



## **Obstacles on the Road to Christ: Insularity**

### **Luke 11:33-36**

Well if you want your fruits and vegetables and your meats to stay fresh, you need to keep them cold. And thankfully there's this thing called a refrigerator that will do that for you. They have been proven to work. Word has gotten out about refrigerators. Now everyone in America has one. If you want to walk around outside without hurting the bottom of your feet, thankfully there's this thing called shoes that will do that for you. They've been proven to work. Word has gotten out about shoes. Now everyone in America has them. The average woman has twenty-seven pairs of them. If you're out and about and you want to talk to somebody that's not there physically present with you, thankfully there are cellphones that will do that for you. Ah, they've been proven to work. Word has gotten about cellphones. Now virtually everyone in America has one. (1:34)

If you want to get your sins forgiven, you want to be reconciled with your Creator, thankfully there's this thing called Christianity that will do that for you. It's been proven to work. Word has gotten out about it. That's why everyone in America is a Christian. (1:52)

How are you liking this paradigm? It was working for a while there, wasn't it? What in the world is going on? Well, perhaps it's not been proven to work. No. No, maybe, maybe not everyone has really heard about this. Or maybe there's a third option. Maybe there's another reason. In Luke 11 we've reached verses 33 through 36 in a sequence of passages where people are not responding well to Christ. And what's interesting about the context is Jesus has proven the power of his message. He has demonstrated that. It was proven to work. He also was very tenacious about getting the word out. He had sent people out at every village. He had been around as an itinerant preaching everywhere. The word had gotten out. And yet, people were still saying, "Well, we don't have enough information," and "I'm not sure it's real; why don't you prove it again. Give us a sign." They were saying they were needing more information, that they needed proof that it works. And yet, Jesus stops in verse 33 and says that's not the problem. There's a third option here. There's a third reason why you would not embrace this message. (3:09)

Now this study today in these verses, verses 33-36, are very important for us, because if we do not understand this third option, this third reason, you may be baited into the thing that Jesus was being baited into but he wasn't going to—he wasn't gonna follow. And that is, listen, it's not more information you need. And it's not that you need proof of the veracity of it, or the effectual nature of it. There's a third reason you may be responding negatively to this message. And he highlights that here in this passage. (03:35)

So if you haven't turned there yet, look at this. This is important that we catch this, because if you don't catch it you're gonna be frustrated in your evangelism. You're gonna be going down roads you shouldn't go down. You're gonna be—if you're not aware of it, you may not even learn how to counter it, 'cause this, there is some wisdom here to help us counter this. When your non-Christian friends and neighbors say, "Yeah, it might be nice to have my guilt removed," "It might be nice if there is a creator for me to be reconciled with that creator," "I could see the advantages on the surface, but I need more information. I need proof of this." We need to say in our own minds, maybe it's this third thing that Jesus talks about here. Follow along with me as I begin to



read it in verses 33 through 36. (04:12)

Verse 33. No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand so that those who enter may see the light. And when you read that, maybe the last time you read it in our daily Bible reading, you said, "I know this verse. I know this. I know what this is about." Careful. Before you think you know what this is about, be really careful. Because I know your mind will go back to—this little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine. Hide it under a bushel? No! I'm gonna let it shine. Hide it under a bushel? No! I'm not gonna let Satan blow it out. I'm gonna let it shine. (04:59)

Now, if that's where your mind goes when you read these words I'm not saying you're biblically wrong because you know what? Jesus used this exact same illustration to illustrate something about you, as it's put there on the Sermon on the Mount on— in Matthew 5, that you are to let your light shine before men so that they can see your good works. And one day, we trust, glorify our father who is in heaven. So there is an application that fits that camp song that you learned as a kid. And great. Don't hide it under a bushel. (05:28)

That's not what we're talking about here. The context here is people being confronted with the message of the kingdom, the message of the gospel, the—the proof that Jesus is the Christ and that he has the power to reconcile people to the father. All of that has been in the context, and now he starts talking about lamps, not under bushels, not in cellars, but put upon a stand so everyone can see. And then he says here in verse 34, your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad then your body is full of darkness. Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. So the reference here about me is not letting my light shine. It has something to do with making sure there is a healthy eye or something that allows me to have light inside of me. And he says and that would be really good. Verse 36: If then your whole body is full of light having no dark part, it will be holy bright as when a lamp with its rays gives you light. Now the lamp that gives you light, that must mean that I am not the lamp, and I'm not shining. And this analogy in verse 33 is not this little light of mine, *I'm gonna let it shine*. No, it's about me making sure that light from that lamp gets inside of me. Well, who's the lamp then? (06:46)

Keep your finger here and turn back to Chapter 1 with me real quick, when Zechariah the priest, named after the Old Testament prophet Zechariah, is told he's gonna have a son. And he has this son, and the son is John. We call him John the Baptist. He prophecies, if you look at this text, in verse 67 it says, "filled with the Holy Spirit." So this is not just an accurate record of what Zechariah thought or said, these are the inspired words of God coming through Zechariah speaking of great things. If you just look at it there in verse 68, God is- is gonna be this blessed and worshiped person. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for he has visited and redeemed his people. Spoken of in what I often call the prophetic perfect; it's as though it's already happened, but it's happening. He's visited and redeemed his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David. All these thoughts about the Davidic covenant in the Old Testament, there's gonna be one that sits on the throne of David, and all of that's already been referenced in this narrative of the birth of Christ and will be expanded upon, and all these great things about God fulfilling his messianic promises from the Old Testament. As he says, verse 70, as he spoke by the mouth of the holy prophets from of old. (07:56)

So there's the context. God's gonna come visit and redeem. The Lord is gonna come and do that. Verse 76. Drop down there. And you, child—now who's that? Jesus? No, no, no. This is Zechariah talking about the birth of his son, John. John. Child. You'll be called the prophet of the Most High for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way. So the Lord's gonna visit and save people. He's gonna accomplish their salvation. John his son, now, born in his old age, is gonna be a prophet that goes before the coming of the Lord and do something to prepare people. What's he gonna do? Verse 77. To give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins. That's why he's always preaching about repentance. Repent. Get your sins dealt with. He's preparing people's hearts by repentance, and then the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world is going to come after John and present the reality of what he's been preaching about. And all that's gonna happen because of grace. Verse 78. Because of the tender mercy of our God whereby now—let's talk about the arrival of God here, underline this—the sunrise shall visit us from on high. God is coming. My son John, to speak in the words of Zechariah, he's gonna go and prepare people's hearts for the coming of God, and it's gonna be like a ball of fusion coming up over the eastern horizon, and it will be like the sun blasting the land with light. Verse 79. To give light to those who sit in darkness—a reference there, that Isaiah passage—and in the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace. I want that. Want the product. I'd like to have that. Well the sun is gonna shine. (09:34)

So when you start reading our passage today, Luke 11:33, this little light of mine— No, this isn't, had nothing to do with your light, and it's not little. It's the sunrise. It's the arrival of Christ. Christ has been put on a stand so that all who enter can see it. He is shining brightly in the first century. He is proving that his message and the truth of forgiveness and reconciliation works. He sent out everybody to go prepare people to hear it. Not just John the Baptist but the seventy-two that came into Judea to get people ready. And he comes, and he's shining brightly. And they're sitting around going, "Oh, we need more information. We need you to prove it." He's going, "No, no, no, no. That's not the problem." (10:12)

Look again at our text. No one after lighting a lamp puts it in the cellar or under a basket. God certainly didn't do that with the arrival of Christ. Puts it on a stand so that those who enter may see the light. Now your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy your whole body is full of light, but when it's bad your body's full of darkness. Note what's taking place here in the contrast between 33 and 34. What's taking place is that God is stating here, Jesus is making it very clear. The problem with your rejection of this message is not with the light. The problem is with your sight. The problem is not with God's communication. It's with your cognition. The problem is not with the proclamation of the truth that's taking place before your eyes. Right? It's with your perception of the truth. You've got a problem. The problem is not with God. The problem is with you. It's not that the information is not there that's convincing and verified. It's that you have a problem with your gateway, your portal, to your life, and you have a bad eye. You need a healthy eye. (11:15)

That's important for us. Let's put it down this way. To start with just the first part of that to make some observation. Number one on your outline if you're taking notes. We need to confirm, we need to confess, we need to concede, we need to admit, that God clearly communicates.

### ***1. Admit God clearly communicates.***

Look at the— look at the reference again. No one after lighting a lamp puts it in the cellar or under a basket. Was this stuff done in a corner, to put it the words of the apostle Paul? No. It was all out in the open. God put Christ on a stand and it's giving light to everyone. Doesn't put it under a basket. Anyone who, who enters can see it. As a matter of fact, you enter the stage now, even two thousand years later, and guess what? This is as relevant on your outline as it was in the first century. God clearly communicates. (11:59)

'Cause I know what you're saying. Well, you know, if my neighbor coulda been there in the first century. I know he's resistant to Christ now, but if he coulda been there and seen those miracles and been there listening to the wisdom of his teaching, well then he would respond 'cause that's when God was *really* speaking. I put it down this way for a reason. God clearly communicates. He's doing that right now. God is a God that communicates. He's been communicating, and he's communicating even louder. The volume went up, and it was amplified with the coming of Christ. He's spoken in the Old Testament through the prophets in many portions and many ways, but in these last days he's spoken to us in his Son. And he is screaming, and still does, through four identifiable means. And we can probably come up with sixteen, but let me just give you four this morning with this little acronym, which means nothing: CCSS. But it'll be our sub-points. CCSS. (12:48)

Number one: He speaks through **creation**. This is review for a lot of you, I understand, but at least jot it down. God speaks not just in the first century through the coming of Christ, he is speaking right now through creation. Jot this down: Psalm 19:1-4. Psalm 19-1:4, and it reads this way: The heavens—here's a speaking word—declare the glory of God. Now that's not the heavens you can't see, that's the heavens you can see. That's the sky, that's space. It goes on to say in its parallelism, The sky above proclaims—there's another speaking verb—his handiwork. Now how often does that take place? I'm glad you asked. Verse 2: Day by day it pours out speech, and night to night it reveals knowledge. So how often is creation speaking to all the people on the planet? Every day, and every night. (13:38)

Now he clarifies, verse 3. There's no speech, there's no words, there's no voice that's heard, so don't put your ear, you know, next to a tree and expect to hear something. It's not that. This is poetic. But it's clear, nevertheless. The next verse says, their voice goes out—how far?—throughout the whole earth. Their words—now they're not audible, but they're clearly communicating—they go out to the end of the world. So I learn this from this passage. Creation, the things that God has made, is speaking everyday and not just in the first century, and every night, not just in Old Testament times, and it's doing it everywhere. Everywhere. In Papua New Guinea? Yes. In Brazil? Oh, absolutely. I mean, all over the planet. I don't care where you're from. Creation is declaring, as it puts here, the glory of God. And you know that glory that people see when they off, you know, to Mammoth, and they go to hike in the high Sierras, and they want to go, you know, enjoy the beach today. They see all that. They see the glory of God. And if they're honest, they look in their lives and they see the distance between what they experience, and what they crave, and the beauty in creation. And they look at their lives and they see some of the chaos in their lives, and the garbage and corruption in their lives, and they're learning a gospel lesson right there. You got a problem. You want to a beautiful sunset? You



want to see the symmetry of the heavens, the stars, the sky? You want to look at the things that make you say, "Wow! That is magnificent. How majestic!" And then you want to look in your own life, you're gonna see there's a gaping hole between my character and my life, and even in fallen creation the things that I see in creation. That is the beginning and the foundation of the gospel, for us to recognize the greatness of God and the deficiency of our own sin. And God is speaking everyday in creation. (15:21)

Second C. CCSS. Second C: **Conscience**. You knew I was going there next, right? Conscience. It says in Romans 1, hey, creation is declaring all these things so that people are without excuse. The invisible attributes of God are on display, and then the next thing it gets into in chapter 2 is this. You're also without excuse because I know you have the ability to judge other people. And who doesn't have that ability? We all do. Every single non-Christian that is resistant to the gospel is able to look at people in their workplace and complain about them. That person's a jerk. That person's rude. That person's unethical. That person— they're great at putting people in categories of good and bad and great, and faithful and unfaithful. They can do that all day long. And the Bible says in Romans 2 because they can do that they show they have moral perception. And they sit there and even say, isn't it right that God would judge people like that? And for sure we all say, yeah, absolutely. Sometimes if it's a bad enough violation with someone we don't like we say, God, I just wish you'd zap him. Even non-Christians think that way. (16:22)

And the Bible says interesting you have that moral perception, that you think that God would rightly punish them but not rightly punish you when you do the same things. Welll, I don't... do 'em as often... Really? It's amazing. For every person that's irritated you with some violation of some thing that really irks you because it's not right, how many times you can look at your life, and if you were honest and kept track, you'd find you'd did— you've done the same thing more times than you've seen them do it. You've got to recognize the ability for us to see the problem in someone else, and occasionally in that honest moment when my conscience tells me you did the same thing, it allows me to recognize I have this thing called conscience that he goes on to say in the passage is a law for every single person even if they've never heard the laws of God in a Sunday school class. You become a law unto yourself with your conscience either accusing or excusing you, and it's working all the time. (17:18)

Now sometimes I-I push that back to the back of my life. But the Bible says our conscience is at work to reveal the standards of God and to show our guiltiness before a holy God. God is speaking. And how often does that happen? Every single day. For who? Everybody around the planet. Creation is speaking. Conscience is speaking. Here's the first S: **Scripture**. Obviously, scripture is speaking. (17:40)

Yeah, well that's the problem. I know a lot of people around the world they hadn't never even had a Bible. Really? Who are those people. Well... I've seen 'em on *National Geographic*. Listen. That's a great argument that people make, but do you understand how overstated and overblown that is? You do recognize this is third on my list though it's the most specific, and the most accurate, and the most, you know, objective. But you've gotta recognize the scripture has made such inroads around the world. It is the most frequently quoted. It is the most influential book. It's the book that effects more things on this planet than any other book ever written. Ever! (18:13)





Now I know this is not the, you know, the ultimate source of authority, but the *Guinness Book of World Records*. You start looking through that, what's the most published this, and the most influential that, or the most sold album here. Look, look in the books in the publishing section. The Bible, bar none, beyond any other, any other thing ever put into print, is the most influential and the most published book ever. They estimate, which they say there's no possible way to do this, that there are five *billion* copies of the Bible out there. Think about that. Five billion copies. It is translated more than any other book. It's been translated, at least portions or sections of it, in over two thousand languages. You can't even name two hundred languages. Two thousand languages. It has effected governments, and policies, and constitutions. And the way people think, even in our day where people say, "Well, I never really have learned the Bible so I can't be held responsible for what's in the Bible." (19:05)

I would start with creation and conscience and say those things are saying exactly what the Bible is saying. And when you get to the detail of the Bible, it's funny how much Bible you just know by being in this planet. Because the book has effected people. Think of the phrases that come from the Bible: Apple of my eye, drop in the bucket, salt of the earth, skin of your teeth, reap what you sow, a fly in the ointment, labor of love. And if no other verse they know, they know this one: Judge not lest you be judged. [*audience laughs*] They know the Bible. They don't know it as well as you do, and they don't know all of it, but they're— the Bible has effected and saturated our culture. And not just our culture. You'd be surprised. You would be hard pressed to find pockets of people that haven't had some affect from the written word of God. And I'll tell you what, even if you find that group you know that conscience has been crying, and creation has been declaring, and there has been all kinds of things that have said exactly what the Bible has been saying, and God is a clear communicator. (19:57)

CCSS. Creation, conscience, scripture. Let me give you the last one here. Letter D: **The Spirit**. The Spirit. Maybe you believe this or you don't, but Jesus made a promise. And he rose from the dead, and I believe what he said. When I leave I'm gonna send the Spirit into the world, and he's gonna convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. This is beyond creation. This is beyond conscience. This is beyond scripture. The Spirit now is gonna get active in people's lives. It says "sent into the world". And he's gonna convict people about what sin is. He's gonna convict people about what righteousness is. He's gonna convict people about judgment that they deserve. Think about that. My life, the standard of righteousness, and what I deserve because I don't live up to that. You don't have to have a kid go to AWANA to learn the wages of sin is death. It is out there in people's minds, in part because of creation and conscience, but also the Bible clearly says, because of the Spirit. (20:54)

Now we don't quote this verse very often, but we should quote it more often. We don't quote it very often because it's kind of weird in it presenting the Spirit as a sevenfold spirit. But at least jot this down and recognize what it's saying about the point I'm trying to make right now. Revelation 5:6. Revelation 5:6. It speaks of this scene in heaven, and it speaks of the one on the throne and the lamb as though he'd been slain. He was there, the twenty-four elders, the four living creatures. And then it speaks of the Holy Spirit, who is referred to three times in the book of Revelation as the seven spirits of God. Now, we'll get on— deal with that another time, or I have, you can look it up, or you can look it up in some Bible dictionary if you want. But here's

what it says about the Spirit of God, the sevenfold Spirit of God. It says that Spirit of God which has been sent out into all of the earth. I know this. I don't care where you live, in the outback of Australia in some deserted, you know, desert wasteland in the middle of who— who knows where. It doesn't matter. Here's what the Bible says. The Spirit of God that has its origins and ultimate residence in heaven is now on earth and it's everywhere, working. It's doing things that, according to Jesus in the upper room discourse, is going to point out to people sin, righteousness, and judgment. (22:10)

So the problem isn't with God's communication. It's not the issue of I don't have enough light. It's the issue of I got a problem with my sight. Not an issue of God's communication. It's an issue with my cognition. So that's the problem, and it's presented in verse 34a as a healthy eye lets it in, and bam! You got light in that person's life. The bottom of verse 34 says, buuut when the eye is bad, then your body's full of darkness. So the eye is pictured here as some kind of portal, which in a sense it is, right? And even in our scientific thinking about photons and translating into impulses in my brain, I get a sense of reality through the perception of my eyeballs, and it comes from the outside, and it comes into my eyes. And if I had for some reason some bad situation, and I'm blind and cataracts, or my eyes have been blind from birth, I can't get past that portal to take in the photon shapes out there, and I can't make sense of it, and—blocked. It's obstructed. And he says that's the problem. When your eye is bad your body's full of darkness. Therefore be careful lest the light in you—and you gotta put that in quotes 'cause it makes no sense if you don't—be careful lest the light in you, the supposed light in you, actually be darkness. You don't want that. More on that in a second. (23:24)

But let's just think of this for a second. And I don't wanna get too philosophical. But just start with what I want to do in this particular point when I'm talking to people that want more information or more proof. Sometimes they— they may valid— they may be a valid concern. But a lot of times we got to point to the problem of sight and reception. Number two. We have to

## ***2. Expose resistance to the truth.***

There's a problem with your gateway to your life. You're not willing in your volition to open up to the truth. You're resisting it. As it's put there in—I mean, let's just give you two passages that relate to some of the things we've already said. John 1. The starting of Christ being the *logos* in that opening prologue of John speaks of him as the light coming into the world, and it was the light of men. And it was the light of men. And it was coming into the world, and though the world was created by him, right? The world did not know him. He came unto his own, the next verse says, and his own—what? Do you know the verse?—received him not. The light is— is thwarted it seems by the fact that people are blind and cannot see. It says there in Romans 1 that the things in this creation should make the invisible attributes to God very plain to us, but we suppress the truth in unrighteousness. (24:39)

Now, a few observations. First one is this. When you see this analogy, and I don't want to stretch the analogy too far, but it certainly is true as we see in the rest of scripture. When it comes to light entering into the body in this analogy, we have to recognize what we're looking for that light is exterior to us. It is external. It is objective. It is something outside of me. It exists outside of me, and it needs to be let in through the portal of my mind, if you will, the receptor of



information, and I need to let it in. External. Let it in. (25:12)

I'm trying to paint a picture that's in contrast to what most people think today. And that is whatever I need in terms of truth it's already here. If you want to talk about some of the liberal writers or whatever, the spark of divinity within me. The man on the street we talk about, men are basically good in their hearts. You've heard all this. The Bible would say, no, here's the problem. There's darkness in you until the external, objective light gets into you. Now you wanna compare that to some words, how about this? Internal. Subjective. It becomes something that is about what I decide. It's a lot like what we see in the last verse of the book of Judges, which is a theological statement, not a political statement. When it says, "And in those days there was no king in Israel." Which, by the way, I'd have to ask you was there a king in Israel? Well, not a monarch sitting on a throne with a scepter and a robe around him. Oh, but there was a king. 'Cause this was a theocracy, and God was their king. But they didn't want to hear it. Their quote-unquote eye was bad, so there was resistance to that king. But it says, rest of the verse, there was no—in those days there was no king in Israel so—you know this verse?—everyone did what was... whatever I decide. (26:22)

Now you think we live in a day like that? You put that in a philosophical term, let's call it relativism. You can also as a subset of that talk about subjectivism. You can talk about individualism. This is really the theme of a lot of the book I put on the back of the worksheet if you want to dive into some of those books, just to think through the modern problem of what people think about truth. And that is, I get to decide truth for myself. That's why Copan's book on the back, the title is so revealing. It's exactly what we deal with everyday, and that is it's true for me, but it's not true for you; true for you, but not true for me. See, now if you're talking about what kind of ice cream you like I can understand the preferences being different. But if you're talking about statements of truth regarding who God is, what he's like, what'll happen if I do this or do that, what won't happen to me if I trust and obey—I mean, I can say, listen, those are either true statements or they're not. They either correspond with the reality of what is real and true, or it's not. We don't get to make up our make-believe facts here as though they're internal to us. All truth is external to us, and if it's true it will remain true external to us, even if I don't incorporate it into my own life. Do you follow what I'm saying there? This is the subjectivism, the individualism, the relativism of our day. (27:27)

So the analogy is helpful in that regard. I need to get the light into me. I'm not trying to discover some internal light. I'm not trying to fan the divine spark into a flame. I'm not trying to sit there and arbitrate truth in my own heart 'cause I am some kind of master of truth. I'm not. I need to perceive what's out there, and let in the truth. That's the picture here. (27:58)

Problem could be your eyes, when your eye is bad. Now when you see that, and you think your—your truth receptor's messed up, we can have that sense of okay, well, there's the resistance and I just want to point out the people's truth receptor's broken. Is— isn't that how it reads? Matter of fact, when you think about a bad eye you think about someone with cataracts or someone that's blind, and you picture that the photons can't get through that, can't be transmitted to the brain. You get that picture of there's a breakdown here. The gates are down. Something's broken. And while that may communicate that, it's much more than just that they can't see. Now, there's theological truth there. You theologians out there, I understand and I agree with you. There's a



rea— there's a *could not* to this. But I think you need to understand there's certainly a *would not* to this as well. Doesn't verse 35 reveal that? Therefore be careful lest the light in your be darkness. So apparently there's some culpability, some responsibility here about my truth receptor. Apparently, at least in this analogy, there's a sense in which I can have a healthy eye or a, or a bad eye based on what I'm letting in and what I'm letting out. That the portal to my life, see, that's something I gotta take a close look at and make sure it's healthy and good. (29:07)

There's another thing that may help us which you can't see in our English text. But if you have your software out there you can click on words and you can easily see it, and that's the word "bad" in verse 34. But when it is bad—what is bad? Your eye—then your body is full of darkness. I want to show you this word's used four times in this chapter alone. Let's just look at some of them. *Poneros*. I didn't say "panera", if you just started to salivate. *Poneros*. *Poneros*. *Poneros* is this Greek word that's translated here "bad", when your eye is *poneros*. Now, I want you to look at verse 29. When he condemned these people by— they wanted a sign, he says, verse 29, are you looking at it? Chapter 11. He began to say this generation is a *poneros* generation. What— what does that mean? Well, here it's translated, what word? "Evil." Evil generation. It seeks for a sign. Look up at verse 26. Here's the word again. Then it goes—we're talking about a demon now, it's been excised from someone—he brings seven other spirits more *poneros* than itself. What's it translated? "Evil." Verse 13, way back up there in the prayer section. If you then you are *poneros* and you know how to give good gifts to your—how's it translated? "Evil." (30:21)

Now we get to this passage, verse 34, and they translate it "bad." And you think bad as in "broken." And there's truth to that. That may be why the ESV translators said well, let's translate it that way 'cause it's true. Our eye is broken. Because of the fall it's broken. But we see in this illustration culpability and responsibility given to the person who has a bad eye because your eye's not just broken, your eye is bad as in evil. Something your doing here with your eye that is your control, that's something that you're doing, and God's trying to put the onus and responsibility on the person saying, look at the way your eye is working here. It's evil. (31:01)

So this is not just a could not see. This is a would not see. This is not just "I can't— I can't see" because of the fall. This is a "I won't see," and "I don't want to see," "I will not see." Do you ever see that in the Bible? Everywhere. Now you could say there are reasons ontologically, in terms of why Adam is responding the way he is. But as soon as Adam sins, and God shows up and starts bringing information to him, which is simple as "Adam, where are you?", what does Adam do? Does he pop to the forefront and say, "Yes, sir. Here I am"? No, he says nothing, and he goes and hides. He runs away and hides. (31:45)

The subtitle of this sermon is what? Insularity. Insularity is "I want to shield myself from God's truth." This is a moral decision I'm making. I understand that it's because our fellowship with God is broken. And more profoundly, they even throw clothing on. Think about that. The insulation from this. When God comes and brings more specific information about how to live life, and he says here's my rules on the— on Mt. Sinai, the people gathered around and said, "Oh, give us the information. We really want to know what God thinks." What— what happens at the foot of Mt. Sinai? Oh, away. We don't want to hear from God. We don't want to hear it. We're afraid we'll be— we'll be consumed. Oh, Moses, if you want to relay it secondhand I guess we'll



listen to you, but, whoo! Don't want to hear it. See, this isn't just a "can't hear it" 'cause I got a problem because of sin. It's that I "won't hear it" because I'm constantly compounding my hands over my eyes saying I don't want to see it. (32:39)

One more observation about this in verse 35. Be careful lest the light in your be darkness. Now that's a weird way to put it. 'Cause if it's really light it's not darkness. No, no. It's just that you think it's light, but in reality it's darkness. Follow me on this now. People need to be careful that the quote-unquote *light* in them is not really darkness. And why would it be darkness? 'Cause the portal and entryway into my heart. I'm not allowing God's light in. I don't want the truth. I prefer something that's a little different. Now how can you think you got light in your if you always reject the virtuous, righteous God? Because I'm putting other things in that in my mind are the kind of virtuous, righteous things that I want, and sometimes God is included in that. As a matter of fact, I would say this. The enemy is a master and an expert at this. As a matter of fact, that's the point. He likes to comes to people and bring them information that sounds very God-ish, that is very religious, and it makes you feel like you got light in you. And he's willing to give you that. As a matter of fact, Paul warned the people in Corinth, saying, be careful. It's no surprise that false teachers would come looking like good guys, 'cause even Satan himself masquerades around like an angel of... darkness. Is that what it says? Light. He is an angel of darkness. That's the picture of this moral depravity, and this sin and corruption, but he comes as though it's good. Now you imbibe on that you'll have something you think is light, but it's not light. (34:05)

One passage on this. It's worth looking at. We read it not long ago in our daily Bible reading. Isaiah 30. Isaiah 30. And Isaiah 30 it reminds me of, well of a lot of things, but let me give you the context. Assyria was strong. It was threatening. Judah's being exhorted here not to make alliances with Egypt because they're looking at the problem on their political borders thinking this is not good, we got a problem here. And God saying I've told you how to solve the problem. The reason those armies are there is because of your sin. You need to repent. All the things that creation is saying, all the things your conscience is saying, all the things that the prophets have said in scripture, and the speaking prophets as well as the writing prophets. And everything the Spirit of God is convicting—*that's* the real problem. Respond to that. But they didn't want to hear that. Now they didn't want to toss God out, and they didn't want to think they weren't people of virtue, but they were busy ignoring the truth of God and building alliances with Egypt. And— and so God says something interesting in verse 8. (35:04)

Hey, Isaiah, write this down on a tablet. This is Isaiah 30:8. Inscribe it in a book that it may be for the time to come as a witness forever. I want everyone to catch this, not just in the generation of Isaiah. I want everyone after this to understand the problem right now with Israel, and the problem of them not wanting the truth and instead looking for other solutions. Now comes the interesting part, the diagnosis of God. For they are a rebellious people, blind children, children— now here's a good phrase to underline—unwilling to hear the instruction of the Lord. Oh, so they have given up on church altogether? Well sometimes it feels that way. Verse 10. They say to the seers, to the prophets, do not see. We don't want any more insight from you guys. And to the prophets, do not prophesy to us what is quote-unquote righteous and right and holy. We don't want that. Instead here's what we want. Can you give us truth without the hard edges? (36:01)

Here it comes. Speak to us—I love this—smooth things. We want things that make us feel like



the tank is full of righteousness. We want light in our lives. We want to feel virtuousness and good with God, and we want all of that. But we'll like it to go down smoothly, because we don't really deal with the hard edges of sin, and righteousness, and holiness, and repentance. We don't want that. In essence, God gives the window into what that really is. They're actually asking for illusions. Prophecy stuff—stuff that's not even true. Leave the way, they're saying. Turn aside from the path. Let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel. (36:39)

You know what they want to hear about? The gracious one of Israel. The peaceful one of Israel. The merciful one of Israel. See? Now is God all those things? Absolutely. But when you screen out the justice of God, the holiness of God, and you take all of those things out, the righteousness of God, and you just want to be stuck with the kitten, cuddly kind of Twitter post God of the modern age, then you're asking for a kind of portal that wants to filter and screen out things. And I don't want all of the light coming in. I just want little bits and refractions of light, and I don't want it because it's too uncomfortable. The truth has hard edges. And says you may think you're full of light but you won't be. It'll be darkness. You better be careful about that. (37:21)

Well how do I know? If what the—I think is light in my life is really darkness. Well, this isn't going to help much, but you'll know a minute after you're dead. You will know for sure. There'll be no question at that point. Whether you're depiction of what you bought into and imbibed on on earth in terms of Christianity was right or wrong. Whether your view of God and the religious focus you had, whether that was good or not. It's as though, and I've said this often, that eternity's a lot longer than this temporal life. But it's like in this life in preparing for eternity and the place God's gonna put us where we will have undying, undecaying bodies, we're preparing for that right now. And it's as though he's given us this life, like you about to start on a journey. And it starts with all of us gathered at a gas station, and God is bringing in these trucks and dumping these brand new cars and putting them there. And what we've gotta do to prepare for the journey is we gotta gas these things up, get in the car, and the moment of our death we begin this life. Real life. Eternal life. And the only way we're gonna know if the things that we filled our lives with were the right things is when you hear, "Gentlemen, start your engines." At that point, we'll know. (38:33)

'Cause there will be people that stand there at the gas pumps, so to speak—this illustrations getting complicated now—and I'm thinking, I don't like the price. It's too high. Boy, I ju— I don't want to part with that much cash. I don't wanna— I don't wanna have that in my tank. I don't want it. It seems too costly. While some clever guy off to the corner of the gas station property is saying, I got a— I got a fill up for a dollar. I'm like, what are you talking about? And he's there with the air and water machine, and he's put his four quarters in, and he took that black hose and he's pouring it into his gas tank going, look at mine, man, mine's great, it's cheap. Lot of money for a Slurpee inside leftover. Now, and again, I don't want to stretch this too far. But the truth sloshing around in his life feels like it's good. It's all good to go. The gauge says "full." But it will not be tested until the journey begins. Until you turn the key and you start that motor. And then you're gonna find out whether the truth in you was darkness or not. (39:39)

To put it in much better illustration—I'll use Jesus' now, okay?—he said, I'll tell you what it's like. It's the difference between a man who builds his house on the rock and a man who builds his house on the sand. Now there are a lot of people that listen to Jesus, they'll pick and choose a



few things like a cafeteria line. And those will be the kinds of people who will think they're perfectly fine 'cause people look at their lives, like the guy who's got a sloshing tank full of something, and everyone will go, "Oh, that's great. You sound like you're all filled up." That house will be sitting there. But there'll be a day of assessment. There'll be a day of testing. There'll be a day when they will have their work tested, and it will be like a storm against that house. And the difference between the man whose house will stand, and the house that will collapse, is the one who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice. This is a portal to the information that Christ is bringing that you open, and you embrace it. (40:29)

Well that's negative, Mike. Well, sometimes it does feel that way. But verse 36 ends on a positive note here, this illustration about light. He says, Yeah, on the other hand then, if your whole body is full of light, well, how did that happen? Verse 34. My eye is healthy, and your whole body is full of light. So I gotta have this receptor, this portal, this gateway, to my life. I gotta have a healthy one that sees the truth and lets it in. If then your whole body is full of light, verse 36, having no dark part—it's not like you're selective about this, you're letting it flood in—then it will be wholly bright as when a lamp with its rays gives you light. It's like that statement there in Ephesians. You know, arise, O sleeper, and let Christ shine on you. When you are in that place of opening to that message of the gospel, to the truth of Christ, and you're not selective, you're not sitting there going "I need more information, you need to prove it to me", but you've had adequate reason to believe the truth and you say yes, you embrace it, you're receptive to it. Then all this picture, whatever it is it's positive, it will be wholly bright. (41:34)

Now he doesn't us give any explanation of this so I'm out on a limb here, but I gotta start thinking. What does that mean? How— I mean, what are the positives of me saying, yes! I'm receptive to this. Even though it's got hard edges, I'm going to swallow the truth and I'm not gonna say, "Oh, just give us smooth things." Well that's the stuff we, we should focus on. You wanna counter a little bit of this, to the resistance in your life? And you want to promote receptivity? Well you oughta do that based on the benefits of it. Number three. Let's put it that way. (42:00)

### ***3. Promote the benefits of receptivity.***

And I hope you have some. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. If he's visited you and redeemed you, like Zechariah's prophecy said, well then we oughta talk about that. And we oughta talk about the benefits of that. And we oughta be walking billboards and advertisements of what it is to be in league with Christ because he's forgiven my sins and reconciled me to him. That should come with some benefits. (42:25)

Now this is not prosperity gospel stuff. Right, because the things that are really the lasting and true benefits, the profound benefits, they go far beyond what you're driving or where you live. This has to do with things that we sit here and say regardless of the circumstances, regardless of the health problems, regardless of the challenges of financially, these are things that define us as Christians. And this is distinctly different from having darkness in my life. (42:49)

Now, you could go in any direction with this, but I just thought since I gave you the CCSS in the first part, let's just use those initials. And you can use your name initials, or your— whatever, your



street name. Or you just sit down and write some. That would've been a good discussion question assignment. Just sit there and list some benefits of your life with the light of the gospel in it. Now, I'll just use these letters. (43:11)

Let's just talk about one that I love to quote: **Courage**. Courage. Proverbs 28:1. The wicked flee when no one pursues them, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. Do you understand the difference between being someone who has not dealt with my guilt problem, that stands before God as a hostile alien and is not his adopted child. There's something that changes radically just in the terms in the way I face life. Courage. These are people that can say because of Christ I can stand up if you're gonna chop my head off, if you're gonna shoot me, if I'm staring down the barrel of a gun at a community college. I will stand with Christ, and I'm not afraid. See, that's the kind of thing that Christianity can do to people's lives. Because the light lights them up, and they are fully bright. (43:57)

How about this one? **Conscience**. CCSS. Second C: Conscience. I have a clear conscience. My life, though it was like scarlet and stained, reasoning together with the Lord and adopting, and embracing, and opening the portal to his truth, and— and having that truth of forgiveness, and grace, and repentance flood my life. Man, my, my conscience is clean. It's been washed. It's as white as snow. I mean, I know these are all related, but think about how blessed it is for someone to have their sins forgiven, their transgressions not counted against them. If you want to talk about courage, how about Paul standing before the Sanhedrin and saying one of the reasons I have courage is that I have served the Lord with a clear conscience. My conscience is clean. He could say that guys that are standing there that could do this [*thumbs down gesture*] and have him killed. And he's saying, you know what? I'm right with God. And God plus one is a majority. Right? The early apostle could say, hey, see if it's right to you whether we obey you, the governing officials, or whether it's right for us to obey God. We're gonna stand with God, and when God is on our side it doesn't matter if everyone else is against us. If God is for us, who can be against us? (45:09)

We lead that to the third one. S: **Support**. I mean, I don't mean to trivialize this, but as I'm thinking I made a list, you can make your own list, but what does it mean to have the benefits of wholly lit, letting the truth of God into your life? Well, one of them is the support of God. I have God *in* me. That's the picture. It's a spatial picture, but it means God is in me. He will, as it's put in Hebrews 13, never leave me and never forsake me. I mean, that's a kind of support the rest of the world does not have. It's the kind of thing, and I love the way it's put here in this passage, Psalm 91:15. God speaking, here is his promise. The righteous when he calls to me, I will answer him. And there's one of the subsets of this; I have the privilege of prayer. I will be with him in trouble. We read this in our daily Bible reading this week. You walk through the fire, I'll be there. You walk through the flood, I'm gonna be there. I will walk you through all these things. I will never leave you and never forsake you. He says this, I will be with him in trouble. I will rescue him and I will honor him. See, when we live with the audience of one, ultimately like Paul said, then the cross in part is something that makes the world crucified to us and I to it. It doesn't really matter anymore whether we're winning in the polls or not. (46:23)

Courage, clear conscience, support from God. I guess all these are really related, but let me know this one down. The last S: **Stability**. Stability. I love this verse. We don't quote it enough. Psalm





112:7. Psalm 112:7 talks of the righteous, and it says, the righteous are not afraid of bad news. Their hearts are firm, trusting in the Lord. Yeah, the difference between your neighbor reading the paper and you reading the paper? Radically different. Not afraid of bad news. I don't like it. I prefer good news. But my heart trusts in the Lord, and it's gonna be stable. It's gonna be firm. I'm not freaking out. I'm not like the people that have no hope. Even when people die in my life. Think about that. You don't grieve like the rest of the world. Promote the benefits of receptivity. That oughta be on display, and in that sense I can end with Jesus' analogy in Matthew 5. In that sense, once the light floods your life then, hey. This little light of mine? I am gonna let it shine. I'm gonna make sure people can see it, 'cause the light has flooded my life. (47:24)

This sermon, getting us to recognize the fault is not with God. The fault is with our receptivity to God's truth. Exposing that is important in our evangelistic encounters, and our obligation is to promote the benefits of seeing and realizing it all comes down to the apex there of the problem with our sight. And when you think about that spiritually. People don't like you messing with their spiritual eyes. Any more than you like someone messing with your biological eyes. Am I right about that? I don't want anybody coming up to me at the door and poking their finger in my eye. He's gonna get a bad response. And yet, there came a day when I invited someone to take a scalpel to my cornea and cut a flap in it and lay it back like a carpet. And then say I'm gonna take laser beams and beam these into your eyeball, and I'm gonna burn up parts of your cornea and just reshape it for you. And then I'll put that flap back and hope everything heals well. I did that. Willingly. I remember this is gonna be freaky, when they explained it to me. Aww, I don't know about this. And I always think, well, at least it the kind of procedure, surgery, I'll have my eyes close. Oh, no, that's right. I can't. This is gonna be weird. (48:42)

Now I don't want you taking a knife to my eyeball. But I've let someone take a knife to my eyeball. Why is that? 'Cause I realized at one point what I'm missing. You want to be a billboard for the light of God in your life? At some point, and there is some truth to this. It's not the main focus of our evangelism, but to say you know there's something about the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. There's something about being led in the way of peace, as it says there in Zachariah's prophecy, because the sunrise has dawned and shined in my life. I am willing to have that surgery on my eyes 'cause I know what I'm missing. I got a glimpse of what I need to see. (49:21)

It's hard for people to come to Christ. Not so much because they're lacking evidence or information, but because you're gonna have to mess with that thing that is so sensitive. What I use as a gateway and a portal to the truth. I don't like messing with that. I don't even like to think that the truth is outside of me. I like to think it's in me. But I know I need to get it put in me. Messing with your eyeball, that's weird. It's bizarre. It's serious. It's... whatever. But that's the work God's called us to do. And we don't do it alone. Obviously it is God who ultimately grants sight. But we're praying for that. We're asking for it. We want to see more of him. (49:59)

Let's pray together. God, both spiritually and biologically, I look back to that transformation of my sight, and I look at that with no regrets. Scary. Faith is scary, not because it's based on something I don't think is real or true. It's scary because opening up that portal to the truth of God I know is going to change everything. It's gonna flood into every dark part of my life, and it's gonna reveal that this is right, or this is wrong, or this needs to be shored up, or that belief is



not what it needs to be. It's gonna have a transformative effect. And yet, God, when we recognize how much better it is to have real light in our life, and not this fabricated, cafeteria-style light that so many people opt for just to have something sloshing around in their life that makes them feel virtuous, but the real light of Christ with hard edges and all. To embrace that, God, we know that's ultimately a... a perfect moment in our life. A *teleios* moment, a moment that just is just what it ought to be. We were made for that, to know you. The only true God in Jesus Christ whom you've sent. Thanks so much for the sunrise rising in the first century, and thanks that we can sit here now knowing that that communication has not ceased just because of the ascension. That you continue to speak loudly in creation and conscience, in scripture and through your Spirit. I pray that would be something that we would capitalize on and point out, that we would take pains to recognize in our evangelism, and that we would lovingly and prayerfully expose the resistance that's so common in our world. God, help us to be billboards of your grace and the benefits of seeing this week. In Jesus' name. Amen.