Behold: Light in the Darkness

Spotify Episode: https://open.spotify.com/episode/0RkIBkbV6fqNvkmxEUtMNd?si=fEum1WvsTOOTNfJeL1u8Kg

Summary

In this Advent conversation, we explore what it means to behold Christ as the Light who meets us right in our places of darkness, longing, and uncertainty. Drawing from Isaiah, Luke, Matthew, and John, we reflect on the God who steps into our mess before we're ready, who speaks promise before fulfillment, and who draws near long before we know how to reach for Him. This sermon invites listeners to slow down, pay attention, and receive the hope of Emmanuel—remembering that **we don't have to find the Light; the Light has come looking for us.**

Using the simple acronym **B.E.H.O.L.D.**, we see six invitations of Advent:

- **B — Begin in the dark** with honesty about where we truly are.
- **E — Emmanuel meets us where we are**, not where we wish we were.
- **H — Hear the promise before the fulfillment**, trusting God's word even when we can't yet see the outcome.
- **O — Open your eyes to small lights**, the quiet graces of everyday life.
- **L — Let God interrupt your expectations**, just as He did for Mary and Joseph.
- **D — Do one thing: pay attention** to His presence this week.

📖 Scripture Passages

Luke 1:26-33

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

Matthew 1:18-23

18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

Isaiah 9:2

The people walking in darkness

have seen a great light;

on those living in the land of deep darkness

a light has dawned.

John 1:1-5, 9

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

⭐ Reflection / Discussion Questions

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Begin in the dark:

Where do you feel the weight of darkness, uncertainty, or longing in this season?

How might naming it honestly create space for God to meet you?

Emmanuel meets you where you are:

What would it change for you today if you truly believed God is with you *as you are*, not as you think you "should" be?

Hear the promise:

Is there a promise of God—Scriptural or personal—that you're struggling to trust right now?

What does it look like to hold onto that promise even without seeing the fulfillment yet?

Open your eyes to small lights:

What moments of grace, comfort, beauty, or help have you experienced recently that might be God breaking in?

Let God interrupt:

Where might God be gently interrupting your expectations or routines?

Do one thing:

What is one simple practice you can do this week to pay attention to His presence?

🙏 Advent Prayer

BEHOLD (Advent 2025)

Jesus, Light of the World,
we come to You just as we are.

We begin in the dark,
naming the places in our lives and in our world
that feel heavy, confusing, or unfinished.
Meet us there with Your mercy.

Emmanuel, God with us,
thank You that You draw near before we even know where to look.
You step into our mess, our fear, and our waiting
with a love that does not retreat.

Help us **hear Your promises** again—
even the ones that feel far off or slow in coming.
Teach us to trust the quiet work You are doing beneath the surface.

Open our eyes to the small lights You scatter through our days—
the moments of grace, the kindness of others,
the strength we didn't know we had,
the hope that flickers even when life feels dim.

Give us courage to **let You interrupt** our expectations,
to loosen our grip on control,
and to lean into Your unexpected ways,
just as Mary and Joseph did.

And this week, help us to **do one thing**:
to pay attention.
To look for You in the ordinary.
To behold Your presence in our real, beautiful, messy lives.

Jesus, we don't have to find the Light.
You have come looking for us.
Help us behold You—
now and always.

Amen.