"The True Light" – Pr Jim Sprengle – Advent Midweek 2
December 10, 2025

I. **Isaiah 9; 2 Corinthians 4; John 1** – previously read

II. **Lights are everywhere as we prepare for Christmas Day**.

a. This sermon series is about the standard decorations we see around us during Advent and Christmas… but have a much deeper meaning as they prepare us and point us to the coming of Jesus… and today it's lights.

b. Michele and I don't normally put up Christmas lights on the outside of our home, but this year I decided it might be good with our open house… So off to the stores I went looking for some ideas.

i. That was the wrong way to go… because the options are endless… with every color, style, and brightness, it becomes overwhelming!

ii. In the end, if you want to see what we settled on, you will have to attend our Christmas open house next Monday.

c. Light displays are now in every downtown area, on homes, businesses, in the malls, and that includes outside and inside displays.

i. Many of you have gone to the Festival of Lights at the Grotto, which is amazing… along with the Oregon ZooLights… or maybe the Winter Wonderland at the Portland International Raceway.

1. These places are almost beyond imagination when it comes to how many lights they can string on a tree or put into a display.

d. Even here in the sanctuary we have lights for our Christmas tree, along with the candles we light for the Advent wreath.

i. So why do we decorate with lights during Advent?

III. **The tradition of holiday lights originated in Europe**.

a. Last week I talked about Christmas trees starting out in Germany in the Middle Ages, while the practice of attaching candles to these trees started with Martin Luther in the 1500s.

i. This tree lighting idea caught on… and people began attaching candles to the tree branches in various ways, but lanterns became the norm (I'm assuming very small lanterns).

ii. These lights reminded Christians of the lights of Christ's birth… or the Bethlehem star, the angels who lit up the night sky with the glory of God, and most importantly, Jesus who is the light of the world.

b. In time, German immigrants in the 1700-1800's brought this tradition to America… which became popular around the country.

i. With America being a country of innovation, the electric lightbulb opened a new frontier in lights… and Thomas Edison's company eventually made a string of lights for Christmas decorations.

ii. The first string was 8 bulbs about the size of a ping pong ball, and were way too expensive for most people… but over time light strings were standard decorations by the 1950's.

iii. Today, over 150 million sets of holiday lights are sold in the United States each year, lighting more than 80 million homes and consuming a 6.6-billion-kilowatt hours in the month of December alone… which is more electricity than some small countries use in an entire year!

IV. **Yet, as the culture around us decorates** with holiday lights for different reasons, as Christians, we know their significance.

a. With all the awe and wonder of light shows and beautiful displays, a much deeper meaning is behind these lights.
   i. In the Bible, darkness is the symbol for sin and evil, while light is the symbol for holiness and righteousness.
   ii. So, lights during Advent and Christmas should remind us of why Jesus came into the world: to forgive sin and restore us to righteousness… to cut through the spiritual darkness.

b. You see, the fall into sin opened the door for spiritual darkness… the evil, deception, and all kinds of brokenness that corrupts everyone.
   i. But God promised a Light to break through the darkness of sin… which we know came with the arrival of the Messiah.
   ii. Isaiah prophesied about the kind of impact this light would have… "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone." (Isaiah 9:2)
      1. The prophet went on to announce this light breaking through the great darkness with the birth of a Child, the Son of God: "For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given." (Isaiah 9:6)

V. **Lights are a powerful reminder Christ's first advent or arrival**.

a. Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in the coming of Christ into the world.
b. The Christmas story tells us that Jesus' birth became an astronomical event because the light of a special star led the Wise Men. (Matthew 2)
c. Another event with light took place when God's glory shined on the shepherds, as the angel told them of the Savior's birth. (Luke 2:9-10)
d. Although John's Gospel doesn't tell the events of Jesus' birth, it does describe how much that birth meant.
   i. John says, "The true Light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world." (John 1:9)
   ii. Jesus came to enlighten everyone with His own righteousness and glory… and after Jesus grew up even He would tell people, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)
e. By grace through faith, all of us who once lived in the darkness of sin now receive Christ's light of righteousness and glory.
   i. In our 2 Corinthians reading it says, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the

knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6)

f. So, the candles of the Advent wreath and the lights on the Christmas tree celebrate the first coming of Christ, and as 2 Timothy 1:10 says, "Our Savior Jesus Christ…abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

VI. **However, we don't just look back**, we also see the lights around us and remember Christ will come again.

a. When Jesus comes back, the darkness of sin ends forever as righteousness and light takes over completely.
   i. We know that God intends to make all things new, including creation, as He makes a new heaven and a new earth to replace everything that has been impacted by the darkness of evil and sin.

b. For us, who have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, we have the best news ever… that we will live in that perfect place eternally.
   i. At the end of the Bible, the Book of Revelation gives us a glimpse into the place where we will live… "And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk." (Revelation 21:23-24)

c. Today, it's easy to see the darkness of sin in our world and in ourselves.
   i. But we reject sin and repent of the darkness in us…. Because we know that Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins and bring us into the light.
   ii. Rather than worry about a future in the darkness of hell, we eagerly expect the return of our Savior to include dwelling with Him in the light that never ends.

VII. **So, as you look around** at the lights this season, stop and think of Jesus.

a. They remind us of a powerful message found throughout all the Scriptures… that the light of Christ has come to cut through and destroy the darkness of sin.

b. It's really what Advent is all about… the eternal glory that Jesus won for us at His first coming… and that we will experience fully at His second coming.

c. On Christmas Eve, we will have a candlelight service where the flame from the Christ candle is shared with the small candles held in the hands of all the people gathered for worship.
   i. We cherish this experience because of it special meaning… the coming of Christ brings the light of righteousness to all who believe.

d. So, every time you look at Advent and Christmas decorations shining their light, remember what it's all about… Jesus has come and will come again to bring you the light of His righteousness and glory!! Amen[1]

[1] Based on © 2025 Concordia Publishing House, *Every Heart Prepare*, Advent-Christmas series