

# ***“The Local Church”***

**John 8:12 & Matthew 5:14**

March 31<sup>st</sup> Easter 2013

## **VIDEO:**

### **Welcome to Our Church**

**T/S:** Today we are going to bring clarity to the connection between Easter & Church...

## **CONTEXT:**

Easter is all about...

**Christ’s GOSPEL... & Christians “GO-Tell”**

*How DO Easter & the Church go together?*

*They are **BOTH** Supernatural expressions of*

***MIRACLE... MESSIAH... MISSION***

**Natural vs. Supernatural “Light” / darkness**

**Exodus 10:21-23** = *Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may*

*be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt." 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. 23 They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings.*

**Crucifixion DARKNESS** = noon till 3pm (last 3 hours)

**Isaiah \*\*\*5:20-21** = *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness... 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight!*

**T/S:** Like Paul... we are going to continue to use plain speak

## **2 cor 4:1-6 = The Light of the Gospel**

**4** *Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case **the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ**, who is the image of God. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 **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.***

**“...you were bought with a price...”**

**T/S:**      Miracle    Messiah    Mission    ...**MORTGAGE!**

Illustration:    “**Mortgage party**” vs. payoff day

**Good Friday...** (Pay-Day for Easter celebration)  
...the Church was PAID FOR on Friday  
...but the party was on Easter Sunday

**Matthew 16:18 = ...and I will build my church...**

NOTE:      Jesus is the “capstone”

              Jesus is the “cornerstone”

NOTE:      Matthew 7:24ff (two houses)

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20 = do you not know that *your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.***

## Crucified Christ... Crucified Christians

**Luke 9:23** = *He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.*

**Galatians 2:20** = *I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*

**I AM the Light of the world...**

(and now... after Good Friday...)

**YOU are the light of the world.**

(John 8:12 & Matthew 5:14)

*Miracle! Messiah! Mission!*

**John 8:12 & 9:5** = *"I/Jesus am the Light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

\*\*\* NOTE: whoever FOLLOWS... "has" = conditional

**Matthew 5:14-16**

**14** *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; **15** nor does anyone light a lamp*

*and put it under a basket, but on the lamp-stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **16 Let your light shine before men** in such a way that they may see **your good works**, and **glorify your Father** who is in heaven.*

## **VIDEO: "This is Church"**

### **LIGHT Gives SIGHT!**

**Psalms 36:9** = *...in Your light we see light.*

**Psalms 119:105** = *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

**Psalms 119: 130** = *The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.*

\*\*\* See also... 1 Cor. 2:14 & John 9...

### **LIGHT UNITES!**

**John 17:21**

**Ephesians 4:3** (fight for faithful unity)

## **LIGHT IS LOVE!**

**John 13:34-35**

**1 Corinthians 13**

## **LIGHT IS LIFE!**

**John 1:4 =** *In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.*

**John 12:36 =** *...believe in the Light so you may become sons of Light*

*Miracle Messiah Mission =  
“BELIEVE & BECOME”*

## **LIGHT is BRIGHT**

**Philippians 2:15 =** *...you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom **you appear as lights in the world,***

## NOT-Quite LIGHT

Luke 11:35 = *“...watch out that the light in you is not darkness.”*

2 Cor. 11:14 = Satan can disguise as an “angel of light”

## LIGHT will FIGHT

Romans 13:12-14 = *The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light....* ...put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

Psalms 27:1 = *The Lord is my light & my salvation  
Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life;  
Whom shall I dread?*

# LIGHT is RIGHT

## Ephesians 5:6-11

*6 Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for God’s wrath is coming on the disobedient... 7 Therefore, do not become their partners. 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as*

**children of light** — **9** for the **fruit of the light**  
results **in all goodness, righteousness, and truth**—  
**10 discerning** what is **pleasing to the Lord**.  
**11** Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness,  
**but instead expose them.**

Let's see what the CHURCH is  
NOT...

Vacant Lot

**Crack-house**

**Police Station**

**Bank**

**Fast food restaurants**

**Convenience stores**

**Country Club**

**Day-Care**

**Car-wash**

**Schools**

**Health Club**

**God's HOUSE???**

**T/S:** “Visiting God’s *house* is NOT same as becoming an *adopted* part of His home.”

**Eternal difference between “Going TO” church  
and “BE-ing Church”**

Going to church is NOT  
the same as COMING to CHRIST...

**T/S:** Let me show you what I mean... watch where  
“church” enters the scenario and when Christ  
really takes over...

**COSMOS = “no God”**

**ASIA** (other side of the world = “many gods”)

**VIDEO:**  
***A Man Fell In a Hole***

**EUROPE** = one-God, but Wrong God

**Canada/Mexico** = “Pluralism that accepts christianity”

**West Coast** = “christianity that accepts pluralism”

**Mid-West** = “christianity that rejects the Bible”

**East Coast** = “christianity that accepts ignoring/editing  
the Bible”

**Western Maryland** = claims to both be-Christian AND  
accept the Bible... BUT their conflicting rituals &  
traditions trump the Truth

**Chester** = claim to be Christian and accept Scripture’s  
authority but deep down inside are fighting against the  
Truth as an intentional, eternal, agent of Satan

**Stevensville** = claims to be a Christian and believes they are accepting Scripture's authority BUT they have been deceived by false teachers and are *sincerely* living a lie

**God's Street** = May or may-not claim to be Christian but recognizes that SomeOne or something is trying to get his/her attention and that this Christian thing might just be for real...

\*\*\* **God's Front Yard** = true Christianity coming into focus & saving faith is contemplated (and often feared) /

\*\*\* **God's Covered-Porch** or front-steps (SOOOOO Close...) = Christianity's truth in love is understood & saving faith is contemplated (and often feared) /

## **"I Stand By The Door"**

By Sam Shoemaker

"I stand by the door. I neither go too far in, nor stay too far out, The door is the most important door in the world —It is the door through which men walk when they find God.

There's no use my going way inside, and staying there, When so many are still outside, and they, as much as I, crave to know where the door is.

And all that so many ever find is only the wall where a door ought to be...They creep along the wall like blind men with outstretched, groping hands, feeling for a door, *knowing there must be a door... yet they never find it.*

**So I stand by the door.**

"The most tremendous thing in the world is for men to find that door—the door to God.

**The most important thing any man can do** is to take hold of one of those blind, groping hands, and put it on the latch—the latch that only clicks and opens to the man's own touch.

**Men die outside that door, as starving beggars die** on cold nights in cruel [cities](#) in the dead of winter —they die for want of what is within their grasp.

They live, on the other side of it — they live because they have found it. **Nothing else matters compared to helping them find the door** and open it, and walk in, and **find *Him*.**

So I stand by the door.

"Go in, great saints... go all the way in. Go way down into the cavernous cellars, and way up into the spacious attics —into this vast, roomy house, this house where God is.

Go into the deepest of hidden casements, of withdrawal, of silence, of sainthood. *Some* must inhabit those inner rooms, and know the depths and heights of God... *And then call outside to the rest of us how wonderful it is.*

Sometimes I take a deeper look in... Sometimes I venture a little farther in; but my place seems closer to the opening . . .

**So I stand by the door.**

"The people too far in do not see how near some are to leaving — (those too far in can seem) preoccupied with the wonder of it all.

Somebody must watch for those who have just entered the door but would like to run away.

**So for them, too, I stand by the door.**

"I admire the people who go way in... **But I wish they would not forget how it was before they got in.**

*Then* they would be able to **help** the people who have **not even found the door,** or the people who want to run away again from God.

**You can go in too deeply,** and stay in too long, **and forget the people outside the door.**

As for me, I shall take my old accustomed place,  
near enough to God to hear Him, and know He  
is there,BUT... not so far from men as not to hear  
them,And remember they are there too.

Where? Outside the door..

Thousands of them, millions of them... (billions  
of them)...

But—more important for me...

**One** of them... **two** of them... **ten** of them...

Whose hands ***I* am intended to put on the  
latch...**

So... ***I* shall stand by the door and waitfor  
those who seek it.**

**'I had rather be a door-keeper . . .'**

**So I stay near the door."**

**Eternal Doorway...** (see cross!)...  
welcome to God's house!

Would you like to come in and be-come an  
adopted part of His HOME?

***Do you REALLY WANT to come in???***

## **VIDEO: “My Jesus”**

### **CLOSE:**

\*\*\* Turn the entire message/analogy around and show that it is Jesus who is traveling from heaven / “the cosmos” all the way down to the doorway of YOUR heart)...

**Revelation 3:19-20** = *Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.*  
**20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, **I will come in to him** & will dine with him, & he with Me.**



On August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. left an indelible heart-print on the window of human history. He did so by simultaneously casting and defending a vision that was founded upon divinely inspired freedom. Dr. King's eloquence and passion stirred the soul of a nation when he delivered his famous, "I Have A Dream" speech.

Today, we too have a divinely inspired vision that is rooted in faith and enveloped by biblical *"truth in love"* (Ephesians 4:14-16). Like Dr. King, we will share our vision in parallel expressions of optimism and high-calling. We will be a church that serves the world, from our neighbors to the nations, as a BRIDGE, intentionally connecting Christ's "real-deal" to everyday living. Therein, **we are committed to BE-ing an Acts 1:8 church:** *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

## **We Will "BE" His Witnesses**

**We will be a church within which everyone feels welcome.**

\* Within which sinners sit beside saints & feel no condemnation, but rather Christ's love

- \* Within which one's social standing, race, or other demographics simply do not matter

**We will be a church that celebrates the presence of God.**

- \* Within which people not only feel His presence, but encounter Him in life-changing ways

- \* Within which worship is not a Sunday morning "form," but an all-the-time lifestyle

**We will be a church that is committed to prayer.**

- \* Not as part of an order of service or as some sort of religious "duty" but as a spiritual lifeline for daily living
- \* Within which fervent, intercessory prayer is consistently lifted individually & corporately
- \* Within which the week's highlight is often an intimate time of prayer

**We will be a church that is Spirit led with biblical authority & refining truth (2 Timothy 3:16-17).**

**We will be a church that has the world at heart.**

- \* Within which committed lives "*on-mission*" will replace mere, *moralistic good deeds*.
- \* Within which people are passionate about taking the gospel to all the world... so passionate that they feel compelled to get involved in the process personally - via heartfelt prayer, sacrificial giving, and hands-on participation... in local outreach efforts, as well as missions' trips across North America and around the world.

**We will be a church in which people find true, biblical, Church-defining "community" including:**

- \* Friends that last a lifetime

- \* Support and affirmation
  - \* A family in which the unity of the Spirit is a primary priority *and* is zealously protected
  - \* An atmosphere in which people out-do each other in being servants – not as some form of legalistic behavior, but because they are so deeply committed to living like Jesus

**We will be a church in which children feel loved & safe; young believers are built up; & Christian adults are disciplined to make disciples, who make disciples... all by God's grace & for His glory.**

**We will be a church that consistently reflects the love of God to our community...**

- \* As a saved people who are constantly on the lookout for opportunities to share their faith
  - \* Our aim will never be to “*get in someone's face;*” but rather, to *touch someone's heart*
  - \* As a people who intentionally search for ways to serve those outside of the faith, with practical demonstration of God's love – and no strings attached!
  - \* Thru double-fisted seed-sowers becoming comfortable working behind the spiritual plow
  - \* As a people within which new believers are warmly welcomed into the family of God *and* intentionally nurtured (a.k.a. “disciplined”) in their new life in-Christ... as His Church.

**We will be a church that's a little slice of heaven here on earth.**

*Miracle. Messiah. Mission.*

**We will be a church that honors and obeys the Word of God.**

- \* Within which biblical truth is presented in accurate, creative, and applicable ways

- \* Whose people live with a healthy fear of God and treat faithful obedience biblically
- \* A church whose doctrine reflects the Truth of God's fully inspired and perfect Word
- \* A people intentionally led through a process of spiritual growth that develops and deploys them as blessed slaves of the living God.
- \* A church in which all who "*believe and receive,*" embrace their "right-where-you-are" missionary-calling
- \* A church whose attitude is always:  
*"God said it. We believe it. That settles it."*

**It is our prayer that you will catch & commit to these commands & commissions of Christ.**

*"Find the Lost, Grow the Found"*

(Matthew 28:18-20)

**Together, in-Christ, we will BE-the-Church!  
 ...that Jesus bought on Good Friday  
 & that we celebrate on  
 Easter Sunday!**

Let's Pray.... AMEN