

Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday – Caldwell
January 15, 2017

Title Called to be.....
From The Darkness into the Light

Good Morning This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!!!!

We come once more to this place of worship to magnify and praise the holy and righteous name of Jesus. We give all glory and honor to our God the Father.

Let Us Pray: May the Words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight. Oh Lord my strength and redeemer Amen.I pray that God continues to smile upon each of you, and makes each of us a vessel so that we can be used by responding to the Word. May God continue to shine His light on each of us. Amen

Song: Walk in the Light

From the Darkness Into the Light

Imagine, if you would what life would be like if the sun refused to shine. How cold, dark, frozen and lifeless this earth would be. Not very much movement, not very many interactions; how dark, dismal and destructive and so cold. That's how our lives would be without No light. Nothing to help us see our way. No clear direction Nothing to help guide us spiritually or physically, No light! only darkness. Only despair and devastation. There's no way we could survive. But then there was light!!!! God is the source and fountain of All lights

In James Chapter 1: 17, the scripture refers to God as the Father of lights. It reads: Every generous act of giving with every

perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Here, the word lights is plural, which means that it is more than one kind of light. It could mean natural light, like the sun, moon and stars. It could also mean intellectual light, like knowledge or talents we have. It could also mean the spiritual gifts that are inborn or given by the spirit. Whatever the kind of light, God is the creator of it all!!!!!!

There was not anything made that was made that didn't come from God. Including His only begotten Son Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world. God sent his son to take away our sins. We all have sinned. We were born into sin. When we are in sin, we are in darkness. We want to move from the darkness into the light. That light comes through Jesus. Jesus is the manifestation of the word. Which is an indication that something is present or that something is real or that something exists. Jesus is the visible form which has been revealed.

That's what the season of epiphany is. An "epiphany" is when something reveals itself, or shows itself. The Son of God reveals his glory for everyone to see. The glory of our Savior Jesus Christ is revealed to us and shown to us. Because it has been shown

to us we can see. WE rejoice because we can see and have come from out of the darkness into the light.

The wise men had an “epiphany”. In other words they realized that Jesus had come to be a light unto the world. They had a new awakening to the will of God on their lives.

The wise men came from afar and brought their gifts of gold frankincense and myrrh. They recognized that Jesus was the light of the world. They saw his star shining from the East and they followed that star. That star led them to Jesus. By the time they got to Jesus he had to be at least one or two years old. So the nativity scene is just a little off. But none the less when they got there, they bowed down to worship him because **they had an epiphany....** A sign or a revelation that Jesus was the Son of God. Another point that I am trying to make is that they followed the star. They followed the light and the light led them to Jesus. If we are in the light. We are already **out** of the darkness. We can't have light and darkness at the same time. We can't serve 2 masters. We'll either love one and hate the other or hate one and love the other. We can't have our cake and eat it too! We must choose this day whom we will serve. That's the way it works in our lives, if we

follow the light which is Jesus, we can find our way out of the darkness. Only what you do for Christ will last. Everything else will pass away.....Well, what is the darkness? Some of us like the darkness. We encounter darkness every day. I'm not talking about the sun going down each night. I'm talking about the jealousy, the hatred, or the malice in our hearts. I'm talking about our own selfish desires and our urge to control everything and everybody. *If so*, we are walking in darkness. Darkness is also turning on the television, watching the news and seeing violence, killings, controversies, war, and homelessness. Darkness is when we enjoy all the wonderful things that God has given us and we fail to give Him all the glory and honor that he deserves.. Darkness is when we see our fellow brothers and sisters suffering and we do nothing to ease their pain or hurt. Darkness is when we see injustice after injustice and we do nothing. We go along just to get along. Darkness is when we think that **We** have made **all** these great accomplishments **through our own merit** and not by the grace and forgiveness of God. We're in darkness!! If you are in darkness, and you want to come to the light, call upon the name of Jesus!! Jesus is the light. There is no other name that we can call upon where we may be saved. Ask him to

give you a brand new start and ask him to give you a clean heart. Our darkness can turn into light when we stand up and do what God has called us to do. We must come from out of the darkness into the light. Coming into the light means we must accept our calling.

Some of us are in darkness because we refuse to do what God has called us to do. We 're too busy having a good time. We don't have time for God. We're too comfortable and satisfied doing what we do. We really haven't thought about anybody else. We're too busy trying to make it ourselves. But it's not about us. It's about God's will for our lives.

In our Old Testament scripture for today Isaiah 49: 1-7, Isaiah made it known that he understood his calling. He tells the Israelites that the Lord called him **before** he was born, while he was still in his mother's womb. The Lord polished him and equipped him with what he needed to so that he could tell others about the goodness of the Lord. It goes further to say the God gave him **as a light** unto the nations so that God's salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. Oh Isaiah understood his calling and he was not about to let anybody turn him around. As a church community, we need to have such a conviction. We've got a great job to do. And sometimes that task

seems impossible when in our society many things are done for self glorification or done just because everybody else is doing it. Or because your friends and family will get mad at you if you do this and if you do that. I say stand up for Jesus because Jesus has stood up in the gap for you. Jesus is the light of the world. Come from out of the darkness into the light. Which means we also must accept our calling!! Whatever God **has** for you to do, you do. Whatever God has for you to say, **Speak!!** **Wherever** God has for you to go. **Go!!!**

Paul in our New Testament scripture accepted his calling. He tells the people at Corinth that he is consecrated in Jesus Christ. In other words, because of Jesus' sacrifice, we belong to God. Paul continued to accept his calling as he describes Christians as those who have been called to be "God's dedicated people". The Christian must show themselves to be fit in life and in character for the service of the Lord. Christians who has separated themselves for service. They have been set apart for service. ...in other words, the things you used to do, you don't do no more... Things you used to say, you don't say no more. The places we used to go, we don't go no more. The Christians at Corinth have been called into community,

not just the community of believers at Corinth, but the community of believers everywhere. Those in every place that called upon the name of the Lord would be saved. Paul assured the Corinthians that Jesus had given them everything they needed and that Jesus would be there with them until the end. It was Paul's calling to preach to the Corinthians and tell them not to be discouraged. He did just that.....In spite of his own disappointments; in spite of false prophets, ,various controversies.....Paul continued to encourage the people at Corinth **to come out of the darkness into the light.**

Now, on this day of Martin Luther King's Birthday.....What if Martin Luther King Jr. had not accepted his calling? Where would we be. He organized and led many marches that advocated for political and social justices. He was instrumental in the civil rights movement. He advocated change through a non-violent means. Many of us would not be able to enjoy some of the privileges that we have today had it not been for Martin Luther King Jr. Martin knew whose he was. He knew he was called to do a job and he accepted it.

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

These are the words of Martin Luther King. He talking about that

kind of love that Jesus talks about. Jesus tells us to love one another as he has loved us. Jesus sacrificed his life so that we could have life and have it more abundantly.

Martin Luther further expounds as he contends: I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.....Martin believe d in unconditional love. No matter what the creed or no matter what the circumstances we love unconditionally.. We, too ought to have A DREAM.....Saying ... When we all get to heaven what a day of rejoicing that will be . When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory.

What if John the Baptist had not accepted his calling? And Baptized Jesus?

What if Moses had not accepted his calling to lead the Israelites to the Promised land

What if Jesus had not accepted his calling. Where would we be????? He healed the sick. He raised the dead. He made the lame

walk, made the dumb talk. Made the blind see. He cast out demons. He calmed the raging sea and he died on the cross for you and me **because** he loved us!! Jesus is the light that has brought us out of the darkness!!!!!! He is the manifestation of the Word

John Beehler, a Presbyterian pastor preached a sermon entitled the Seven Ups... This sermon has become a popular sermon. Beehler encouraged the people to: Wake Up, Dress Up, Shut Up, Stand Up, Look Up, Reach Up, and Lift Up!! I have my own version of the Seven Ups which might be a remedy for how we can come out of the darkness into the light. First, we need to.....

Get Up- Realize and recognize that we cannot save ourselves. Salvation comes from God through Jesus Christ. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. WE are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. So Get Up and

Come on out of the darkness into the light and

2. **Straighten Up-**Accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. Know that God sent his Son Jesus so that we could have life

and have it more abundantly. He can make a way out of no way. He is the light and he can turn our darkness into day. Then

3. **Stay Up** –When trials and tribulations come, we don't give up and we don't give out. We Keep on keeping on and know that God will never leave you nor forsake you. We'll let nothing separate us from the love of God. He sent his Son as a living sacrifice to **show** His love for us. We must be steadfast, unmovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord.

And when we've come out of the darkness into the light.....

4. **Speak Up**- We let **everybody** know that for Christ I live and for Christ I'll die and whatever injustices You've done unto the least of His people. You have done unto Christ. Everybody is somebody in God's eye. Jesus came into the world as a light for all people, not just some. Remembering that we have more things in common that unite us than there are differences that divide us.....

When we've come out of the darkness into the light

5. **Show Up**- We work for the up building of God's kingdom. We work while it is day for when it is night, no one can work. You see, the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Those whom God has called... he also justified. Those whom he justified, he also

glorified. If God be for you, who can be against you??? Can God count on you to be a worker in **his** vineyard?

Then we

6. Pray Up Acknowledging That God is Almighty, all powerful.

We give thanks to him because He is such a great God. God can do anything but fail. We can call on Him Saying Father I stretch my hands to thee no other help I know If thou withdraw thyself from me whither shall I go. He's a wheel in the middle of a wheel. He'll fight your battle if you'd just keep still and keep the faith.

7. Follow Up!!!Put our faith into action. If you have faith the size of a mustard seed.... I say if you have faith the size.....God can work it out

...Jesus told us that if he be lifted up he would draw all men unto himself.. Jesus commissions us to go ye therefore and teach all nations. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Go ! Go! (RE: the Seven Ups) Today I encourage you to Walk into your destiny! Arise! Shine and give God the glory. Shine! Because your light has come. The glory of the Lord rises upon you. You have come from out of the darkness into the light, so Go, Go...Go ye therefore and teach all nations.

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Benediction: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord lift his countenance upon you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and give you peace. Hence forth now and forever more.