



**“Seeing Our Neighbor”  
Neighbor(ing), week three  
Courage Church  
March 5, 2017**

John 8:3-11:

“The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you

say?” This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

The moment we just read is one of the most defining moments in the scriptures, setting for us the ultimate example of the way that we are supposed to treat our neighbors who struggle with sins that we don’t necessarily struggle with ourselves, or in some cases even understand.

None of the people who brought the woman before Jesus were innocent... they just MAY not have been guilty of what they were accusing HER OF.

So the scribes and the Pharisees drag a woman out who had been caught in the act of adultery... they make the whole thing a public spectacle, shaming her and they are even ready to put her to death for what she had

done... but if you noticed, verse 6 says that they did all of this to TEST JESUS.

they wanted to get Jesus to disavow the law or to downplay her guilt because Jesus was known for his grace... and for the way he did NOT look down on sinners but rather, he ate with them. So the thought must have been, "if we can get this guy to say that sin doesn't matter... we will have something on him that we can use against him."

So they tried to put Jesus between a rock and a hard place... Grace, or Law.

But what the religious leaders say to Jesus actually reveals a much bigger problem that exists among humanity, and today my hope is that we can take a look in the mirror and ask ourselves, "is that how we are?" - verse 4 & 5:

Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?"

Teacher... we found *something* in this woman that makes us believe that she deserves to die... while we deserve to keep on living.

THIS IS RELIGION AT IT'S WORST.

Religion says that I have earned what I have because of the way that I have lived... and because of the bad things that I have NOT done, and the good things that I HAVE DONE...

and ONLY people *who think like that* can look at another person, and then pick up a stone.

and unfortunately, when most people who are NOT Christians think about Christians... they think about people who are holding a stone, just waiting to cast it on them.

and it would be easy for me to say to you this morning to LAY DOWN YOUR STONES... but if you have them, (if you look at another person and

you see the sin in *their* life and perhaps somewhere deep down in your heart you can't help but hope that it comes back on them, OR AT LEAST it causes you to subtly think you are better than they are...)

perhaps first you need to ask yourself, "why did I pick this up in the first place?"

The church is called to never pick up the stones. The religious leaders, laying down their stones are not the example in the story, Jesus is.

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On our way to the Mardi Gras mission trip, Dawn and I had the chance to take a mini two night/one day long vacation in Pensacola Beach... we dropped the kids off at my sisters in Atlanta, then headed to this hotel down there.

and this hotel had these fire pits outside, and Dawn and I were sitting there on our first night there just looking at the stars enjoying the warm evening, when another couple came and sat down with us at the fire...

and we got to talking... and we asked them how long they were staying in Pensacola and they said... "just two nights."

They said, "we flew in from Minneapolis, are staying here for two nights and then driving to New Orleans."

They didn't say Mardi Gras...  
they just said New Orleans...

and then they asked us... how about you?

and Dawn and I just sort of looked at each other and said, "same thing. We are doing the exact same thing. We are here two nights, and then driving to New Orleans."

and at that point we shifted the conversation to something else... and I am already starting to get a little uncomfortable... because I KNOW why I was

going there... and I was PRETTY SURE that it was NOT the same reason that they were going there.

there was almost like this silent tension.

then after a couple minutes of awkward silences, the lady said “are you going to Mardi Gras? *I mean, obviously, you are going to Mardi Gras!*” and we said “yes”

and she wanted to know what it was like...  
if we had been there before... what they should expect.

We told them that we had never been to Mardi Gras but had been to New Orleans... that it is a super cool city with incredibly deep fried foods.

and the first chance that I got, I told Dawn I was tired, and we got out of there.

See, when we were at Mardi Gras it was easy to love people, to give them free hugs, to serve them coffee and food, and pray for people...

but to encounter someone on that journey... in that hotel... I just felt this weird discomfort around the idea of telling them “well, I am going to New Orleans during Mardi-Gras *on a mission trip*, because people who go *there* need Jesus.”

But why do we do that?

Why do we sit across a fire from someone that we should be building a relationship with, and think about how “they are going to the same place we are, but they are going to do the things that we are going there to try and free people of by showing them the love of Christ?”

WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING WHY THEY WERE GOING THERE?

Why do we think that we are good... and others are not good...

Why do we see people and with only a fraction of a window into their lives and then make judgments against who they are?

and how on earth are we supposed to love our neighbor when we view them that way?

and this is so important, Because before you can ever truly love your neighbor, as we are going to talk about next week... first you have to work on how you see your neighbor.

It would be very hard to love someone who you think you are better than.

So I am going to do my best to show you why, biblically, people do this. and I genuinely believe that this has the power to change the whole world if enough people can grasp it.

I believe that the most defining moments in human history, without a DOUBT, are: the fall of man, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the last will, *one day*, be THE RETURN of Jesus Christ.

You MUST understand the significance of these events. I wish I could spend all day with you about this, but I can't.

But I want to show you something that a lot of people miss, and it is in regard to **the fall of man**.

The Fall of Man:

In the beginning, the bible literally describes a paradise, a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground (Gen. 2:6)

Then God creates Adam from the dust... and later he creates Eve from the rib of Adam, while Adam was sleeping (Gen. 2:21-22)

but before he created Eve, the bible says something very very important. It is found in Genesis 2:9, and it says:

“out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. **The tree of life** was in the midst of the garden, and **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**”

So there were TWO TREES. The human story begins with a tree. The tree of life... the first thing that God gave man was LIFE, and he said that this tree, they were permitted to eat from. In fact, any tree in the entire garden, they could eat from, except for one.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

This tree is at the root of why we do the things that we do. And the problem is not the good... the problem is not even the evil, even though there are compelling cases out there for both... the bible is VERY CLEAR that Eve took a bite of that fruit for one reason and one reason only, and it is this word right here: Knowledge.

Look at what the serpent said to Eve... Eve tells the serpent that if she eats of the fruit, or even touches it, she will die... which by the way, God never said she couldn't touch it... just that she couldn't eat it... but look at how the serpent responds: (Gen. 3:4-5)

But the serpent said to the woman, “You will **not** surely die. **For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.**

and the idea of knowing the unknown was what drove that first bite. and it opened her up to something that she had never experienced before. The knowledge of what is good, and what is not good.

and Adam, who was with her, then ate some of it as well, and the same thing happened to him. Suddenly, he saw the world through a different lens.

Think about it. Adam and Eve were naked together from the beginning of their lives and they never thought anything of it, until suddenly they had knowledge. And then what did they feel?

Shame - because they were naked. They felt shame because they looked at each other and suddenly for the first time felt “something is missing... something is not right... and if it is not right with you... with what I AM SEEING, then it must not be right with me either. and thus... shame. guilt.

Knowledge shined a light on the areas of their lives that were NOT as they should be.

Knowledge was the draw to the fruit.

and most of our first instincts are to say HOW COULD THE PROBLEM BE KNOWLEDGE? “knowledge is power” and Knowledge is power... and that is the point.

I am not talking about knowledge as in “we should LEARN THINGS” I am talking about knowledge as in “WE KNOW THINGS”

See knowledge doesn't solve problems it only illuminates them. It shows us what is wrong. And we were never meant to see that. The fall of man is the reason that we see the bad in people.

Because Adam and Eve decided... I want to navigate good and evil on my own...

They could have eaten from the tree of life, and could have eaten from it forever... but instead they chose this... and do you know what God said to Adam after he ate the fruit?

God says (verse 17, 18) “Because you have eaten of the fruit which I commanded you *not* to eat... Now, IN PAIN you shall eat it all the days of your life.”

Let me put this in my own words to hopefully explain it better:

Adam, you just opened up a world that you are not ready for. In fact, you were not created for it.

And it is going to be the constant source of pain until the day that you die. Because now, every time you look at your wife, you will see someone who has sin. Every time you look at your kids, the truth about them can't be hidden. When your son Cain kills your other son Abel, every time you see Cain, you will see Abel, and the horrific sin that one Son did to another... Every time you look in the mirror, you will see how far you are from what you should be, and how poor of a job you did with your family, and how much you screwed up when you ate that fruit. and in every situation, there will be a right choice, and a wrong choice... and you are going to have to figure out what *that* choice is, from now on.

And as you make your choices, you are going to form what is called a worldview... and it is going to cause you to view others differently, because as you begin to navigate good and evil you are going to start figuring out the difference. and slowly, judgment is going to creep in, toward others who don't share the same worldview as you, or who struggle in different ways than you do.

See, knowledge will illuminate for you just how sinful other people are.

Adam and Eve wanted to be like God, and they got exactly what they wanted.

Look at what God says in Genesis 3:22-23 - I think we just read right over this usually, especially the first part.

“Then the Lord God said, “Behold, **the man has become like one of us** in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever —” therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

God said: They are now like us. They can see the faults. They can see sin. They can see something that I did not intend for them to see. They could have had life, but they chose knowledge... and God said, “you can't have both. Get them out of the garden, so that they don't even touch the tree of life... because nobody can live forever in a sinful world with that type of knowledge. and now as long as they do live, they will never truly have life. They have power... but not life.



and suddenly, the human existence views each other through the lens of what is wrong, instead of seeing the world in the perfection that it was created to be.

Fast forward over 6,000 years... to a team of 8 Detroiters, ministering on the streets of New Orleans during Mardi Gras. Trying desperately to repaint the image of Christ that other missions trips there have painted in the past. When "Christians" get on a soap box with a megaphone screaming to the crowds "you are all going to HELL!"

and instead we just decided to serve people.

We served coffee and pastries to people as they walked by, and we offered free hugs to people... and it was amazing... we had several people get out of their cars and come up to us for a hug. And it led to all sorts of conversations, which sometimes even led to us praying for people.

One guy, after praying with Dawn and I, told us that we had restored his faith in humanity... he had just a few minutes before meeting us had an encounter with another group of "Christians" who just yelled at him and made him angry. I don't even know what we did... we just talked to him... we just offered him some coffee and empathized with him. He didn't want anything from us... he said he had everything he needs...

but he did accept prayer.

Another couple that we talked to had recently got married and were two months pregnant. They are homeless living on the streets of New Orleans, and they used many foul words as they described all the ways that they had been hurt by the church in the past, and told us stories about times that they went into huge churches for help, and were instantly thrown out, and told that there is no help for them there, and that they were not welcome.

They came into the conversation with a huge wall up against Christianity and the church, but an hour later, they were still there, praying with Dawn and some of the other girls. Something broke in this young lady who was

so bitter toward Christians, and she probably prayed with the team for 15-20 minutes.

Because instead of judging them, the team just made room for them to share their stories... and we CONNECTED with those stories.

Then there is this guy...

Meet our neighbor: the Pope.

This guy dressed like the pope, and walked around with a mega-phone and a button that said "Who am I to judge?"

This is a guy who, to me represents the many attenders of Mardi Gras and the way that they feel about the church.

There is a group of so called "Christians" who show up every year at Mardi Gras, with megaphones and soapboxes and t-shirts and signs that say:

God hates: Fornicators, Adulterers, homosexuals, and revelers.

Which sends the devastating message to the people who need Jesus, that Jesus hates them.

and the way that Mardi-Gras attenders for years have viewed the church has been through the lens of people like this... sign waving, soap box standing, megaphone screaming people out there casting the image of an angry God licking his lips in anticipation of the judgment that he is about to call down on their giant party in the streets.

That is why the pope gets up in the morning and puts on his pope costume. To stand with people who have been marginalized by the church, and send a message to all of us that our judgments are not working, and are not winning.

So the church that we partner with down there created these shirts that say the opposite of what the signs say:

I love: Fornicators, Adulterers, homosexuals, and revelers.

and these are an amazing conversation starter...

someone came up to one of our team members when they saw the shirt... and immediately starting the argue with her about it, because she didn't even read the shirt... all she saw was fornicators... adulterers... homosexuals... revelers... and assumed it was a "God hates them" shirt...

and the moment she realized what the shirt actually said, everything changed in the conversation.

"oh... so you are Christians... and you aren't here to protest us?"

Did you know that there is a better way to reach lost people than that?

I want to show you something that I believe is very powerful:

Psalm 106:23 - Therefore he (being God) said he would destroy them—

\*\*\*sounds an awful lot like what those angry Christian sign holders are saying...

had not Moses, his chosen one,  
stood in the **breach** before him,  
to turn away his wrath from destroying them.

This is in reference to the situation we mentioned two weeks ago.. When Israel sinned by building and worshipping a golden calf... it was a moment when God wanted to destroy them, but look at why God didn't destroy them...

Moses stood in the breach.

The word breach is the Hebrew word: פֶּרֶץ "**perets**" - it is a gap... an opening.

And because Moses stood in this opening... God spared Israel.

But I want to show you another place that we get this same word in the bible. And what we are about to read should break your heart... it should be a wake up call. and it is God himself speaking through the prophet Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 22:30

And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the **breach** before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.

Same word: Breach... פֶּרֶץ "*perets*"

God says here... man, the city is sinful. Man, the land is full of abominations... and the only "just" thing to do is to judge it and if I judge it, I have to destroy it, because there is nothing good about it... and that is going to happen unless someone stands in the breach... but look at this... He found no-one.

No-one who will stand between the judgment the people deserve, and the people who are guilty.

No one who will stand between the people partying at Mardi-Gras to escape their reality, and God... No one who will stand between the people of Detroit and all the evil that the city is known for, and the judgment that it deserves.

God looks around, and he says THERE IS NO ONE!

Guys, even some of the people who we consider to be hero's of the faith didn't have it in them to do what God is looking for here.

In fact, if you study Jewish culture, the two most respected leaders of all time are Abraham and Moses... as we read here in Psalm 106, Moses actually stood in the gap. Moses didn't deny Israel's guilt, but instead he wedged himself into that little space between God and the people, and he pleaded with God on behalf of a group of guilty people.

And God spared them!

We all know the story of Abraham, who stood between God and Sodom and Gomorrah and pleaded, and even worked out terms with God to try and prevent God from destroying them.

Abraham knew that the things done in Sodom and Gomorrah were horrible, but he stood in the gap for the PEOPLE.

This type of boldness with God seems wrong, but for whatever reason, the bible says that God wants us to do it! And there are tons of times in the Old Testament that God changed his mind about what he was going to do, because of a single person standing in the breach.

There is POWER in the BREACH!

But do you know who is not held in nearly as high esteem as Abraham and Moses, in Jewish culture?

Noah.

Because it was the same story... a world full of guilty people who God was so mad at, that he wanted destroy them and start all over... and he told Noah what he was going to do... and Noah just said okay... he went, he built a boat, and he saved his own family... never once even asking God to have mercy on the people. And that is a guy who we tell stories to our kids about...

and I am not trying to come down hard on Noah here... my point is this... EVEN HE didn't stand in the gap... and when we read his story through our modern lens, we think that he did the right thing because he obeyed God. But God said the same thing to Moses as he did to Noah... and Moses didn't DISOBEY God... but he did stand up for the people.

In Ezekiel God says... I am looking for someone... anyone... who will stand in the breach like Moses did on behalf of Israel... someone who will stand between the sinful people who deserve to be destroyed... and me...

I AM LOOKING!

but but I found none.

God WANTS US to petition to him on behalf of sinful people. He wants us to fight for people **who we know are wrong**. He is looking for followers who are willing to love people so much that they are so bold, that they will go to God on their behalf and say “God, have mercy on them. God, change your mind... don't show wrath.”

He is looking for people who understand that there is a gap that needs to be stood in, between the people who WE KNOW are wrong... who we KNOW are doing the wrong thing... and God... who has every right to do whatever He wants... but for whatever reason he wants us to get in His way.

He wants us to stand up for the guilty. He wants us to stand WITH the guilty. Even with all of the knowledge of all that they have done. Because that is what it means to be a neighbor to someone whose life is completely infected by sin. And nothing on the planet has a better chance of getting through to them, than that.

That is what Jesus did for the woman caught in adultery.

verse 6-9

“Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.”

This woman WAS GUILTY! There is almost no debate there, she was guilty. And by law, she could have been stoned for what she had done.

but what Jesus does, is he wedges himself into that gap... into that space between the guilty, and her impending judgment, and he stands there... in the breach... and He pleads for her.

He pleads the cause of the GUILTY.

but you have to realize this... Jesus is not like a lawyer trying to prove her innocence... he doesn't even make a case against her guilt, in fact, he actually makes a case that *justice* be done.

Is it "just" that these people, in all of *their* sins, should stone her, for hers.

and the writer makes a very interesting observation. He says that they ALL went away... that they went away one at a time, beginning with the older ones.

In that culture, age and wisdom went hand in hand... seniority was actually a status to the religious, and by leaving the younger ones to their zeal, but no longer having the backing of the respected elders... the case instantly became harder to push forward.

Because the "wisest among us" are dropping the case.

But the question is, why? and there is only speculation on this... because the bible doesn't define *the why* here! But I think its pretty apparent.

I am 33 years old... I am still very young and I have A LOT to learn. In fact, when we were on that trip to Mardi Gras, Dawn and I took every opportunity we could to let other pastors there pour into us... and speak into our lives and our ministry and our family. Freddie's spiritual Father, Pastor Grogan met Dawn and I and the first thing he said was "I want to pour into you!" and we were just like "YES PLEASE! Pour into us!" and he took us aside and we met for hours and he just spoke into our lives and it was amazing. We are really trying to position ourselves in places where we can learn from others who have done it longer and better than we have.

And if I want to push something forward in my life or in our church, but Pastor Kevin says "I don't think thats a good idea... or Pastor Dave or

Pastor Brad or Pastor Chilly calls me and says... lets think through that a little more..."

I may not be happy about it, but *instantly* I would hit the brakes. I have done it before... YOU DO NOT WANT TO MOVE FORWARD without the wisdom and authority of your elders.

But to speak to the WHY... Why the eldest among them left...

There is something I am noticing as I do get a little older. Because when I was younger I was loud... I was abrasive, I was opinionated on things that I didn't even always understand... even though I never held crazy signs... it probably felt to some like I was...

and I probably still act like that sometimes. It is not my heart, but I probably do it.

But one thing I am realizing, is that the older that I get, the harder it becomes for me to look at someone else and think "that person is more guilty than I am."

Because they are NOT.

The older I get, the more focused on become on what my job is.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 - "We have been given the ministry of reconciling people BACK TO GOD and not counting their trespasses against them... Because Jesus took care of that... God took care of that, when he made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ.

My job is to love people where they are, by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ...

not be condoning every evil thing that they do.  
but not by condemning them either.

God is NOT looking for people who just pretend like sin isn't sin...



He IS looking for people who understand that sin isn't bigger *than* Jesus.

My job is to love, and my job is to stand in the gap for the guilty. and its very important that you hear that. The guilty.

And according to Ezekiel... God is looking everywhere for people who are doing their job... and **NOBODY IS DOING IT.**

So Jesus does it.

and suddenly, it is just Jesus, and the woman.

Verse 10, 11:

Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

See, when it is just you and Jesus, the story changes.

Because now it is just you, and the one who not only defended you, but took the punishment on your behalf. Because Jesus never said "you are not guilty" - instead, he said "I will take what you deserve, because I love you."

and that is the gospel. That is why Jesus died on a cross for our sins, and resurrected three days later. To pay the price for all the things that we got wrong, and then to rise again after three days only to prove that even death can't hold down the power of Jesus Christ. Knowledge has nothing on life... and only Jesus has life. And he proved it with the resurrection.

And that is the message that will change the way that you view your neighbor. Because Jesus died for them, just like you. It is not your job to navigate good and evil... it is your job to point to Jesus... to His death, and His resurrection.

The gospel says "I can't navigate good and evil on my own... I need Jesus to do that."

“Because every time I try and live right, I get it wrong... every time I think I am making progress I slip...” That is why Jesus begins the sermon on the mount by saying “Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for they shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven” - Blessed are the ones who come to terms with the fact that on their own they are never going to be good enough... Because it is at that point, that Jesus can fill you with the life that we were all meant to have from the beginning.

### **Do you see how much these two trees represent the gospel of Jesus Christ?**

One tree represents us, navigating ourselves... working out ourselves... trying to figure out life ourselves... and every time we accomplish something we believe that we have earned something...

Then we see others and we think “why did they do that? Why do they act that way? What is wrong with them?” not realizing that when we do that, we are actually not living gospel centered lives... we are navigating good and evil, rather than living in life.

Adam and Eve partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and it opened their eyes and suddenly left them with the weight of having to navigate what was good and what was evil, when before that God handled the heavy lifting for them. But the tree of life says “God, I need you to do this.”

Knowledge will open you up to how broken you are. How broken your neighbor is. How deserving we all are of God’s judgment and his wrath because we have wronged him in so many ways.

And if you chose to eat from that tree, you will live your whole life wondering... am I ok?

Not only that, but you will live your whole life thinking that everyone else is NOT okay. You may not get up on a soap box or scream it from the rooftops, or paint a nasty sign that you carry with you to Mardi Gras and get in peoples faces with, but you will in your heart struggle with others... and

the way that they act, and you will in your mind differentiate between them, and you. And that is the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

You will live your whole life judging... You will be like Jonah, who wanted wrath to come to the Ninevites. You will be like Noah, who saved his own skin and his own family but he didn't stand in the gap for anyone else.

But the other tree says "you were never actually capable of navigating any of it on your own... eat from the tree of life, and you will have life... not because of anything you did... but because of what is in the tree."

Life is in the tree.

and Jesus died so that we could eat from the tree of life once again. During his ministry, he put it like this... "I am the way, the truth, and the LIFE."

And with the woman caught in the act of adultery, He made himself THE wall between what should be done... what the very law says to do, and the way of life... that says "there is so much more for you than *this*."

but when you choose life, you are choosing to deny the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

You can't walk around living in grace and yet casting judgment on others.

When you choose life, you become an ambassador for the Kingdom of Heaven with the ministry of reconciliation, which means that you are the bridge between the sinful, and their savior. Your job is to stand in the gap... No matter WHAT YOU SEE.

The bible begins with a tree. It is called the tree of life. And because Adam and Eve chose knowledge over life, that tree was taken from them...

But the bible also ends with the same tree that it starts with. But in the end, there aren't two trees, there is only one.

Revelation 22:1-4 -

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, **the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month.** The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> *No longer will there be anything accursed,* but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And night will be no more. **They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.**

In the end, Revelation tells us there will be no more need for lights because the whole world will be light... see, now, lights make things visible... throughout the bible we read that the things we think are done in secret will be brought to light... Light is so great but it also is extremely revealing... I had a crack in the finish of my acoustic guitar and when I took it to the shop, they had to put it under a light to see if the crack had reached the wood... light shows us the broken things that we don't even realize are there.

But when Jesus comes back for his church, there won't be any more need for any of that. Because night will be no more.

There will only be one tree. And the bible says that its leaves will heal the nations... and we won't look at other people anymore and see an enemy... we won't see someone who is worse than us...

But while there is still darkness, we need to remember that we are the light of the world. Not to illuminate problems, but to illuminate Jesus. and we do that by standing in the gap...

But the first thing we have to work out is ourselves... we will never stand in the gap for people who we believe in our hearts are worse than we are. We have to accept the full gospel...the tree of life... that says “Jesus did this for everyone.” “Everyone who has breath has hope” and if I have anything to do with it, they are GOING TO SEE THAT HOPE.

I don't want to get to the end of it all, and meet Jesus, and hear him say "I was looking for someone to stand in the gap for Detroit, but I found no-one."