

## Sermon followed by Service

September 7, 2024

Daniel 12:3

This past summer, did you have a chance to sit back and look up at the stars? Some twinkling - “twinkle, twinkle, little star.” Some shining bright. Each one special. Altogether they have us smiling, wowing, wishing, hoping - for a life, a place, peaceful and bright ... or maybe hoping, wishing, to be like the stars, shining peaceful and bright, part of a glorious piece of art.

That’s what God wants for you as his children. Not to be stars in the sky, but to shine like the stars in the sky. **“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”**

That’s what we want for our children, isn’t it? I don’t mean just those that share your house and your DNA. Many of us don’t have children at home; some of us don’t have children at all. But we do all have children, children that God is bringing into our lives, at home, here at church, at school, out in our neighborhoods. And what do we want for the children God brings into our lives? That they shine bright and peaceful like the stars.

And that’s what we want for ourselves, isn’t it? - to shine peaceful and bright? Oh, I hear some voices saying: “I don’t want people looking at me.” I get that; I don’t want people looking at me the way I am either. I don’t want people seeing my

darkness. I don't want people seeing me sputter. Sometimes I'd rather just hide than be seen sputtering in my darkness. But to shine peaceful and bright - that would be alright!

But how? That's where we sometimes get confused. That's where we sometimes confuse our kids. In here (our heads and hearts), we can get the idea that shining bright means getting attention - and some of the ways people try to get attention isn't all good; some of the ways we try to get attention is more dark than bright. Or we can get the idea that shining bright means showing off - maybe showing off to other people, or maybe showing off our bigger and better to ourselves - "look what I got, look what I can do, look who I am." Sometimes we can get the idea that shining bright like the stars is about us getting the star treatment, or us giving ourselves the star treatment. Yes, God is eager to treat us like stars, but expecting to be treated like stars, giving ourselves the star treatment - that can lead to a world of hurt.

Sometimes we set our children up for that hurt. Sometimes we set each other up for that hurt. Sometimes, instead of raising our children to shine like God's stars, we set them up to shine like fake stars. Instead of raising them up as God's children, we treat them like toys for fun and games. Or instead of raising them up as God's children, we treat them like trophies: "Look what my child can do." Or instead of raising them up as God's children, we treat them like tsars, like little rulers and we let them rule the house. And then what do we find? When children are treated as ruling tsars or trophies or toys, pretty soon they're not shining like God's stars - and their shine is gone.

And we see much the same thing in ourselves, don't we? When we expect the star treatment for ourselves, when we give ourselves the star treatment, expecting bigger and better, more and more, giving ourselves bigger and better more and more, what so easily happens? Instead of shining like God's stars, we shine more and more like the world shines - splashy and sputtering. Instead of shining like stars, we settle for shining like cheap, glitzy glitter - covering up that our shine is gone.

We want better for our children. We want better for ourselves. We want a better shine, don't we? Not just a shine that sputters and fades, but a shine that lasts forever. How can we shine like the stars? How can we set our children up to shine like the stars? It takes more than a new polish. It takes more than a flip of a light switch.

That little ruling tsar in us - that little self or that big self inside us expecting the star treatment - it needs to be deposed, put out. If we don't, God will. Our trophy thinking - living for cheers and for glory ... our toy thinking - life is supposed to be about fun and games ... our toy and trophy thinking needs to be recast, replaced with a new heart. How? The answer is found in what God has for us in Jesus. Instead of casting us out for our darkness, instead of casting us aside for our sputtering shine, instead of casting us into the fires of hell, God so loved that world that he gave us Jesus. Jesus took our place as dark and demanding and self-centered; he took our place as guilty before God; he took our place on the cross. On the cross in our place, Jesus was deposed and punished; on the cross in our place, Jesus

paid the price that covers over our self-centered and demanding darkness. Now, with Jesus, our sins and guilt are forgiven; you are forgiven.

That means a whole new way of life, a whole new way of looking at life. Instead of our little self inside us, or that big self inside us, feeling small and needy, guilty and lonely, instead of needing people around us to give us the star treatment, instead of needing to give ourselves the star treatment, we have God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - giving us God's star treatment. The Father - You have the almighty God and Creator of the Universe loving you; you have the Creator of all the stars in heaven calling you and caring for you as special to him, as his own dear child. The Son - You have Jesus holding you as his; not to hide you - with Jesus, you are his stars in this world shining with his light. The Holy Spirit - instead of just that little self or that big self ruling inside you, you have the Holy Spirit of God alive in you, connecting you with God, giving you the heart and the life of God so you can shine with the heart and the life of God.

The Spirit doesn't do that with a snap of his fingers or a feeling shazamed from heaven. The Spirit shines into you with his Word, with his sacraments. He doesn't implant a life-time battery inside us, but he gives us a heart looking for a charging and re-charging relationship with God and each other. That's why we're here! To live that charging and recharging relationship with God and each other, we have worship and Bible Study, Sunday School and school. We come together with God

and his family here; we get together with God and our family at home. And he charges and recharges us to shine.

Not just to shine as stars, but to shine as his stars. How? There are different ways we can shine as God's stars - by working hard, doing our best, getting things done for God, making things look good for God. We have so many ways we can put God's shine on things. But here's the shine God especially loves to see from us - love. With our school theme verse - **“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you”** - we don't just put God's shine on things, we put God's shine ... we shine God's love into hearts.

Moms and Dads - I get to see your kids shine. It's neat to see them shine as they're learning in the classroom; it's neat to see them shine as they're playing on the playground; but it's especially neat to see them shine with God's love as they look out for and care for each other. They don't just put a smile on my face, you put a smile on God's face. With Jesus, that's a smile we'll get to see forever in heaven - where we will get to shine with God's life and his love forever and ever.

With Jesus, **“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”** To shine like the stars forever - that's what God wants for you and for your children. To shine like the stars forever, to shine with God's life and his love - that's why we're here, isn't it? Amen.

*Jesus tells Daniel: “Those who are wise will shine ... those who bring many to righteousness will shine.”*

*What connection do you see between shining like God with love, compassion, and forgiveness and “being wise”?*

*What connection do you see between shining like God with love, compassion, and forgiveness and “bringing many to righteousness”?*

*Who in your life could be blessed to see you shine with love, compassion, and forgiveness?*

September 7 & 8, 2024

## NEW MORNING PRAISE

**IN OUR WORLD TODAY ...** we can feel and see so much darkness around us. Some people see and feel almost nothing but the darkness. Some find ways to flash and splash some sputtering light into their lives.

**IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ...** we see the light and the love of our God, and he lights us up to shine his light into the world. We welcome our school families as our children remind us that a best way to shine God's light is by shining with God's love!

### OPENING HYMN

*"Blessed Jesus, at Your Word"*

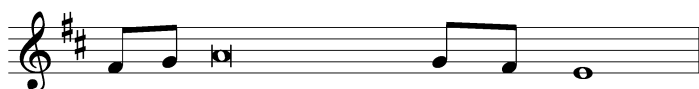
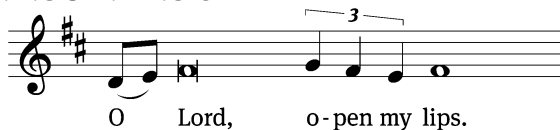
Hymn 919 vs. 1, 3, 4

Blessèd Jesus, at your Word we are gathered all to hear you.  
Let our hearts and souls be stirred now to seek and love and fear you,  
by your teachings, sweet and holy, drawn from earth to love you solely.

Gracious Savior, good and kind, Light from Light, from God proceeding,  
open now our heart and mind; help us by your Spirit's pleading.  
Hear the cry your Church now raises;  
hear and bless our prayers and praises.

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, praise to you and adoration!  
Grant that we your Word may trust, confident of our salvation,  
while we here below must wander, till we sing your praises yonder.

### OPENING SENTENCES



**And my mouth shall de - clare your praise.**



Hasten to save me, O God.



**O Lord, come quickly to help me.**

### CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: **Amen.**



Give glory to God, our light and our life.



**Come, O come, let us wor - ship.**



## COME, O COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD

Come, O come, let us sing to the Lord,  
let us shout with joy to our sav - ing Rock;  
come, en - ter in with our songs of praise,  
come, en - ter in with thanks - giv - ing.

1 You are a great and a won - drous God,  
2 Come, let us wor - ship and, bow - ing low,  
cup - ping in your hands all the depths of earth.  
kneel be - fore the One who has made us all.

You made the hills and the moun - tains high,  
You are the God whom we call our own,

*Refrain*  
you made the seas and the dry land.  
we are the flock that you shep - herd.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Merciful Lord, comforter and teacher of your faithful people, increase in your church the knowledge of your will. Strengthen the hearts of those who hope in you, and show them the depth of your promises. Let our children follow the light of your Word, and follow you with eager footsteps; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## A MEDLEY OF SCHOOL THEME VERSES

M: Do not be anxious about anything,

C: **but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,  
present your requests to God.** (Philippians 4:6 ~ 2016-2017)

M: I have told you these things,

C: **so that in me you may have peace.**

M: In this world you will have trouble.

C: **But take heart! I have overcome the world.** (John 16:33 ~ 2017-2018)

M: So do not fear, for I am with you;

C: **do not be dismayed, for I am your God.**

M: I will strengthen you and help you;

C: **I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.** (Isaiah 41:10 ~ 2018-2019)

## SCHOOL CHILDREN SING (SATURDAY) *“God Loves Us with Jesus Loves Me”*

*God loves us all night and day, Not just part but all the way.*

*So in love, He gave His Son, Our salvation to be won.*

### ***Refrain***

*Jesus loves me this I know, Jesus loves me, He tells me so.*

*Jesus loves me this I know; The Bible tells me so.*

*His salvation great and free, Bought by Christ on Calvary.*

*Bought with blood and grief and pain, Washed away our sinful stain. **Refrain***

*What great love saves us by faith? Love that comes from Love Himself.*

*Love that reaches from the cross, Giving us what we had lost. **Refrain***

*Jesus loves me, this I know. For the Bible tells me so.*

*Little ones to Him belong, They are weak, but He is strong.*

*Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me, The Bible tells me so.*

*Jesus loves me, He who died. Heaven's gates to open wide;  
He will wash away my sin, Let His little child come in.*

*Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me,  
Yes, Jesus loves me, The Bible tells me so. **Refrain***

- M: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,  
C: **and I will give you rest."** (Matthew 11:28 ~ 2019-2020)
- M: "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,  
C: **"plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future."** (Jeremiah 29:11~ 2020-2021)
- M: Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.  
C: **They will soar on wings like eagles;**
- M: they will run and not grow weary,  
C: **they will walk and not be faint.** (Isaiah 40:31~ 2021-2022)
- M: Therefore go and gather disciples from all nations  
C: **by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit.** (Matthew 28:19 ~ 2022-2023)
- M: I can do all things  
C: **through Christ who strengthens me.** (Philippians 4:13~ 2023-2024)
- M: Be kind and compassionate to one another,  
C: **forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**  
(Ephesians 4:32 ~ 2024-2025)

SCHOOL CHILDREN SING (SATURDAY)

*“Oh, How Good It Is”*

Hymn 731

*Oh, how good it is when the fam'ly of God  
dwells together in spirit, in faith and unity.  
Where the bonds of peace, of acceptance and love  
are the fruits of his presence here among us.*

**Refrain**

*So with one voice we'll sing to the Lord,  
and with one heart we'll live out his word,  
till the whole earth sees the Redeemer has come,  
for he dwells in the presence of his people.*

**(Congregation)**

Oh, how good it is on this journey we share  
to rejoice with the happy and weep with those who mourn.  
For the weak find strength, the afflicted find grace  
when we offer the blessing of belonging. **Refrain**

Oh, how good it is to embrace his command  
to prefer one another, forgive as he forgives.  
When we live as one we all share in the love  
of the Son with the Father and the Spirit. **Refrain**

**FIRST READING**

**Daniel 12:1–3**

“At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 78C

Refrain

Your Word, O LORD, is a lamp for my feet  
and a light un - to my path.

My people, hear my / teaching;

listen to the words / of my mouth.

I will utter hidden things, things / from of old—  
things our ancestors have / told us.

We will not hide them from their de- / scendants;

we will tell the next gener- / ation  
the praiseworthy deeds / of the LORD,

his power, and the wonders / he has done. *Refrain*

He decreed statutes for / Jacob

and established the law in / Israel,  
which he commanded our / ancestors  
to teach their / children,

so the next generation would know them, even the children yet / to be born,  
and they in turn would tell their / children.

Then they would put their / trust in God  
and would not forget his deeds but would keep / his commands.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son**

**and to the Holy / Spirit,**  
**as it was in the be- / ginning,**

**is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

## GOSPEL

*Matthew 5:14–16*

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

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

## APOSTLES’ CREED

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## HYMN

*“God Loved the World So That He Gave”*

**Hymn 570**

God loved the world so that he gave his only Son the lost to save that all who would in him believe should everlasting life receive.

Christ is the solid rock of faith, who was made flesh and suffered death. All who confide in him alone are built on this chief cornerstone.

God would not have the sinner die; his Son with saving grace is nigh. His Spirit in the Word declares that we in Christ are heaven’s heirs.

Be of good cheer, for God's own Son forgives the sins that you have done.  
You're justified by Jesus' blood; baptized, you are a child of God.

If you are sick, if death is near, this truth your troubled heart can cheer:  
Christ Jesus saves my soul from death; this is the anchor of my faith!

Glory to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Three in One!  
To you, O blessed Trinity, be praise now and eternally!

**SERMON**

**Daniel 12:1-3**

**HYMN**

*"Speak, O Lord"*

**Hymn 633**

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy Word;  
take your truth, plant it deep in us, shape and fashion us in your likeness,  
that the light of Christ might be seen today  
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.

Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility;  
test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.  
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see  
your majestic love and authority.

Words of pow'r that can never fail, let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds,  
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us,  
truths unchanged from the dawn of time,  
that will echo down through eternity.

And by grace we'll stand on your promises,  
and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.

Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built,  
and the earth is filled with your glory.

## OFFERING

*If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an "I Give Online" card in the pew racks.*



*(You heard our school children sing today. Tuition Grant Fund envelopes are available in the pew rack to support affordable tuition for our school.)*

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Eternal Father, your Word is a lamp for our feet and a light to our path. You inspired the Scriptures for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that your servants might be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**Lead us to love your Word more and more and to receive your message with great eagerness.**

You have given us your Word that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing we may have life in his name. Enable us to see the wonders of your love in Christ from the beginning to the end of your holy book.

**Help us to see Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.**

Work in all your people, especially in parents, the resolve and patience to teach little children the simple truths about the Savior who loves them. Walk with us as we take our children to the manger, the cross, and the empty tomb. Let them find Jesus in stories, songs, and prayers.

**Move us to bring up our children in the training and instruction of the Lord.**

Provide wisdom and commitment to teachers who train our young people in Sunday Schools and youth Bible classes. Deepen their knowledge of your Word as they prepare and share the lessons they teach. Move them to model a sincere devotion to the Scriptures.

**Lead us to plan for and support the Christian training of children.**



We thank you for enabling our congregation to provide elementary (and secondary) education for our children. We know our schools are your special blessing, and we pray for the resolve to establish and maintain standards of excellence in all aspects of education. Move us to be generous in our offerings so that teachers may teach and students may learn in fitting surroundings.

**Lead us to provide Christian schools that reflect the immensity of your love.**

Bless the schools and teachers who prepare public ministers of the gospel for service in our churches and around the world. Lead teachers and professors to be faithful to your Word and provide insights that enable them to pass on your truth to their students. Ignite the zeal of young men and women to be willing and eager to share the truths of Scripture with others. Move us to support with our prayers and gifts the schools our synod has established.

**We pray that you send workers in your harvest fields.**

Work in us that we may find the lasting value of growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ. Lead us to be faithful in our personal study of the Scriptures and in participating in regular Bible classes. Rid us of all thoughts that Christian education ends in our youth. Make us life-long students of your precious Word.

**Lead us to believe that at every age your Word remains a lamp for our feet and a light to our path. Amen.**

#### **PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

**BLESSING**



The Lord bless and keep you.



**A - men.**



The Lord's face ev - er shine up - on you.



**A - men.**



The Lord grant you peace for all your days.



**A - men.**

CLOSING HYMN

*“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”*

Hymn 713

I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus.  
God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.

*Refrain*

In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.  
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus.  
Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path,  
and show me the way to the Father.

*Refrain*

I’m looking for the coming of Christ. I want to be with Jesus.  
When we have run with patience the race, we shall know the joy of Jesus.

*Refrain*

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