

# Sermon Title: Christ the Light of the World

- Introduction:
  - Reference Scriptures: Malachi 3:1-5; Luke 2:22-40
  - Reference to the film 'Children of Men' as a backdrop for societal collapse and disconnect.
- Israel's Disillusionment with the Temple:
  - Historical background of Israel's original temple and its destruction.
  - Expectation of messianic age shattered by foreign rule, crop failures, and unfulfilled promises.
  - The temple became symbolic but disconnected from reality, akin to Michelangelo's David in 'Children of Men.'
- The Unexpected Messiah:
  - Arrival of the Messiah, challenging expectations.
  - Jesus, as a baby, brought into the temple by his mother.
  - Simeon's recognition of the true presence of God in the unexpected Messiah.
- Jesus as the True Temple:
  - Contrasts with political and military power; focuses on reconciliation.
  - Fulfilling the true purpose of the temple by reconciling creation to God.
- The Church as Christ's Body and Temple:
  - Baptism as an entry into the true temple.
  - Assurance of God's promises, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and forgiveness of sins.
  - Call for believers to live as visible signs of Christ's light, embodying love, mercy, and forgiveness.

## Discussion Points / Points to Ponder:

1. How do we navigate moments of disconnect between our expectations and reality, similar to Israel's experience with the temple?
2. Discuss the role of symbols in faith. How can symbols, like the temple or rituals, maintain relevance without losing connection to lived experiences?
3. Share personal reflections on the significance of baptism and how it assures believers of God's promises, presence, and forgiveness.
4. How can individuals and the church collectively embody Christ's light in daily life? Discuss practical ways to live out love, mercy, and forgiveness.
5. Consider doubts and apathy within faith communities. How can believers overcome challenges to faith, similar to the doubts in Israel regarding the temple's efficacy?
6. Explore the communal aspect of the church as the body of Christ. How can the community support and encourage individuals in their faith journey?
7. Reflect on personal expectations of experiencing God's presence. How do these expectations align or differ from the ways God chooses to reveal Himself?

### **Alternative questions:**

1. How does the film analogy of Michelangelo's David in 'Children of Men' relate to the way Israel viewed the temple during the time of Malachi? In what ways can a sacred space lose its meaning when disconnected from its original purpose?
2. How do unmet expectations impact faith, and how did Jesus, as the unexpected Messiah, challenge these expectations?
3. How can doubt and disappointment affect our spiritual practices, and what steps can be taken to overcome such feelings?
4. Consider Simeon's prayer upon seeing baby Jesus in the temple. How does Jesus, as the true temple, fulfill the promises of God? Discuss the significance of Jesus as the Light for revelation to the Gentiles.
5. How does the concept of the church as Christ's body align with the idea of Jesus as the true temple? In what ways can the church embody the transformative nature of Christ's light in the world today?
6. Reflect on the symbolism of baptism as an entry into the true temple and the assurance it provides. How does baptism impact one's understanding of the relationship with God, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the forgiveness of sins?