



A Thankful Heart for the Gift of Light

By Pastor Haywood A. Robinson, III

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

John 1:9 (CSB)



“As good as God has been to me, I can’t afford not to bless His name.” Those lyrics, and others like them, have jolted me out of many a pity party. They’ve raised my “thankfulness” quotient and I find myself in the midst of a praise party. Perhaps you’ve experienced the same. We have far more for which to give God praise than for which to give Him another petition. Who’s not aware of the absurdities in our world, the difficulties in our communities and the uncertainties in our future? However, if we do a *fact check*, I believe we’ll recognize that our blessings exponentially exceed our burdens. If we can’t think of anything else for which to be thankful, there’s always Jesus. In the present darkness in which we live, let’s be thankful for His gift of Light.

The beloved disciple and apostle, John, chooses not to introduce Jesus by way of His ancestry or birth. Rather, He presents Him as the Word, the Life, and the Light. Describing Jesus, he wrote, “the true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.” John wants everyone, for all time, to know that Jesus is the Light of the world.

These few words in John 1:9 give us many reasons for which to be thankful with respect to this Light. First, let’s be thankful for a **genuine** Light. John identifies this Light as “the *true* light.” The apostle, James, penned “every good and perfect gift comes from the Father of lights...” Among the most prominent of buzzwords in use today is *virtual*. There are virtual meetings, parties, dinners, and classes. Everything seems to be...virtual. I choose to shy away from using that term too often, especially with reference to our worship services. This is because of its meaning: “being such in power, force, or effect, though *not actually or expressly such*” (<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/virtual>). In other words, virtual is something that feels, looks and sounds real, but, in fact, is not real at all. Well, there’s no *virtual* light here. This Light is true... authentic... the real deal!

Let’s also be thankful that this Light is a **generous** Light. Broadening his description, John continues, “... that *gives* light.” Often found in urban settings across our vast country are skyscrapers. These massive, tall buildings scream for attention. During the day, their bold architectural designs captivate us. At night they line the skies with their breathtaking displays of light. But they demand so much in return to maintain their splendor. Continual expense, energy and effort must be invested to sustain their serviceability. Our many light sources -- candle, flashlight, incandescent, solar, flood, and LED -- are like those buildings. They capture, but also require, our attention. Not this Light. Like the sun, this Light gives freely, with no need to receive anything from its recipients in return.

This true and giving Light provides us with another reason to be thankful. We should celebrate its **global** nature. Notice, this Light is not for a select few, but for *everyone*. Imagine this, God has gifted the world with one, solitary Light which transcends time, space, generations, races, countries, galaxies and more. Like the moon, this good gift from God faithfully gives of its peculiar essence to whomever will receive it -- anywhere and at any time in the world. How appropriate the celestial reception received at His birth: "I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for *all* the people" (Lk. 2:10 CSB), as well as the lyrics we sing during the advent season: "Hark, the herald angels sing, Jesus the Light of the *world*." Be thankful that this Light is global.

In this scriptural text, John provokes our gratitude to go beyond the genuine, generous, and global characteristics of the Light. He distinguishes the Light as a **gospel** Light. Unlike the sun or moon, which provide their benefits from a far distance, notice that this true Light "was coming *into* the world." Wow, now that's gospel! That's good news! Crazy good, in fact. Think about it. What if we had to go to the sun in order to access its benefits. We couldn't. We wouldn't survive. We'd be consumed. Guess what? This Light is greater than the sun's light. Because we couldn't come into the Light's presence, He came into our world. As Jonathan McReynolds sings, that's far beyond being lucky, that's love (Jn 3:16).

Essentially, our hearts should be overflowing with Thanksgiving for Jesus Christ, Who is the **God**-Light. There is no one like Him. Who wouldn't show appreciation, adoration and adulation for such an undeserved Gift? I suspect only those who are blinded by the darkness of distraction, disappointment and despair. Despite the manifold problems that our world is facing, I encourage that you look higher than the hurdles, look beyond the burdens, and look above the adversities until you see the Light. By that, I mean sweet Jesus! He's a genuine, generous, and global Light because **He's God**. He's a great, gracious, and glorious Light because **He's God**. He's a guiding, guarding and governing Light because **He's God**. Look to Him and soon you will sing:

Give THANKS with a grateful heart. Give THANKS to the Holy One.

Give THANKS because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son.

And now, let the weak say, "I am strong!"

*Let the poor say, "I am rich
because of what the Lord has done."*

GIVE THANKS!

GIVE THANKS!