

***“Seeing Through Jesus”***  
2 Corinthians 3:12-13, 4:1-6

If you look at a color picture and really focus on it, if the image is turned to black and white, you still see the colors. The colors aren't there anymore; the colored light is not going to your eye receptors, but our brains interpret it with the colors that were there. But that only lasts so long.

When Moses visited with God his face would glow for a while as if still reflecting the glory of God. Then the glow would fade. They put a veil across his face so the people would not see the glow fade. It only lasted so long. The glow gave a glimpse of God, but it was only temporary; it was not complete. We need a clearer, more intense view to see God and who we are.

The light we see is a combination of red, green, and blue light. In the old days colored TV had three electronic “guns” that each projected a type of light on the screen to get the colors we see: red, green, and blue. You needed all three to give a complete picture of the colors. But if you only had red, only red light came on to our eyes to see. The same happened with green and blue. This morning we are going to use that as an example to show that the views we have on our own can only give us a partial image. The only complete image we can have of our world comes through seeing through the light of Jesus.

Red is a color associated with energy. We speak of things being “red hot.” We will use that to represent a world view that looks to getting things done. This is a view that solves problems with science and technology.

One hundred years ago 30% of deaths in this country involved children under 5. Today that has dropped to 2%. Words “diphtheria,” “cholera,” “typhoid fever,” “polio,” and “tuberculosis” have gone from feared diseases to names for vaccines. Information that came to us in weeks through the mail is available for us instantly online. In this world view all problems can eventually be solved by how we make and fix things.

But look at what “being productive” does. Our tapping of carbon energy heats our homes and keeps our cars going, but what does it do to the earth as a whole? Technology has replaced human work, but that also lessens jobs that give income to families. What good is it to be “productive,” when you ignore or can't relate to your spouse or children?

Green is the color of growth. It is associated with being positive. “Green light” doesn't just mean that our cars can go, but that there is agreement about what we should do. We will use this light to represent a worldview that sees good in everything.

The prevailing view in our academic world after World War 2 was the “red light” view that we just mentioned using science and technology to solve all problems. It was the United

States' ability to be productive that brought about victory in the war. We looked to that to beat communism and poverty.

But that view failed. We hear about "asymmetrical war" where the enemy hides among the population and turns your seeming victory into defeat by causing the deaths on so many people. Science can enable us to bring the world to our fingertips, but it has made it hard for us to know how to talk to the person standing next to us. The academic world turned to the "postmodern" view that says that all views have something to contribute. People in older cultures may not have indoor plumbing, but they don't have to lock their doors out of fear of theft or can trust their neighbors to help watch their children. In this worldview every culture and view has something to contribute. Everyone is basically good. We just need to learn to be tolerant and accepting.

When people are sad, they feel "blue." A whole genre of music is called "blues" and usually reflects bad times in peoples' lives. We use this blue light to represent a worldview that sees the bad in everything.

This worldview may not be very popular, but so often it seems much closer to the truth than the other worldviews. It is certainly easier and more precise to criticize things than to come up with real solutions. Our "red light" technology says we can find alternate forms of energy besides fossil fuels. But they involve inconsistent energy like wind turbines, toxic chemicals like what is used in batteries for solar power, or the danger of nuclear accidents. Our "green light" acceptance can affirm many different ideas, but so often they contradict each other and fly in the face of truth. So often for every seemingly "good" thing we can find something selfish and exploitive. Did the US give aid to their defeated enemies of Germany and Japan out of a sense of pure generosity, or because they feared that communism would take over in those countries? Do people give to charity because they really care or help them feel less guilty?

The "blue light" may seem honest, but what are we left with? We see it reflected in the words of Ecclesiastes, "Vanity or vanities, everything is vanity." Or as another translation reads, "Meaningless, meaningless, all is meaningless."

None of these lights are enough. They all fall short. But if we bring them together, we get white light. In that light we don't just see some things and not others. We can see clearly.

That is the light that God shone into this world in Jesus. He called Himself "the light of the world. Light and darkness are used so often in Scriptures to describe good and evil. To understand this we have to realize what darkness meant in a time of no electronics. Every now and then, our power goes out at night and it gets really dark in our neighborhoods. But we can still get in our cars and travel with our headlights. But in Jesus' time you didn't travel at night. It was too dark. You put your life into danger by walking in a land of rocks and gullies. Darkness was frightening. That is why St. Paul could say, "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth." (Ephesians 5:8-9). Think of how we feel when after

groping with our hand in the dark we reach a light switch and the dark turns to light. God has come in Jesus to bring light into our dark world.

Only in Christ can we see clearly. In Him we are not hiding the bad things, nor pretending we can solve all our problems, nor saying “it’s hopeless.” No, in Him we have a clear view of God’s love, both how extensive (as we see His death for us on the cross) and eternal (as we see in the Transfiguration as it gives us a preview of Easter). Because in Jesus, we can see.