Welcome to Redemption Church of Plano, Tx. My name is Scott and I’m the Youth Pastor here. If you are here for the first time today, you have missed out on some great messages the last couple of weeks, but they are all available on our podcast on our website. We’ve been talking about Darkness for weeks. The first week, we talked about how scary it is and that fear…that fear is not unnatural, the dark can be dangerous. Not just trip on my son’s action figure dangerous, but truly DANGEROUS. In week 2, we talked about reasons for that danger. The enemy prefers darkness! Demonic things happen in spiritual darkness and we are/should be children of light. I don’t want to get ahead of myself, but we are the light in the dark places!...........Then, last week, we had our good friend, Pastor Kiesel from Mykop, Russia come and talk to us about the light that they are spreading around the dark landscape of Russia. This is joyous news, but it is to be expected because Light Wins!

<LIGHT WINS>

Today, I am going to encourage you through scripture and preaching to take that winning light and spread it around. We are called to Shine the light of Jesus into the dark places.

 I would like to begin with a short demonstration.

<Brief Demonstration>

~LIGHTS GO OUT BLACK~

This is a room. This room is dark. The camera probably can’t see much, but if I create some light…You can see me. As your eyes adjust, you could probably see a large portion of this room from just a little light. That’s because the very essence of darkness is the absence of light. When you add light to it, it is not “dark” anymore. Now if we turn on all of the lights

~ALL LIGHTS UP~

That might even hurt your eyes for a second, because the Darkness has been obliterated. That’s right folks, you have hitched your cart to a winner, because although this world is dark, Jesus is the light of the world! John 8:12 says…

John 8:12

He said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never live in darkness. They will have the light that gives life.”

Jesus is the light and if we walk with Him and He walks with us, we will not walk in darkness. There is safety found in Jesus Christ. Not necessarily safety on Earth, although there is nearly as much evidence of people being saved as being martyred, but safety in eternity. I don’t know about you, but give me that treasure where moths and vermin can’t destroy it. Give me my treasure where it cannot be stolen. We have the light of the world on our side and he can’t help but obliterate the darkness that threatens us. It’s not magic, it’s practical. And it’s practical that now that we have light, we should share it and bring peace and safety to the darkness. We need to bring Jesus to the darkness, so HE can destroy it. We are called to do it.

<We are Called To Carry The Light To Dark Places>

 Matthew 5 is one of the most instructive, marching order-esque chapters in the Bible…it’s the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is telling us what to do and two verses are devoted to this topic. Matthew 5:14-16.

Matthew 5:14-16

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. **15**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. **16**In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

<We are Called To Carry The Light To Dark Places>

We are called to let our light shine before others. There are dark places that we may not want to go. There are things that “self-righteous” people might prefer to avoid out of fear or “ickyness.” A self-righteous person is interested in themselves. A self-righteous person has no desire to go to hurting and broken people, because a self-righteous person is only worried about (hand to ear) THEMSELVES. And that makes sense to me, because of the fact that a self-righteous person isn’t saving anyone. A self-righteous person cannot save anyone. Put it plainly…the only one who saves is Jesus. He’s the author and finisher or perfecter of our faith. That’s why we NEED to bring him to dark places, because He is the only catalyst to change such things, AMEN? A self-righteous person does things because of how good they are and a righteous person does things because of how good Jesus is. A self-righteous person is like someone in a glow in the dark shirt. You’ve been around the light long enough to charge you up, but if you don’t carry Jesus with you, it will fade and then self-righteous little old you will be in the dark. When I say that we are called to carry the light into dark places, I’m not talking about charity to promote goodness and warm feelings in the world on a global scale, I’m talking about BRINGING JESUS CHRIST TO SOMEBODY. Pastor Kiesel was correct in stating that we need to meet the physical needs of people to keep them alive for Jesus to work in their life. I am in no way bashing missions work, but the most philanthropic thing that you can do is bring Jesus to somebody. And this is great for you, my righteous brothers and sisters because if what we are supposed to do is bring Jesus to the dark places, this is easy because it is dark around here.

It says in John 3:19-20

John 3:19-20

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. **20**Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.

People living in darkness won’t come into the light. We need to bring the light of Jesus to them. What does that look like? If we bring Jesus to them, He’s also referred to as Love. Jesus is light and love and so bringing true love and compassion to a person will brighten up their lives. Bringing true love to a community will break up division and bring peace. Bringing Jesus in the form of love will obliterate darkness. We need to know where the darkness is. It’s not just dark in Syria, where Christians are being murdered regularly. It’s not just dark in communist-repressed North Korea.

<Wherever there is no light, it is dark>

Wherever there is no light, it is dark. Wherever there is no Christ, it is dark. And so we are called to bring Him to those places by loving the people in those places and no matter how dangerous it seems, we can be confident because Light Wins

<Light Wins>

It says in Revelation 21:23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. Jesus is the light in Heaven and we know that Heaven is the end. So we know that Jesus, who is constant, will be with us til the end and even in greater capacity as He will light everything. Light Wins. It’s dark here, but this…it will go away and all that will be left is us and that glorious light. People need to know that. Your friend who isn’t sure if they believe in God anymore needs to know that. Your dad who is quiet about his faith because he is unsure needs to know that. The kid down the street who keeps getting into trouble needs to know that. The person who you paid for the gasoline that you put in your car needs to know that. Light Wins! Jesus wins!

* MUSICIAN -

We have been made more than conquerors and as righteous believers, we need to share that with somebody. We are charged to bring this light to the world. When was the last time you were righteous and concerned more with the love of Jesus than yourself? When was the last time you got over your personal stuff to light up someone’s world? You wanna talk personal stuff, I can talk a little personal stuff, but Jesus wins. I believe it and even I should tell more people about it, so I am charging us all to be that 1st century church to a 21st century world and start bringing love to people.

We do three things at Redemption Church and the third one is taking physical steps to the altar and talking to God. We need to get real with Jesus. If you’re like me and you’ve been letting personal stuff and self-righteousness get in the way of your witness, come pray and ask Jesus to purify you. If you are righteous and you want to share pray for strength and cry out for boldness. If you feel like you can’t share love with the darkness because you are dark, come to this altar and find the love that’s been waiting. Come into the first two feet and we will pray with you. Today could be the day that light enters your life. Today is the day that darkness can be lifted. Who wants to be a beacon? To their family? To the world? Meet me down here. Let’s talk to Jesus as Nate sings.