

“Walk in the Light” John 12:24-50 Wednesday in Holy Week 2021

Grace, peace and mercy be unto you from God the Father and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

We are blessed in many ways here in our church. One of our greatest blessings is this beautiful sanctuary. The space is large and welcoming. The appointments are noble and reverent. The stained-glass windows, the banners, the paraments, and the vestments. Everything here encourages humble reverence and pious devotion to our Lord.

But what truly makes this sanctuary a holy and sacred place is the Light. I don't mean the light coming from the fixtures, and I don't mean the light shining in from the windows. The Light that truly blesses our church is not created light from the sun. It is not manufactured light from bulbs and fixtures. It is heavenly light: The Light of Christ. The Light Christ shines in all its heavenly beauty in the purity of his holy Word and the perfection of his blessed Sacraments.

That's what Christ does. He shines the Light of heaven in our hearts and on our souls and into the darkness of this sinful broken world. And he does it right here in our churches; just as he does in every place where his Word and Sacraments are kept and celebrated in faithfulness to him.

Shine though he does, Christ also warns us of the time when darkness will come. In the gospel for today, Christ says

. . . Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

Again, we hear Jesus' prophesy and proclaim his death. “*The Light will not be with you always*”, he says. The Light of heaven will be put out. Cruel men. Demonic men. Unbelieving men, consumed by darkness, will crucify Christ. And, as we know, Christ's words prove true. As he died upon the cross, the world went dark. Saints Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell us that as Jesus was crucified “*. . . there was darkness over all the earth . . . and the sun was darkened.*” As Jesus suffers, divine Light disappears from the earth. As Jesus dies, the light of holiness yields to the darkness of evil and for a time, the Light of Light vanishes from the world.

Jesus dies in darkness. Jesus is buried in darkness. Jesus lies in his tomb, concealed in darkness for three days after his death. For those three days in the tomb all is darkness for his disciples. They hide in fear in the darkness of the upper room. They mourn Christ's death in the darkness of despair. They walk only

“Walk in the Light” John 12:24-50 Wednesday in Holy Week 2021
in the darkness and dwell in the shadow of death.

Unlike the disciples immediately after Christ’s death, we have the benefit of knowing already that Christ our Light did not stay in the darkness of the tomb. We know now that the darkness indeed did not overcome the Light on the cross of Calvary. We know that Christ our Light, even now shines in heavenly glory at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. But the disciples didn't know any of that when they hauled Jesus down from the cross—cold and limp and dead. Or maybe it’s more correct to say they didn’t yet *believe in the light*.

As Christ died on the cross and was buried in the tomb. The disciples only *believed* what they saw: They saw the sun go dark. They saw the world grow dim. They saw their Lord die in the deepest darkness the earth has ever known. We know that darkness, too. It’s what we go through when sin leads us to hide from God in self-created darkness. It’s what plagues us when our mourning over loss lacks hope and turns into the darkness of despair. It’s what threatens to consume us when the shadow of death falls upon us and those we love. Thus, we share in the darkness of the disciples. And thus, we share in the darkness Christ knew as he died upon the cross.

And yet today on this Holy Wednesday, even in the midst of the darkness all around us, Christ shines His light upon us. He says, “*Walk while ye have the light. Believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.*” We walk in the light by praying that Christ would walk with us through the darkness of this world. Meditating on Christ’s passion and death whenever the darkness threatens to overtake us. Giving thanks for Jesus’ time spent in darkness by which he miraculously shines the light of his salvation upon us.

We walk in the bright and holy light of Christ here in the marvelous church sanctuaries especially as we faithfully receive the gifts Christ gives in his Word his Forgiveness and his Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Altar. And by these gifts, Christ works and nurtures and strengthens our belief in him as the Light. Walking in the light, as Jesus calls us to do, is really nothing more than practicing our faith in the church and in our lives. Walking in the light is practicing our faith in a way that says for all who care listen: I know where I am going, because I'm walking in the light of Christ my Lord. Walking in the light is practicing our faith in a way that displays for all who care to see: I’m a child of God, because I believe in Christ, my Light.

In just a matter of days we will mark the darkest hour in the history of the world: We will enter the darkness of Good Friday and grieve the death of Christ our

“Walk in the Light” John 12:24-50 Wednesday in Holy Week 2021

Lord and our God. By predicting his death for us today and calling us to walk and believe in his light Christ calls on us all to repent of the darkness that lurks in our lives, in our hearts, and even in the depth of our souls.

During these holy days we undertake such repentance in faithfulness and confidence because we know that the Light of Christ still shines in all our darkness. CHRIST SHINES IN THE DARKNESS OF OUR LIVES. CHRIST SHINES IN THE DARKNESS OF OUR HEARTS. CHRIST SHINES EVEN IN THE DARKEST DEPTHS OF OUR SOULS AND BY HIS LIGHT HE DRIVES AWAY ALL THAT DARKNESS. The Prophet Isaiah says, *“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”* The Psalmist says, *“The Lord is my light and my salvation.”*, and Saint John says at the start of his Gospel, *“In (Christ) (is) life; and the life (is) the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness hath not overcome it.”*

As we remember Christ's passion and meditate on his crucifixion we take his words to heart and walk in his light. For CHRIST'S LIGHT IS OUR LIFE. CHRIST'S LIGHT IS OUR REDEMPTION. CHRIST'S LIGHT IS OUR SALVATION. CHRIST'S LIGHT IS OUR GREATEST TREASURE. Even in churches where we don't have the best light in the world: Even in a world filled with the darkness of sin: Even in darkness deep as death: Christ is our light and he bids us walk and believe him as such. So that's what we do. By grace, we believe in him as our light. By faith, we walk in his light—as his brothers and sisters and as the children of the Light of God.

Let us pray: God sustain us through the dark days ahead and grant that we walk all our days in the light of Christ, and that we live forever in his heavenly light. Amen.