

Living as Children of Light by Seeing the World Differently

Sermon for the Fourth Sunday in Lent (3/15/2026)

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All the scripture readings we heard today invite us to see the world differently from the way we normally perceive it. What does that mean? Are we perceiving the world incorrectly? Are our experiences misleading us so that we cannot see the truth?

I am interested in watching world news, especially during these days of conflicts, wars, disturbing video clips, and the fiery commentaries of television anchors. I also follow social media reports coming from India. Much of what I see, hear, and speak about appears confusing, conflicting, and often distorted. I am not always sure what to believe and what to ignore. The images presented to us often seem to represent appearances rather than reality.

So the question arises: **How do we see the truth and move beyond appearances?**

We also encounter public debates that ask us to take sides on pressing issues—human sexuality, abortion, war, the death penalty, government policies, racial and caste discrimination, gender relations, the status of women, and environmental concerns. These issues are complex and emotionally charged. Competing narratives attempt to shape how we see reality.

But conflicting narratives and ethical dilemmas are not new to our time. The early Christian communities faced similar struggles.

During the time of the apostle Paul, the churches he established wrestled with questions about how to live faithfully in a complex society. In his letters—especially to the churches in Rome,

Galatia, Colossae, and Ephesus—Paul often begins by grounding believers in the truth of Jesus Christ and then drawing ethical guidance from that foundation.

In today’s reading from the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul urges believers to “**live as children of light.**” Earlier in the chapter, he writes, “*Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us.*”

This is Paul’s method: first, he reminds believers **what they believe**, and then he explains **how they should live**.

However, when we read further in the same letter, we encounter instructions that can create tension today: “Wives, be subject to your husbands,” “Children, obey your parents,” and “Slaves, obey your earthly masters.” These teachings reflect the social structures of Paul’s time and do not easily fit within our modern understanding of equality and justice.

So, we are left asking: **What should we believe today? How should we act faithfully in a rapidly changing world? How do we know that our judgments correspond to truth?**

To begin with, we must acknowledge that our perceptions are **not neutral**. We see the world through various filters shaped by our experiences. Our perceptions are influenced by our upbringing, education, culture, political environment, economic position, and personal history.

In other words, our understanding of reality is conditioned by the context in which we live. What appears convincing to one person may look very different to another.

In a democratic and pluralistic society, this diversity of perspectives is inevitable. Yet it can also lead to confusion, disagreement, and conflict. This is exactly what we see today in competing narratives that often blur the line between truth and illusion.

Amid this confusion, Paul offers the powerful metaphor of **light**. He says, “*Everything exposed by the light becomes visible.*” Therefore, believers are called to **live as children of light**.

But what does it mean to live as children of light? Does it mean possessing some special spiritual enlightenment that allows one person to know the truth perfectly?

Paul does not suggest that truth belongs to isolated individuals. Instead, he points us toward the life of the **community of faith**.

Living as children of light requires an open spirit. Such openness grows when people gather in a community that is willing to listen, reflect, and discern together. In this shared journey, new understanding emerges through honest dialogue.

The Christian community is therefore not static but dynamic. It continues to seek truth while living a life shaped by love. As imitators of God and children of God, we are called to reflect the love that God has shown us in Christ.

This love invites us into conversation rather than division. It calls us to openness, transparency, and humility. The community becomes a place where mutual encouragement and support help us discern truth together.

This is what it means to **see the world differently**.

The story in the Gospel of John, chapter 9, beautifully illustrates this transformation of perception. Jesus encounters a man who was blind from birth and restores his sight. But the real drama in the story is not only about physical blindness—it is about **spiritual blindness**.

The religious leaders who question the healed man believe they already know the truth. Because of their rigid assumptions, they cannot recognize the work of God standing before them.

Ironically, the man who was physically blind begins to see clearly, while those who claim to see remain blind.

By the end of the story, the healed man confesses his faith in Jesus, while the religious authorities become more hardened in their disbelief.

This story reminds us that seeing is not merely about eyesight; it is about **the openness of the heart**. Sometimes those who believe they see clearly are the ones most resistant to new truth.

The readings from the Old Testament carry the same message. In the story from the First Book of Samuel, God sends the prophet Samuel to anoint a new king for Israel after rejecting Saul. When Samuel sees Jesse's sons, he is impressed by their appearance and stature. But God tells him, *"The Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."*

Even the prophet Samuel had to learn to see differently.

To live as children of light, therefore, requires **humility**—the humility to acknowledge that our perceptions may be incomplete and that we need God's guidance.

This humility is also reflected in the story of Hagar. When she encountered God in the wilderness, she named God **El-roi**, meaning *"the God who sees."* In God's seeing, there is recognition, dignity, and empowerment.

God does not see as mortals see.

And so, the invitation of today's scriptures is clear. In a world filled with competing narratives, partial truths, and distorted perceptions, we are called to live as children of light.

To live as children of light means imitating God's love. It means remaining open to new understanding. It means confessing our blindness and allowing the light of Christ to transform how we see the world and one another.

When we do this, our communities become places where truth is sought with humility, where love guides our conversations, and where the light of Christ helps us see beyond appearances.

May God open our eyes, renew our hearts, and help us live faithfully as **children of light who see the world through God's loving and truthful vision.**

Amen.