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## **Let There Be Light**

Genesis 1:1-5

Peter Hiett

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[Somber organ music plays. Six pallbearers walk into the sanctuary carrying a casket and set it on the stage. The room is dark and will remain mostly dark until the first song of communion. After a moment, we hear Peter's voice coming from the casket.]

This is awesome. Nobody can see me. Nobody knows I'm even here. I'm, like, *invisible*. "Yes, we are, my precious." Mmmm . . . more chips. [We hear a bag crackling and Peter chewing.] I should have gotten one of these high-tech isolation chambers long ago.

All those people . . . stress me out. They think I'm a dork, I know it. Some of them think I'm, like, all *holy* or something. I bet they'd hate me if they really saw me.

Crap! I have to preach to them. Sometimes I just hate my job. But I can't let anybody know that, because I'm supposed to "rejoice in the Lord always." I better have another beer. [We hear Peter open a can.]

I can't talk about God . . . that's *insane*. I want to run away. Well, I'd better get my act together. It's Easter. I've got responsibilities. I want to stay here . . . I could *die* out there . . . it's safe here . . . it's dark in here . . . really, really dark in here .

. . . and lonely . . . really lonely . . . lonely as hell.

[The casket lip opens.] Oh, golly, I'm sorry. I lost track of time. I was just going over my notes in this . . . ah . . . new . . . ah . . . sermon preparation chamber. I'll just move this out of the way . . .

Let's pray: Lord, cause us to preach your Word. In Jesus' name, amen.

Well, it's Easter Sunday. Easter is an old Anglo-Saxon word for the pagan festival of the vernal equinox when the sun crossed the equator into the northern hemisphere such that there was more light than dark in each day.

When the Church arrived in England, they took over the old pagan name, because Christ's resurrection is the victory of light over darkness.

Here at Lookout, we've been preaching from the book of Genesis. I thought about breaking our series for Easter, but then I realized it's right here in the first three verses of

the Bible. Listen to the first two verses:

Genesis 1:1-2:

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep [the abyss]. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

There's something rather attractive about the dark, isn't there? I mean, light and life can cause some pain. If only you could manufacture some sort of protective wooden box for your soul . . . if only you could construct some sort of stone enclosure for your heart where you could hide it in the dark . . .

[Singing] "Hiding in my room, safe within my room, I touch no one and no one touches me; I am a rock, I am an island. And a rock feels no pain, and an island never cries." It's dead.

Life hurts . . . and life is love. Remember what C. S. Lewis wrote?

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside of Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell.

In his book *The Great Divorce*, Lewis writes:

A damned soul is nearly nothing: it is shrunk, shut up in itself. Good beats upon the damned incessantly . . . their eyes fast shut. First they will not, in the end they cannot, open . . . their eyes to see.

Someone [in Lewis' story] then asked, "Then no one can ever reach them?" And the angel replied, "Only the Greatest of all can make Himself small enough to enter Hell. . . . Only One has descended into Hell."

Well, life and love are painful, and we hide ourselves in our own hell because it's easier to just *not see*.

On Paul Harvey news, Lucille Goodyear reported trouble driving home from work. She says, "It used to be easy . . . no traffic problems, no mad rat race. But now, wow! Cars coming from all directions!" She says it's been that way ever since she got her new glasses.

We hide from pain, and what we hide is our shame. We hide in fear, like Adam

and Eve in fig leaves and trees, hiding in the knowledge of good and evil.

One of the best ways to hide a dark heart is to hide it with religion. That's what the Pharisees did. Jesus said they were like white-washed tombs.

We hide our darkness by acting a part, impersonating ourselves. And there we're cut off and alone. In denial and lies, we hide our darkness in more darkness. Some are so afraid of death they're tempted to suicide—a last ditch effort to seize control.

We hide our fear of death in death.

So in summary, why do we hate the light? Because it exposes our death . . . which we pretend is life.

[Peter shines a spotlight on the crowd. Their eyes have adjusted to the darkness of the room.] You don't like this light shining in your eyes, do you? Neither do I. It burns. So how do we hide from the light? We shut our eyes. All we have to do is shut our eyes, because we don't believe the light is good.

Genesis 1:2-4:

*Darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good.*

God saw that it was beautiful. God says, "Let there be," not "there must be." I mean, He's not like me a moment ago shining the light in your face whether you wanted it or not. He wants you to *let* there be light. He wants you to want Him.

I think that's why He doesn't normally overpower us with bright lights and mind-boggling miracles. He wants us to *want* Him, and that's called faith. He wants us to "walk by faith and not by sight."

So there's a light better than just visible light, and we see it with the eyes of our heart. That's called *faith*. So you may be physically blind yet see better than anyone here.

Well, God says, "Let there be light," and He "sees that the light is good." He wants you to "let there be light" because you "see that the light is good."

Is light good?  
What does it do?

Turn to your neighbor. Close your eyes. Now, give your neighbor a high five. And if it didn't work, keep your eyes closed and try harder. Swing harder! Try harder! [People hit each other harder and harder.]

You know, giving someone a high five is good. It's a way to communicate love and joy. But you people were just smacking each other—hurting each other, and that's *bad*.

So open your eyes, turn to your neighbor, and try again. That's *good*. God tells us to be good, and I think we each want to be good. But we walk in darkness and can't see the good. So the harder we try to be good, the more we're bad.

Much of the time the Church just makes it worse, because we stand around

yelling at blind people: “You’re not good! Try harder! Try harder!” But we’re not supposed to yell; we’re supposed to shine the light.

So if you’re new to church this morning, I want to apologize on behalf of the church. I’m sorry that we’ve been doing so much yelling and so little shining the light.

Light is good.  
But what is light?

Scientists are utterly baffled by light. It behaves like a particle (mass) and it behaves like a wave (energy). And whether it behaves like a particle or a wave depends on what you’re thinking. It’s like light can read your mind.

Well, maybe light isn’t simply a particle or a wave, mass or energy. Maybe light is a *person*: not a *what* but a *who*.

The Bible says, “God is light,” and “Jesus is the light of the world.” So when God says, “Let there be light,” He’s saying, “Let there be me in the darkness.”

You know, Scripture says, “The light shines in the darkness.” Scripture also says that Jesus emptied Himself when He came into this world.

You realize that if you stare at the sun in full strength, it will fry your eyes. And you won’t be able to see its glory at all. However, you can stare at a single flame like this. [Peter lights a single candle in the dark and holds it as he speaks.] You can stare at this flame in the dark and see that it’s good—beautiful.

The light shines in the darkness.

In this world, there was never ever a place more dark than the edge of Mt. Zion at the Hill of the Skull, 2,000 years ago on a Friday between high noon and 3:00. The darkness does not get deeper than the moment in which the creation rejects and crucifies its Creator. And yet, in that moment, the light shines more wondrously than anywhere else in all creation. And if we see Him there, perhaps we can see Him everywhere.

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” As we crucified Him, the life spilled out; the blood spilled out; the light was revealed. And what is the light? The light is steadfast love; unending mercy; absolute, unquenchable grace. And who is the light? The light is God, and God is love. And Jesus the Christ has made Him known.

Jesus is the radiance of God’s glory.  
“The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it.”

All the darkness in the world cannot overcome the light of this single candle. That’s because darkness is an absence, and light is a substance. Evil is an absence, and goodness is substance. God is substance. [Peter puts down the candle and the lights come back on.]

Listen to the creation story in the Gospel of John:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were

made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. . . .

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. .

..

From his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.

Well, to say, “Let there be light” is to say, “Let there be Jesus.” And can you see? He’s good. The Light is good.

“The light shines in the darkness.” On the cross, Jesus emptied Himself and bore our sin, experienced our shame, suffered our isolation, and descended into our death. “The light shines in the darkness.”

Yet we worry that the darkness wins. We think the darkness wins, so we make a “covenant with death.” We trust death, climb in our coffins, and hide from light and life and love. We think death wins, for we only see as far as the edge of the grave.

But death doesn’t win! Death, darkness, lies, and evil always and forever *lose*.

As Jesus dies He cries out, “It is finished!” The earth shakes, the veil rips, tombs are opened. And on the third day, Jesus’ tomb is opened and the Light walks out. And now He tells you in Revelation 21:4-6:

Death shall be no more . . . “Behold, I make all things new. . . . It is done!  
I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”

In other words, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” On the cross, Jesus didn’t just descend into one tomb, one grave; on the cross, Jesus descended into Hell. I think He descended into *every* grave.

The Apostle Paul writes, “He who descended is he who ascended far above the heavens that he might fill all things.” So light doesn’t just shine in some darkness 2,000 years ago on a Friday; light shines in *your* darkness *now*. So if you don’t see the light, what’s the problem?

Perhaps you don’t trust that the light is good. So perhaps you won’t agree with God and say, “Let there be light.” Perhaps the eyes of your heart are shut, because perhaps you’re too afraid to open them. You think the light will only burn and never heal. You think the darkness wins. But “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot comprehend it—overcome it.”

The darkness is temporal; the light is eternal.

The light is eternal,  
the fire of God is eternal,  
life is eternal,  
love is eternal.

There is at least one more amazing thing about light. I'll show you. It's fast . . . really fast. Watch this: [Peter shines the spotlight onto the wall, then turns it off.] Did you see how fast that was? I'll do it again. Did you see that? That light was moving at 186,000 miles per second!

Einstein discovered that the speed of light is a constant. No matter how fast I move, the light will still move 186,000 miles per second, relative to me.

Now, that's totally counter-intuitive, but it means this: If the speed of light is a constant, space and time are *not* constant. Time is relative.

So as I move relative to you, time slows down for me and speeds up for you. If I were to travel into space at 130,000 miles per second and then return in ten years, ten years would have passed for me, but *twenty* years would have passed for you. You'd be ten years older than me.

Theoretically, if I could travel at the speed of light, time *for me* would stop. It would always be NOW. And all your life would be eternally present to me—past, present, and future—NOW. I'd see your whole life in the eternal NOW.

I can't travel at the speed of light. But light can and does. In *The Elegant Universe*, Brian Greene writes, "Light does not get old. A photon that emerged from the Big Bang is the same age today as it was then."

- A photon is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
- Light is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
- So God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
- "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

So when He looks at you, He sees all of you, yesterday, today, and forever. And when He forgives you, it's all of you. He's never surprised by you.

Light is eternal,  
God is eternal,  
love is eternal,  
grace is eternal,  
Jesus is eternal.

So when He gives you His life, it's eternal.

- God said to Moses, "My name is I AM that I AM."
- Jesus said to some Pharisees, "Before Abraham was, I AM."
- Jesus also said, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life."

When we come to the cross, we come to eternity. The cross is the point where eternity invades all temporality and fills it with life—with meaning and plot. So when

Jesus cries, “It is finished,” I think He means *all* is finished: all time is finished, all creation is finished, all atonement is finished, and all of you is finished.

So when He died on the cross for your sins, which ones did He die for?

- Was it only the ones you’ve confessed up till now? So you have to worry that if He knew this or that about your past the deal would be off?

If you hide a sin in the past, you just build a coffin for yourself *now*. You close your eyes to the light and climb in . . . even though He has forgiven all your sins in the past.

- And is it only our sins in the past that He’s forgiven? So you have to worry about failing in the future?

If you do, you only build a coffin for yourself *now* and then climb in . . . even though He has already died for the sins you’ll commit tomorrow. He already knows, and if you fail tomorrow, He won’t say, “Oh no!—I forgot that one.”

Paul writes, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.” He means *no condemnation*. He writes that you are “already seated in the heavenly places with Christ.”

So when God forgives your sins, He forgives *all* your sins. And when the Light descends into darkness, He descends into *all* your darkness. He is the end of all darkness and all time.

And that means all darkness is Easter just waiting to happen. And all *your* darkness is Easter just waiting to happen.

In every dark corner of your life, Jesus is waiting for you to open your eyes because you believe that the light is good.

Open your eyes and look at Him. Your scars are on His body. Your wounds are on His hands, feet, and side.

So Mary went to the tomb on Easter morning. It was the darkest corner of her life. There was no darker place in all the world. It was Jesus’ tomb and her tomb: the death of her hopes and dreams—the death of God.

But she went and she saw Jesus there. Remember the story? He was risen . . . but Mary was still in the grave. He was there . . . but Mary couldn’t see Him. The eyes of her heart were shut in pain, shame, and fear. She thought He was the gardener until He said, “Mary” and opened her eyes.

The Light shone in her darkness,  
and everything changed.

He then showed His wounds to the disciples. They saw that the light is good and said, “Let there be light!” That place of pain, shame, and fear became *the place* of unspeakable glory.

Julian of Norwich writes that Jesus revealed this to her: “Since I have turned the

greatest possible harm into good, it is my will that you should know from this that I shall turn all lesser evil into good.”

When the light shines in the darkness, it turns evil into good. It turns our pain, shame, and fear into the revelation of God’s mercy. He turns sin into grace. He turns grief into Gospel. He turns darkness into light. Light reveals meaning, and Jesus is the meaning of all things.

- If you thought you had no Father, shine the light.  
You’ll see God is your Father.
- If you thought you had no husband, shine the light.  
You’ll see Jesus is your husband.
- If you thought you were alone, shine the light.  
You’ll see His Spirit is in you.
- If you thought you were forsaken, shine the light.  
You’ll see He will never forsake you.
- If you thought you were nobody, shine the light.  
You’ll see you are God’s Body.
- If you thought darkness wins, shine the light.  
You’ll see the Light works all things for good.
- If you thought *you* were darkness, shine the light.  
You’ll see that you are light in the Lord.

He changes the meaning of your past,  
so you’re no longer stuck in shame.  
He changes the meaning of your future,  
so you’re no longer imprisoned in fear.

No longer stuck in the past or the future, you’re free to live NOW with God—I AM that I AM. NOW is where Light is; where eternity is. The present is the moment that eternity touches time.

NOW is where I know God. God is light, and God is person. I can know *about* a person in the past, and I can *imagine* a person in the future, but I can only *know* a person NOW in the present.

Jesus prayed, “And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” When I know Jesus now, I have life now.

The Spirit’s hovering over my darkness; the Light has already descended into my darkness. To know Him now, I only have to speak to Him now. He died so that no matter where I am, I can talk to Him now, even in darkness.

Several years ago, a pastor burned out, resigned from his church, abandoned his family, and fled to a logging camp in New England. One wintry afternoon he sat shivering in his aluminum trailer (it was like a coffin). Suddenly the electric heater went out—died. He cursed his fate, and then he talked to God. He shouted, “God, I hate you!” Then he sank to his knees weeping.

There in that bright darkness, he heard Jesus say, “I know. It’s okay.” Then this broken man heard Jesus weeping within him. He stood up and started home.

As I’ve told you before, years ago at a conference I told God I was leaving the ministry. I’d had it. He didn’t talk to me and He didn’t care about me, I thought. But that day He spoke to me, I heard Him, and He revealed a deep darkness in my soul. I lay on the ground weeping for hours, but I wasn’t weeping in fear or shame. It was sweet, like He was weeping through me and for me.

Later that day, I was literally pinned to the floor. I couldn’t get up, and it felt like a million volts of electricity coursed through my body. I said to the lady who was praying for me, “Jesus just called me a dork!” She said, “Oh, He wouldn’t do that!” But I believe He did. He was speaking my language. He was saying, “Stop being a dork and doubting my love for you.”

In that moment, the veil was ripped; light was everywhere. I thanked Him for everything, for I saw that He was everywhere in my life working. I saw that the light was good, and my heart said, “Let there be more light!” I finally got up off the floor and started home.

Yet I still have to battle the darkness. All the things I said at the start of the service in the coffin were basically true . . . except I’ve learned not to say them to myself in the dark. I’m learning to say them to Jesus, the Light in my dark. [Peter puts the light in the coffin.]

So . . .

- I tell Him, “They think I’m a dork,” and He says, “They thought I was a dork too.”
- I tell Him, “I’m ashamed of my past,” and He says, “You’re forgiven.”
- I tell Him, “I’m scared of the future,” and He says, “Peter, I’m your future.”
- I tell Him, “I can’t do it,” and He says, “I know, but I can.”
- I tell Him, “I want to get drunk on a beach,” and He says, “I know. Be filled with my Spirit.”
- I tell Him, “I’m lonely,” and He says, “Let’s be lonely together.”
- I say, “I hate my job,” and I think He says, “I know. In a garden I did too. But your job is my job. Every real job is my job.” And then I love my job, and it’s not a job but a calling.

I walk with Him; I die with Him. I die to my darkness. I die with Him and rise with Him. “No longer I who live but Christ who lives in me”—the Light in me. “My outer nature is wasting away; my inner nature is being renewed every day.”

One day they’ll actually lay this old body in a coffin. But I don’t need to fear that day. I’ve already been through it a thousand times. And it’s not the end; it’s just the beginning.

*In the beginning . . . darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good.*

Each of you has a coffin. I just told you about mine. Don’t stay in yours. The Spirit is hovering over the darkness. The Light has already descended into the darkness. The Light is good. Say, “Let there be light . . . in my coffin.”

Pray: “Lord God, I confess to you my darkness. Let there be light in me. Let there be Jesus in me.”

In the darkness, on the night Jesus was betrayed, He took bread and broke it saying, “This is my body which is for you. Take and eat.” And after supper, in the same manner He took the cup saying, “This is the cup of the New Covenant in my blood. Drink of it, all of you.”

Come and place the light in your coffin.

[Communion]

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The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

In Jesus’ name, amen.



### Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.**

~*Genesis 1:1-2 (RSV)*

Oh that you would hide me in Sheol, that you would conceal me until your wrath be past... !

~*Job 14:13*

The will of the world is always a will to death, a will to suicide.

~*Jacques Ellul, The Presence of the Kingdom*

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket--safe, dark, motionless, airless--it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside of Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell.

~*C. S. Lewis, The Four Loves*

Deep, deep down, underground in a cave, isolated, alone, by the dark water lived old Gollum. He was a Gollum as dark as darkness. Riddles were all he could think of, asking them and sometimes guessing had been the only game he had ever played with other funny creatures sitting in their holes in the long, long ago, before he lost all his friends and was driven away alone and crept down into the dark under the mountains . . . In his hiding place he had a ring--a ring of power. If you slipped it on, you were invisible, only in full sunlight to be seen, and then only as a shadow. When he was very, very hungry wearing the ring, he might even venture into torchlight, which made his eyes blink and smart, but he would be safe. Oh yes, quite safe. No one would see him till he had his finger on their throat. Quite safe. "Yes," he whispered to himself. "It won't see us will it, my precious? No."

~*J. R. R. Tolkien, The Hobbit*

My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed [Hebrew: *Golem*]. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

~*Psalms 139:15-16 (NKJV)*

**And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.**

~*Genesis 1:3 (RSV)*

In contrast to the Babylonian gods and every other form of oppressive power, the news is that only God's gracious power can create. . . . This God speaks not of "must be," but of "let be." Life in its fullness is therefore possible.

~*Walter Brueggemann, Genesis*

**And God saw that the light was good. . .**

~*Genesis 1:4a (RSV)*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

~*John 1:1-5*

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." So they departed quickly from the tomb with

fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. . . ."

~ *Matthew 28:1-10*

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

~ *John 1:9-14; 16-18*

Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more." Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

~ *John 8:10-12*

### **. . . and God separated the light from the darkness.**

~ *Genesis 1:4b (RSV)*

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.

~ *John 3:16-19*

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

~ *Isaiah 60:1-3*

### **God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.**

~ *Genesis 1:5 (RSV)*

For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. . . . For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

~ *1 Thessalonians 5:5, 9*

Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

~ *1 John 2:9-10*

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. . . . Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

~ *Hebrews 3:12-13; 4:6-7*

Now he has departed from this strange world a little ahead of me. That means nothing. People like us, who believe in physics, know that the distinction between past, present, and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion.

~ *Albert Einstein, at Niels Bohr's funeral*

Time is relative to motion and at the speed of light, time as an inexorable flow of successive events ceases to exist at all. At the speed of light, everything is caught up in an eternal now. The temporal is caught up in the eternal.

~ *Tony Campolo, A Reasonable Faith*

The riddle of the present is the deepest of all the riddles of time. Again, there is no answer except from that which comprises all time and lies beyond it—the eternal. Whenever we say “now” or “today,” we stop the flux of time for us. We accept the present and do not care that it is gone in the moment that we accept it. We live in it and it is renewed for us in every new “present.” This is possible because every moment of time reaches into the eternal. It is the eternal that stops the flux of time for us. It is the eternal “now” which provides for us a temporal “now.” We live so long as “it is still today”—in the words of the letter to the Hebrews. Not everybody, and nobody all the time, is aware of this “eternal now” in the temporal “now.” But sometimes it breaks powerfully into our consciousness and gives us the certainty of the eternal, of a dimension of time which cuts into time and gives us our time.

~ Paul Tillich, *The Eternal NOW*

The humans live in time, but our Enemy [God] destines them to eternity. He therefore, I believe, wants them to attend chiefly to two things, to eternity itself and to that point of time which they call the Present. For the Present is the point at which time touches eternity. Of the present moment, and of it only, humans have an experience analogous to the experience which our Enemy [God] has of reality as a whole; in it alone freedom and actuality are offered them. He would therefore have them continually concerned either with eternity (which means being concerned with Him) or with the Present—either meditating on their eternal union with, or separation from, Himself, or else obeying the present voice of conscience, bearing the present cross, receiving the present grace, giving thanks for the present pleasure. Our business is to get them away from the eternal and from the Present. . . . We want a whole race perpetually in pursuit of the rainbow’s end, never honest, nor kind, nor happy now, but always using as mere fuel wherewith to heap the altar of the Future every real gift which is offered them in the Present.

~ C. S. Lewis, *Scripture Letters*

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

~ Exodus 3:14

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

~ John 8:58

Eternal life is now. We’re surrounded by it, like the fish in the ocean, but we have no notion about it at all.

~ Anthony De Mello, *Awareness*

. . . His love never allows our time to be lost.

~ Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*

Six hundred years ago, Julian of Norwich seized this truth with stunning simplicity when she wrote: “Some of us believe that God is almighty and can do everything; and that he is all-wise and may do everything; but that he is all-love and will do everything—there we draw back. As I see it, this ignorance is the greatest of all hindrances to God’s lovers.” Yet, there is more. Ponder these words of the Apostle Paul: “The things which are done in secret are things that people are ashamed even to speak of; but anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and *anything illuminated turns into light*.” (Ephesians 5:12-14, emphasis added). God not only forgives and forgets our shameful deeds but even turns their darkness into light. All things work together for those who love God, “even,” Augustine of Hippo added, “our sins.”

~ Brennan Manning, *Abba’s Child*

Everything belongs; God uses everything. There are no dead-ends. There is no wasted energy. Everything is recycled. Sin history and salvation history are two sides of one coin. I believe with all my heart that the Gospel is all about the mystery of forgiveness. When you “get” forgiveness, you get it. We use the phrase “falling in love.” I think forgiveness is almost the same thing. It’s a mystery we fall into: the mystery is God. God forgives all things for being imperfect, broken, and poor. . . . St. Augustine says, “In my deepest wound I see your glory and it dazzles me.”

~ Richard Rohr, *Everything Belongs*

So what our blessed Lord’s teaching means is that we should take heed of the following: “Since I have turned the greatest possible harm into good, it is my will that you should know from this that I shall turn all lesser evil into good.”

~ Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

~ 2 *Corinthians* 5:14-17