

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Lit up! - Easter Weekend

April 5, 2021

The first job I held when I came on staff at CedarCreek was LifeGroup Director. We had just begun formalizing a process that would bring support to our group leaders. So one Saturday morning, we gathered all the leaders at our old offices for training on the new process. As I began introducing it, my boss (who will remain nameless) looked at another staff member and whispered, "Wasn't she in the meeting where we discussed a different plan?"

Talk about being in the dark! (I did get a nice apology and some beautiful tulips out of it!) It is never good for your employees to be in the dark about your vision for the organization. Our lives are much the same. We need to have a clear vision, but that is easier said than done! Maybe we notice something is off, but we really have no idea what it is or how we can fix it. Often, we find ourselves in a shadow realm and sort of get used to the murkiness of a life that lacks clarity of purpose.

This Easter weekend, Lead Pastor Ben Snyder spoke of how Jesus invites us to step out of the darkness and into the light. Jesus talked many times about being the true light ([John 1:9](#)), the light that came into the world ([John 3:19](#)), the light of the world ([John 8:12](#)), the one who came into the world as a light ([John 12:46](#)).

Why so many references to light? Because we need light to find our way, and that light is found in Jesus! As Ben said, stepping into the light can be scary. Some of us have grown comfortable in the shadows, convincing ourselves that hiding is the best life has to offer. This shadow world tells us that our lives are mundane and meaningless. That if people only knew what darkness filled your life, they would understand your depression. That things will never get better.

The light that Jesus brings tells us the truth about why he came. He gives us purpose in the mundane! *God is much more interested in the process than the product.* Do you really think that he needs us to do anything for him? He wants us to walk with him through our days, depending on him, and trusting in his goodness. [Ephesians 2:10](#) says that we are God's masterpiece, created by him to do the good works that he prepared in advance for us to do! In other words, we can't mess it up!

Jesus gives us power in the pain of our days. Ben says that we must come to trust that Jesus is stronger than we think! He endured the cross for our sin! Before he was crucified, Jesus endured a flogging that had killed many others. His strength

was on display throughout that day of torture, and it is a strength that we can lean on when life becomes too painful for us to bear on our own.

Through the promise and fulfillment of his resurrection, Jesus proved that the best is yet to come. He overcame death, the payment for our sin ([Romans 6:23](#)), and brings resurrection life to our lit-up lives! He brings light, his light, to illuminate our paths as we choose to walk with him.

John 8:12b

"I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

Questions:

How is your vision? Are you viewing your life in the light God offers?

Next Steps:

If you have never invited Jesus to light your way, to lead you in his light, today would be a great day to start! Today could be the spiritual birthday of your new life in Christ! If that is your desire, pray the simple prayer below.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for the cross. I accept the sacrifice that Jesus, your Son, made for me. I invite Jesus into my heart to be my Savior and Lord. Thank you that all my sins are gone - past, present, and future. Now you see me in the light of Jesus. From this day forward, I ask you to light my way. Give me a desire to follow you and, please, direct my paths. In Jesus' name, amen.

You Are a Masterpiece - Easter Weekend

April 6, 2021

This past weekend, we listened to Lead Pastor Ben Snyder talk about stepping out of the shadows and into the light. This is not something we do on our own or from our own power. It is only possible because of Jesus' resurrection. Ben shared that Jesus is the light ([John 8:12](#)): "He wants to bring you out of the darkness. He wants to change the way you see your life and the world around you."

One of the ways that God leads us out of the darkness and into the light is by revealing purpose in our lives. Often our mundane lives echo with the sounds of, "We're not enough." We're not successful enough, not fast enough, or not rich enough. All of this background noise prevents us from finding peace in our lives. Peace you can find only by following Jesus as your true savior. When we step out of the shadows and into the light, Jesus gives us purpose in the mundane. He relates to our ordinary lives on Earth.

I think the story of [Peter's denial of knowing Jesus](#) is a good example of living life from a place of "I am not enough." While Jesus was being questioned, Peter was not far away. He stood taking in the warmth of a small fire in the courtyard when someone saw him and pointed out that he was one of Jesus' followers. Peter denied it, and within a few hours, denied Jesus twice more. After realizing his failure, Peter slipped into the shadows of discouragement.

During our own walks in life, very often a major disappointment or setback blocks us from truly stepping out of the shadows and into the Resurrected Life that God intends for us. Jesus wants to lead us back into the light, though.

In Peter's case, Jesus restored him by asking three times, "Do you love me?" ([John 21:15-17](#)). Peter, who previously denied Jesus three times, now answers him each time: "Yes, Lord ... you know I love you." By asking these questions, Jesus was reminding Peter what was true. He wanted to change the way Peter thought about himself and his place in the world. Ultimately, Jesus reminded Peter of his purpose.

Despite his denials, Jesus gave Peter a new start. The Lord will do the same for you. No matter what failures are in your past, Jesus can redeem them and give them purpose. No matter what you think of yourself, God wants you to know

that you are special. And no matter where you are, you have an opportunity to live out God's plan for your life.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

2 Corinthians 5:17

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

Questions:

What is God asking you to do in your life? What's holding you back?

Is there anything (or anyone) in your life that has stopped you from living the Resurrected Life?

What's stopping you from doing the good things he planned for us long ago?

Next Steps:

Jesus calls us to new life in him, but we don't have to wait until our resurrection day to begin a new life. He is faithful. Just as Jesus restored Peter, he will restore you too. Step into the light, forgo the shadow of doubt, and spread the news: Jesus is LOVE.

Prayer:

Abba Father, I pray that you keep me from returning to my old life and guide me to a new life in you. Keep me free from the shadows to live in the light, bringing your love and salvation to others around me. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Come Into the Light - Easter Weekend

April 7, 2021

Last weekend, Lead Pastor Ben Snyder unwrapped for us that without Christ, the true light of the world, we merely live in shadows. We bury our pain, lie about our failing, and/or blame others for them rather than admitting how flawed and unremarkable we are.

I am a sinner saved by faith and grace. Consequently, I accept that the pain, suffering, and death of Jesus Christ was for me. He was sent by the Father to shine a glorious light into the darkness of the unhappy life I was living. Ben talked about how shocking that brightness is after living in shame and hiding in the shadows of self-delusion. I spent my entire life trying to impress and be admired by others, all while hiding shame, self-loathing, and fear.

So what did God do? He used people and situations in my life to open my heart and move me toward him, the only true real light of the world. Unfortunately, my fear and shame kept me on the throne of my own life instead of Jesus. The result was very similar to this story from Matthew:

Matthew 6:22-23

²² "Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. ²³ But when your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!"

And it was, oh so dark.

Thankfully, when I gave up "my throne" in 1984, the Holy Spirit kept teaching me to trust God and seek his ways, through every success and failure. God never left my side no matter how far I tried to wander from his path for me.

Even though I belonged to God, I was still full of guilt and shame. I had a secret sin I didn't want to confess as it would hurt many people. Unfortunately, this kept me living in the shadows long after I was saved.

Thankfully, God kept leading me to himself and his light. It was a self-inflicted, hard journey, but he loves me so much that he didn't let go of my hand during the 34 years it took to get me out of darkness and shame. Through [Celebrate Recovery](#), I finally confessed out loud in the presence of a trusted friend the

darkness that had held me captive. Ever since my declaration, the light of Christ shines ever brighter in my life—every minute of every day—through danger, sickness, fear, pain, and death.

I cannot fathom the pain and horror Jesus endured on my behalf so that I could confess my sin and truly know freedom. I welcome a life devoted to the glory of God and serving others, in every mundane and exciting moment. I urge you, if you haven't made a decision yet to stop being the captain of your own ship, please, do so. It's time to begin a life of grace, peace, and real prosperity in Christ.

Questions:

What is your secret sin? How has or does it control your behavior?

Are you ready to let go of your imaginary control?

Next Steps:

If you are sick of living a lie and hiding in the shadows, tell God you are genuinely sorry and name your sins. Ask for Christ's sacrifice to be used for your redemption, then seek out one of our loving pastors. They will help lead you to the next step in your new life journey.

Prayer:

My dear, sweet Father God, Creator of all things and lover of my soul. Thank you for your patience and love, and thank you for your forgiveness, if I only ask it of you. Thank you for your salvation and the miraculous life that exists for me and all who turn their journey over to your loving care and guidance. I pray for your help to be brave and humble so that I might commit the rest of my time here on Earth and throughout eternity to you. In Jesus' powerful, precious name I pray. Amen.

This post was written by Martha Smith, a regular contributor and editor of the LivingItOut.

The Best is Yet to Come - Easter Weekend

April 8, 2021

This week, we reflected on what Jesus has done for us—giving up his life and taking the punishment for OUR sin (THANK YOU, JESUS) and celebrating the resurrection three days later. It's the resurrection that shows that he is not dead, but alive. He went from darkness to light so that we might go from darkness to light in this life. And not only that, **Jesus gives us a promise that the best is yet to come.**

Because he rose again, we worship him. Because he rose again, we know that all authority in heaven and on Earth is his. While we have seasons of darkness, because Jesus rose again, we can walk in the light. In John 12, Jesus said, "I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark" (v. 46). This doesn't mean that more seasons of darkness will not come our way, but rather, through them, we can put our trust and hope in Jesus. He is a light to our paths. He is a beam of HOPE in the darkness. With Jesus, we're not forgotten, and we're never without hope.

This hope that we have in him carries us through this world and is our hope for the future. In John 14:1-3, Jesus says,

*"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am **going to prepare a place for you**? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am"* (emphasis added).

When we place our trust in Jesus for salvation, we have hope to never walk alone while traversing this Earth. We also have the hope of eternity in heaven with him—God the father. Where there are no more tears, no darkness. Where we will forever be out of the darkness and eternally in the light. He's preparing that for us right now, and that provides yet another ray of hope for us when we trust in him.

Questions:

Have you trusted in Jesus as your Savior? If so, are you trusting him through the dark spots of the journey?

Next Steps:

If you're walking in a dark season, turn to Jesus. He's waiting for each one of us to turn to him—for the first time or to return to him. He wants to be the light in our darkness. Hold on to the HOPE that we have in him, because of his sacrifice, because he rose again. Invite a friend to walk alongside you for encouragement. Consider joining a summer Group to be connected to others who are walking through struggles and be encouraged by the hope that seeking God together can bring.

Prayer:

Jesus, I continue to thank you for your great sacrifice for me and my sins. Thank you for the hope that I can have in you, not only in this life but also for eternity. God, I long for the day that I am with you in your glorious presence, but in the meantime, help me to trust you along every step of my journey here on Earth. In darkness, be my light. In my despair, be my hope. I love you and trust you. In Jesus' name, amen.

Will You Step Into the Light? - Easter Weekend

April 9, 2021

I love spring and Easter. It is a time of rebirth, sunshine, and beauty. It fills me with hope and makes me feel courageous and ready to step out of my comfort zone, even though it's sometimes easier to just get by and hide in the shadows. I don't know about you, but I am ready for an adventure. Lead Pastor Ben Snyder spoke about Jesus inviting us to step out of the darkness and into the light. The big question is:

"Will you step into the light?"

Are you ready to step out of your comfort zone for Jesus?

Several years ago, I was sitting at the Perrysburg campus listening to a sermon about serving. I felt Jesus tapping me on the shoulder and telling me that I needed to sign up to serve during the Sunday service. I will admit I argued a bit with Jesus in my head. "Lord, I already serve. I'm a Group Leader." Jesus reminded me that I was a Group Leader who wasn't attending church on a regular basis. (Ouch!)

I felt convicted. After all, serving at the Sunday morning service would help me hold myself accountable to going to church weekly. I went out and signed up. I can't even begin to tell you how much this changed my life. I met wonderful Christian mentors who challenged me to grow in my faith. I cannot believe the wonderful and amazing adventures I have experienced since I chose to obey God. I am amazed by all the people I encountered who showed me the light and love of Jesus. I pray that Jesus' light shines through me and makes others feel his amazing love.

I encourage you to be brave, step out of the shadows, and step into the light. For some of you that may mean putting your faith in Jesus for the first time. (If you have just done that, Praise God! I am praying for you.) For others, you are followers of Jesus but have been in the shadows. Make today the day that you make a commitment to step into light. (Praise God—I am praying for you!) For those who serve, thank you for making a difference and being a light to others.

It was ten years ago that I made the decision to step out of the shadows, and I cannot begin to tell you how much God has blessed me. I have experienced his love, peace, and joy so deeply that it overwhelms me in gratitude. I invite you to step into the light! God has a beautiful plan and adventure for your life.

John 8:12b

"I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

Joshua 1:9

"This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Questions:

Have you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior? If not, why? If your answer is yes, how are you being a light to others? What is Jesus calling you to do?

Next Steps:

Commit to attending church during our next series, *The Adventures of You*. Take [GrowthTrack](#). Join a [Group](#). Read the Bible daily. Pray. Serve.

Prayer:

Jesus, you are the light in this dark world. You are my Savior! I love and adore you. Help me to reflect your light and love to others. I deeply want my life to bring you glory and honor. I trust you and surrender my life to you. Amen.