

The Church



Part thirteen: Bringing light to darkness

Getting started

1. When was the last time you were in total darkness? Describe the experience.

The light of the world

John 8:12 “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Matthew 5:14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

1 Peter 2:12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Acts 13:46-47 Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you. . . . We now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

2. Jesus wants his light to be seen through us—in what we teach and in how we act. Describe how this reality is both intimidating and inspiring.
3. The first Bible most people will read is us. What are they reading?

How dark the darkness is

Isaiah 24:4-6 The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers. . . . A curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt.

Isaiah 9:2 On those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

Isaiah 42:6-7 "I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness."

The human suffering Jesus confronted in his ministry

Luke 9:5 "If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them."

4. Our world is a land of deep darkness. How might it shape our interactions with others if we recognize that seven out of ten people we meet are not doing okay (regardless of how they present themselves)?
5. List out examples of suffering, hurt, and darkness around us (be specific).

How the church's mercy scatters the darkness

Matthew 25:37-40 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

James 5:20 Remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

6. Consider the examples of suffering from question five. Begin brainstorming ways we at St. Mark's could run to that darkness with Christ's light.