

“SOLAR (Son of Love and Righteousness) Power” (Matthew 16:24–17:9)(3.1.20)

LET US PRAY.

Matthew 16:13–17:9 (NIV84) Peter’s Confession of Christ

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

Jesus Predicts His Death

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. 28 I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

The Transfiguration

17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

6 When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." 8 When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

The word of God for the people of God.

Title: "SOLAR (Son of Love and Righteousness) Power"

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we begin a journey. This is the first Sunday of Lent and Palm Sunday is the last Sunday in Lent. As Jesus prepared His disciples for His pending Passion, death, and resurrection, likewise I will serve as a guide on our Lenten journey.

If you were discerning during our reading of these verses, you likely realized there are a dozen sermons or more in them. The challenge for me is not in finding things to share.

Rather, the challenge for me is to make sure we stop at the most important scenic outlooks on the road that leads to the top of Mount Hermon.

You might be wondering why I chose such a large, complex, overflowing portion of scripture. I believe the Holy Spirit first chose it when inspiring Matthew to write it; and, the Holy Spirit guided me in selecting it.

Who is Jesus? That is where we began our reading; the question He asked the disciples.

Who do people say that I am? Who do you say that I am? Well, Jesus is many things. The ultimate answer is given by Father God Himself on this Mount of Transfiguration. "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

I prefer the translations that say this is my beloved son because they are more accurate. If the Father was only expressing a sentiment then, "whom I love" would be a perfectly fine translation; but, there is more being declared by God here. King David was beloved by Yahweh. David's son, King Solomon was referred to as beloved.

We find Paul's most concise version of the gospel in 2 Timothy 2:8 (NIV84) "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel." Prophecy said that the Messiah would come from the line of David. And we have God's promise to David in 1 Chronicles 17:11 (NIV84) "When your days are over and you go to be with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom." So, in using the term beloved son, God is announcing the kingdom of God; and,

Jesus as king of that kingdom.

BODY:

In the title of this message I used an acronym, which happens to be a real word that also points to Jesus. Solar speaks of things related to or caused by the S U N. It refers to things produced or operated by the action of the sun's light, heat, or energy. The acronym stands for Son of Righteousness and Love: SOLAR.

I intentionally selected Psalm 36 for our Call to Worship. We must always remember that God is both perfectly loving and perfectly righteous. Psalm 36 reminds us of this and says the Lord's justice is like the great deep. In God there is life and in God there is light. The psalmist entreats the Lord to continue His love and righteousness toward those who know God. It is almost like the psalmist chose the sermon title for me.

Hebrews 1:3 (ESV) [Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint [or representation, or express image] of [God's] nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

Not only does that verse use a description associated with brilliant sunshine, it tells us that the Son is exactly like the Father. Jesus tells Philip, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father."

On Mount Hermon, Jesus is transfigured. His face shone like the S U N. His clothes were dazzling white. Jesus' essence was magnificently revealed to Peter, James, and John. Because the Father declares Jesus as His Son, we know that Jesus must possess the same attributes of His Father and our Father. Jesus is righteousness. Jesus is love. In fact, Jesus is the love and righteousness of God.

It is impossible to miss the prominent theme of Jesus as the light of the world. John 8:12 (ESV) Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Now, you must remain focused as I demonstrate this as a unifying theme in the Bible using many scriptures. Please follow the scriptures with me as the evidence is developed. The prophets pointed to the Light that was to come: {give page #s}

Isaiah 42:6 (NIV84)

6 "I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness;

I will take hold of your hand.

I will keep you and will make you

to be a covenant for the people

and a light for the Gentiles,

Isaiah 60:19 (NIV84)

19 The sun will no more be your light by day,

nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you,
for the Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.

Jeremiah 23:5–6 (NIV84)

5 “The days are coming,” declares the Lord,
“when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch,
a King who will reign wisely
and do what is just and right in the land.

6 In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel will live in safety.

This is the name by which he will be called:

The Lord Our Righteousness.

Malachi 4:1–6 (NIV84)

4 “Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the Lord Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. 2 But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. 3 Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things,” says the Lord Almighty.

4 “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.

5 “See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.”

This scripture is the closing of the Old Testament. Then the Holy Spirit was silent for 400 years. This closing of Malachi acts as a bridge. What do we find at the start of the New Testament? The birth of baby Jesus.

John 1:4–5 (NIV84) 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

John 1:9 (NIV84)

9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

John 1:14 (NIV84)

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And, the closing of our holy scriptures continues this theme of Jesus as the glorious S O N & S U N.

Revelation 1:12–16 (NIV84)

12 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was someone “like a son of man,” dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

Revelation 21:22–26 (NIV84)

22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. 25 On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. 26 The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.

CONCLUSION:

How many of you have solar panels? My son in Port Republic had them put on his house about a fifteen months ago. A couple of years ago, I investigated the possibility for my own home. More and more people have them on their roofs. In Absecon the elementary and middle schools have a whole field of solar panels to supply them energy.

Representatives from the solar companies have called me to convince me of my need. Robo callers from solar companies have called me. People go door to door through the neighborhoods with clipboards to educate you on the benefits of solar power. I get email solicitations for solar power.

They send me advertisement through the mail. There are solar power advertisements in the newspapers. When I am on Facebook, their ads flash on the right side of my screen. You need solar power; I need solar power; everyone needs solar power! Solar power will save the world!

As we drive around, we see the installed solar panels ourselves. They are like billboards blasting their message. While people are waiting to have their solar energy systems installed, the company puts signs in their yards. Not only that, when you give referrals for friends and neighbors you get discounts on your installed system.

Hmmm...that gives me some ideas. What if we promoted the Son of Love and Righteousness with the same fervor of the solar energy industry? What if we could get government incentives for our industry and the people that received the blessings of the Son of Love and Righteousness? What a great idea to use this referral concept! Hey friend, you should see the power system I have for my whole life. You can have it too!

“Take up thy Cross,” the Savior said,
“if thou wouldst my disciple be;
deny thyself, the world forsake,
and humbly follow after me.”

Wider grows the kingdom, reign of love and light;
for it, we must labor, till our faith is sight.

Prophets have proclaimed it, martyrs testified,
poets sung its glory, heroes for it died.

Forward through the ages, in unbroken line,
move the faithful spirits at the call divine.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.