

## Next Week Sermon

# Church Discipline

1 Corinthians 5

PREACHER

**Dr. Peter Ng**

5 May, 2024

# The Church and Lawsuits

1 Corinthians 6:1-11

PREACHER

**Lee Yee Dian**

12 May, 2024

# The Gospel and Marriage

1 Corinthians 7

PREACHER

**John Lee**











**YOU UNDERESTIMATE  
THE POWER OF THE  
DARK SIDE**

DARTH VADER

*LOMASDOPE.COM*

You can choose to be in the light or choose to be in the darkness

For God so loved the world



John 3:16  
Part 3

The World



# Text to read today

- John 1:1-13
- John 3:1-21
- Key themes explored in this morning's study of scripture – **light and darkness** & what it means to **“believe”**
- Out of about 250 times the New Testament uses the verb “believe” (*pisteuō*), nearly 100 of them occur in John's gospel alone. John also never uses the noun form of “belief” (*pistis*). **For John, belief is always an active idea.**

Afraid to come into the light

What you do repeatedly which you do not want others to know affects what you believe about God

<sup>19</sup> This is the verdict: **Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.** <sup>20</sup> **Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.** <sup>21</sup> But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup> **He came to Jesus at night** and said, “**Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.**”

<sup>42</sup> Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> for they loved human praise more than praise from God.

<sup>44</sup> Then Jesus cried out, “Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. <sup>45</sup> The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. <sup>46</sup> **I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.** John 12: 42-46

There is belief which is just intellectual assent  
and there is belief that impacts the heart

“I believe in Christianity as I  
believe that the sun has  
risen: not only because I see  
it, but because by it I see  
everything else.”  
CS Lewis, Mere Christianity



# Parallels between Nicodemus and the description of darkness in Chapter 1

<sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness **has not overcome/understood it** (*Greek word for light(phos) has a double meaning*)  
John 1:4-5

*Nicodemus misunderstands who Jesus is*

<sup>9</sup> The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world **did not recognize him**.  
John 1:9-10

*Nicodemus does not recognize Jesus is the Messiah*

# Nicodemus compared to the Samaritan woman



**Darkness**



**Light**

# How fear shapes your beliefs

<sup>42</sup> Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for **fear** they would be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> for they loved human praise more than praise from God.

John 12: 42



# Because we fear what others think of us, we often keep our deeds in darkness

- Many churches don't know how to walk with those struggling with sin or with past hurts
- As a result we keep secrets about ourselves as we fear rejection and condemnation if our secrets are exposed.
- We then create a church culture of people who hide in darkness and do not step into the light
- Many of us then put on masks in church to conceal who we really are

Common understanding of putting on a mask  
in public



A more accurate understanding of putting on a mask in public



# Hiding in darkness but pretending to be in the light

- Some of these masks we like to wear
- Some we don't
- Some we are forced to wear to get along in life
- Some we wear so often we are afraid to remove



After a while wearing a mask all the time gets tiring and one of the following happens:-

1. We go church hopping until we find a church that meets our needs and continue to hide in darkness.
2. We end up stagnant in spiritual growth and don't participate in church life. We just "go to church" to fulfil our religious duties. We hide our darkness by building walls around us
3. We become part of the church "elite" and self actualize our existence in participating in church ministries but avoid stepping into the light to deal with our sinful struggles or past hurts. We become spiritually blind to our darkness





<sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup> **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.** John 1:3-4





God's light shines on us if we are willing to come out from the darkness. He sees all our dark and dishonourable sides and still loves us and wants the best for us



- Afraid to come into the light
- **Blinded by darkness**

<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> **For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.** <sup>18</sup> **Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.** <sup>19</sup> **This is the verdict:** *Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.* <sup>20</sup> *Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.* <sup>21</sup> *But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.*

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. <sup>7</sup> When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” <sup>8</sup> Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

<sup>9</sup> At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. <sup>10</sup> Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

<sup>11</sup> “No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

John 8: 6-11

<sup>12</sup> When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “**I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**”

John 8:12

<sup>9</sup> Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.”

John 9:9

There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. **What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.**

Luke 12:2-3

*Context is the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (v1)*



12  
CHRISTIAN  
INFLUENCERS  
TO FOLLOW



# Option 1

- So let's encourage ourselves to act out the supernatural depth of commitment in a manner that is inherent to godly faith - especially for newcomers, reminding them gently of Christ's expectations. We can then hope that as newcomers grow spiritually, they will increase their commitment to one another. And God willing, as we win them to Christ with Holy Spirit driven love, this is how we'll keep them. Attract people as disciples of Christ, and we'll wind up with a church of followers hungry for Christ. It will take people some time to feel some level of commitment, but it will eventually flourish a long-term depth of love for each other. And Christ centred commitment is what reflects the gospel of grace.

# Option 2

- Instead of calling people to act out the supernatural depth of commitment to other Christians that is inherent to faith, we make our churches as low-commitment as possible for newcomers. “Slide on in,” we say. “We’ve got no expectations.” We hope that as they grow, these people will increase their commitment to one another. But of course, what you win them with is how you’ll keep them. Attract people as consumers, and you’ll wind up with a church of demanding consumers. This may allow our people to feel some level of commitment quickly, but it compromises long-term depth of love for each other. And consumerism is the antithesis of the gospel of grace.



# The real Christian influencers



STEVE BAUGHMAN  
**COVER-UP IN THE KINGDOM**  
PHONE SEX, LIES, AND GOD'S GREAT APOLOGIST, RAVI ZACHARIAS



From: Ravi  
Date: October 29, 2016  
To: Lori Anne  
Subject: Re: Letter

Are you going to tell him it's me?



If ministry and church leaders believe this investigation to be credible, they would do well to explore their treatment of him and others; how they used him to further their names, acclaim, pulpit, bottom line, and purposes. **If they believe there is truth to the conclusions, the construct of ministry and the evangelical church is not without responsibility** for the way they commodify a person in the name of ministry and push for performance beyond reasonable human limits, thresholds of pain, and requests for reprieve. Where is the care for someone, for their own sake? But nothing is changing as they stand in self-righteous judgement, elevating themselves far above it.

Open letter from the family of the late Ravi Zacharias

Am I spiritually blind to my sins?

- Afraid to come into the light
- Blinded by darkness
- **Jesus is the light of the world that brings salvation, healing and life**

**<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.** <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. <sup>19</sup> This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

“How is your walk with God”





<sup>12</sup> When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “**I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**”

John 8:12





“Surely I am with you always,  
to the very end of the age.”

- Matthew 28:20

# Some (hopefully) helpful suggestions

- Make it a daily prayer to ask God to shine a light to reveal your sins. A daily posture of humility honours God
- How does fear shape your belief about God and matters of life?
- Don't live by your own wisdom. The struggle with sin requires godly wisdom from others. Learn the habit of having difficult conversations
- You'll only know how life works out by experiencing community with other believers through trial and error. Jesus walks together with all believers
- Together let's be **F**irst and **B**est at **C**aring and not **F**irst and **B**est at **C**riticizing

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16*