."

- If you have good eyes your body is full of light: You see things as they should be seen!
- If you eye is bad or diseased you body will be full of darkness not being able to see things as they really are

And that brings us to verse 35: “Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness.”

- How can light be darkness? Just as an eye, which is usually associated with sight, is called blind when it is bad!
- So if your eye is working you can see & if it is not you are blind!
- If the lamp is working and on the lamp stand then the room will be full of light!

Here is where we must not allow the children’s song to narrow our understanding of God’s great work... When Zacharias had his speech restored he commissioned his son John with these words: “76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, 77 To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins, 78 Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; 79 To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Simeon picks up on this theme of light when he holds the baby Jesus at the Temple saying in part: “For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”

- Jesus will bring light to His people Israel and to the Gentiles.

Remember that is what the nation of Israel was supposed to be: A light unto the nations fulfilling God’s promise to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. *[You homework can be the Gospel of John looking for all the references to light!]*

And finally, we see the instructions given to Paul by Jesus on the road to Damascus that he recounts to King Agrippa in Acts 26: “16 But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 17 I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” *[sound familiar, like Luke?]*

We could go on to the Book of Revelation where we would again see the light being taken away from the Nation of Israel in chapter 18 and given to the Bride of Christ, the Church in chapters 21 and 22.

- Now we can step back and see why these few important verses are placed where they are:

Jesus is being mobbed by the crowds that we have studied throughout the early chapters of Luke and now the religious leaders are growing more and more concerned. The people want more signs or entertainment and the leaders want “a sign,” something they will continue to ask for right up to the time they are standing in front of Jesus on the cross as He bears the sin of the world upon His shoulders!

Jesus then proclaims this to be an “evil generation.”

[Another one of those verses the folks who tell us to be “nice like Jesus was,” seem to miss!]

Just to be sure they do not miss what he said, He says they will be judged in two ways they would have found VERY insulting! Jesus says that the Queen of the South, a gentile woman, will “rise up in judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them!”

- **She traveled to hear Solomon and yet they refuse to hear the greater Solomon who is among them.**

The men of Nineveh will rise up and again we have gentiles being used to embarrass this wicked generation! We should not forget the warning given to Nineveh by Jonah: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” Nineveh’s judgment was to come in forty days, and now the Nation of Israel would be judged in 40 years! While the full presentation of this truth is given by Jesus on the Mount of Olives after He has left the temple in Matthew chapter 23, it was not a new teaching: We see here in Luke that He had previously warned these false shepherds at other appropriate times

And this is what we see on the other side of His teaching about light: Jesus is invited to a Pharisee’s home and ‘insults’ them by not doing all the proper washings.

Jesus takes the opportunity to explain why this was a wicked generation by showing how evil their leaders had become: Instead of a good eye giving light to the whole body, the eye was diseased and has cast the entire body into darkness. One of the lawyers or Scibes who was sure Jesus could not mean them even said, “Teacher, by saying these things you reproach us also” at which point Jesus continues on to make sure they ALL know they are guilty!

- **In fact Jesus concludes by saying that all the righteous blood that has been shed, from Abel down to the last prophet will be required of this wicked generation!**
- **The judgment coming upon Jerusalem in just 40 years would be a severe and final judgment!**

In verse 53 we see that the scribes and Pharisses began to assail Him vehemently” As we go on in Luke’s Gospel we will see that they understood clearly what Jesus was saying about them

Just as Jesus is now on His way to Jerusalem for His appointed time, these false teachers will set themselves like flint against Jesus doing all they can to destroy Him! Luke will continue to remind us of these two paths in the coming chapters...

- **But this is Pentecost Sunday, so let's step back and see the focus of this passage and how it relates to Acts chapter two.**

I trust you can see now that Jesus has clearly shown the contrast between light and darkness. Clearly Jesus is not talking about physical light when he says in verse 35 "Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness" I don't have the time this morning to cover all of Acts 2 verse by verse but I want us to consider two things:

- **The picture that is given**
- **And the pronouncement that is made:**

Think about the picture of what happened in the portion from Acts that we read this morning:

- **The Holy Spirit is poured out as a rushing wind from heaven which we might expect.**
- **The Spirit fills the whole house but what is seen appears to be divided tongues, as of fire "and one sat upon each man."**

Now there have been thousand years of church discussions about what all is meant here, but just as Jesus put the little child in the midst of the disciples when he wanted to explain something that should have been obvious to them: We should take this on face value:

- **This looks like a room full of candles!**
- **Now instead of false shepherds who were full of darkness we have the Spirit giving light to the new leaders of Christ's church!**

The true light has come and the message of Peter's sermon here in Acts 2 and Stephan's with more detail in Acts 7 are very much the same as what Jesus has begun to present to the leaders of Israel and brings to an end with his parable of the vineyard:

- **They have killed the messengers and servants of the King [all those from Abel to Zacharias] and now they have crucified the Son, the Lord of Glory.**

As I said at the beginning, we see two responses from this "evil generation: In Acts 2; 3,000 are cut to the heart & proclaim, "what shall we do"

Peter tells them to Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and then they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Sadly in Acts seven we see the other response where they take up stones and kill the messenger.

- **There is no other option!**
- **For those who choose life, we are then to be light unto a dark world, doing the good works that we were created in Christ Jesus to walk in as Paul explained in Ephesians 2:10**

Our application for this morning comes from Ephesians 5 where Paul fleshes out what he means:

“1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.” – *sins are forgiven*

3 “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.”

- **Could the contrast be clearer? Can you think back to some foolish talk this week, some coarse jesting, to say nothing of lust and coveting...**
- **What if we went back and re-read all those posts and texts?**
- **Then we have the often great problem with our sins of omission – Not giving thanks!**

5 “For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”

- **Jesus said blessed are those who hear the Word of God AND keep it!**
- **There is a LOT of talk about loving Jesus these days, but how much of it comes from “sons of disobedience” even in the Church?**

7 “Therefore do not be partakers with them. 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.”

- **We are those who should expose the works of darkness, not be part of them!**
- **And finally, for those who doubt or think they can keep one foot in both camps...**

14 “Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light." 15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

➤ **We certainly live in evil times –**

Do you have time in your life that needs to be redeemed?

The Gospel declares that we have been redeemed or delivered from the evil generation:

Let us walk as children of the light this week and always in the power of the Spirit who was poured out on the Day of Pentecost!

Communion Meditation:

2 Corinthians 4:3-7 “If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

➤ **This Table is not about us...**

➤ **We proclaim HIS death till he comes**

➤ **Jordon reminds us to keep it simple!**