

# SERMON NOTES - “An Earthly Lightshow”

These notes are designed to be read along with the associated audio / video message

There are 3 ways to watch or listen to this message, and several ways to use it:

Watch or Listen to the Message	Using the Message
The <b>full video message</b> (around 26 minutes) can be watched on our <a href="#">website</a> .	Play the Video OR Preach it Yourself → Small Group Discussion In larger settings. See guidance notes <a href="#">below</a> .
A <b>shorter version</b> (7-11 minutes) with small group discussion questions can also be found on our website.	In small groups. See Notes <a href="#">below</a> .
An <b>audio</b> podcast - on our <a href="#">app</a> , <a href="#">soundcloud</a> , or <a href="#">itunes</a>	Personal listening

Below you will find the following ...

## [1 - A summary of this talk, and various ways you can use it](#)

- [AN OUTLINE OF THE TALK](#)
- [THE MAIN THEMES OF THE TALK](#)
- [THE “CHAPTERS” OR SECTIONS IN THE VIDEO](#)
- [DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE TALK](#)
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## 1 - A summary of this talk, and various ways you can use it

Due to the nature of the video messages, a sermon preached on video/TV generally contains more information than should be presented when preaching “live”.

Video messages also don’t include as many personal stories and anecdotes as would be shared in a personal sermon.

For this reason, when preaching this message “live”, it is advisable for you to pick one or two of the main themes, ideas, or points below, and focus on them, adding your own stories and experiences, and your own personality.

### THE BIG IDEA OF THIS SERMON

While the Church is a “Cosmic Lightshow”, for those of us on Earth, it is a Lightshow hidden in Earthen Vessels - an “Earthly Lightshow” - with perplexing struggles. And yet God always leads us in triumph through all of this and achieves His good purpose.

### SOME TOOLS TO HELP YOU USE THE SERMON

- [AN OUTLINE OF THE TALK](#)
- [THE MAIN THEMES OF THE TALK](#)
- [THE “CHAPTERS” OR SECTIONS IN THE VIDEO](#)
- [DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE TALK](#)
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○ **AN OUTLINE OF THE TALK**

**I. Introduction - Cosmic Light Show** (Ephesians 3:10-11, 1 Peter 1:10-12)

- The church as a spiritual light source for angels

**II. Earthly Perspective vs Heavenly Perspective**

- Earthly view may not seem amazing
- Metaphor of silent disco

**III. Paul's Experience in Ephesus and Troas** (2 Corinthians)

A. Hardships Paul Faced

- Fought wild beasts in Ephesus (1 Corinthians 15)
- Extreme difficulties (2 Corinthians 1:8, 7:5)

B. Yet God Leads in Triumph (2 Corinthians 2:12-14)

- Diffusing the fragrance despite trials
- The fragrance of Christ (Genesis story of Jacob and Esau)

**IV. Treasure in Earthen Vessels** (2 Corinthians 4:6-18)

A. Light Shining in Our Hearts (2 Corinthians 4:6)

B. Yet Having This Treasure in Earthen Vessels

C. Hard Pressed but Not Crushed

D. Perplexed but Not Despairing

E. Persecuted but Not Forsaken

F. Struck Down but Not Destroyed

G. Looking at the Unseen Eternal Reality

**V. The Story of Troas**

A. First Visit - Confusion (Acts 16)

B. Second Visit - Opportunity but No Rest (2 Corinthians 2)

C. Third Visit - Eutychus Raised from Dead (Acts 20)

D. Fourth Visit - A Place of Comfort (2 Timothy 4:12-13)

○ **THE MAIN THEMES / IDEAS OF THE TALK**

**1. The Church as a Cosmic Light Show** (Ephesians 3:10-11, 1 Peter 1:10-12)

- The church displays God's manifold wisdom to angels/spiritual beings, described as a multicoloured, amazing cosmic light show that angels look at with wonder.

**2. Earthly vs Heavenly Perspective**

- From an earthly view, the church may not seem amazing, but angels are mesmerised by the spiritual cosmic light (silent disco metaphor used).

**3. Paul's Sufferings** (1 Corinthians 15:32, 2 Corinthians 1:8, 7:5)

- Paul faced extreme hardships like fighting beasts in Ephesus, being burdened beyond strength, despairing of life itself.

**4. God Leads in Triumph** (2 Corinthians 2:12-14)

- Despite trials, God always leads believers in triumph and diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge through them, likened to a fragrance released when crushed.

**5. The Fragrance of Christ** (Genesis story of Jacob and Esau)

- Believers are the fragrance of Christ to God and to the world, both those being saved and perishing.

**6. Treasure in Earthen Vessels** (2 Corinthians 4:6-7)

- The glorious light of Christ shines within believers, but they are also weak, frail earthen vessels, so God gets the glory.

**7. Hard Pressed but Not Crushed** (2 Corinthians 4:8-12)

- Believers face pressures, confusion, persecution, being struck down, but are never ultimately crushed or forsaken because of God's power.

**8. Looking at the Unseen** (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

- The key is to focus on the unseen spiritual realities, not just what is seen, as the unseen is eternal.

**9. The Story of Troas** (Acts 16, 20, 2 Corinthians 2, 2 Timothy 4:12-13)

- The difficulties Paul faced planting a church in Troas, which became a place of comfort, showing God's triumph.

<p><b>VI. Conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on the Unseen</li> <li>- God Leads in Triumph</li> <li>- Be the Fragrance of Christ</li> </ul>	<p><b>10. Be the Fragrance of Christ</b></p> <p>- Believers are called to be the fragrance of Christ to God, focusing on the light within despite earthly troubles. God will always lead us in Triumph and get the victory as a result, as can be seen by the “rocky” start of the Troas Church, and then its great success in the end.</p>
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<p>○ <b>THE “CHAPTER” SECTIONS IN THE VIDEO</b></p>	<p>○ <b>DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE TALK</b></p>
<p>Section 1: Introduction - The Cosmic Light Show            Summary: An explanation of the biblical concept that the church displays God's manifold wisdom as a spiritual "cosmic light show" to angels and heavenly beings.            First few words: "Hello there. We've been talking about..."            Timestamp: 00:00:24:05</p> <p>Section 2: Context - Paul's Earthly Struggles            Summary: Details the extreme hardships, persecution, and difficulties Paul faced, especially in Ephesus, contrasted with God leading him in triumph.            First few words: "The context of this is Paul..."            Timestamp: 00:03:26:05</p> <p>Section 3: Earthen Vessels - an Earthly Lightshow (2 Corinthians 4)            Summary: Expounds on 2 Corinthians 4, describing believers as having the glorious light of Christ within them, yet being frail earthen vessels, facing pressures but not crushed.            First few words: "For it is the God who..."            Timestamp: 00:10:27:13</p> <p>Section 4: The Story of Troas            Summary: Recounts Paul's four visits to Troas, showing how God worked triumph despite confusion, opposition and difficulties in planting a church there.            First few words: "So let me just tell you..."            Timestamp: 00:19:07:09</p> <p>Section 5: Conclusion - We focus on the unseen and therefore have triumph            Summary: Concluding exhortation to focus on the unseen eternal realities, allowing God to spread the fragrance of Christ despite earthly troubles.            First few words: "Friend, can I leave you with..."            Timestamp: 00:26:08:02</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The speaker describes the church as a "cosmic light show" displaying God's wisdom to spiritual beings. What does this metaphor convey about the significance and role of the church?</li> <li>2. Why do you think angels are said to be amazed and mesmerised by the "light" of the church according to 1 Peter 1:10-12? What might this suggest about the spiritual reality we cannot see?</li> <li>3. Paul experienced extreme hardships and difficulties, even facing death, as detailed in passages like 2 Corinthians 1:8. How can tremendous suffering and God's triumph coexist for believers?</li> <li>4. The speaker highlights the contrast between earthly appearances and unseen spiritual realities using the illustration of a "silent disco." When have you experienced this disconnect between outward circumstances and inner spiritual confidence?</li> <li>5. According to 2 Corinthians 2:14-17, believers are called the "fragrance of Christ." What does it mean to be the fragrance, and how can we live that out practically?</li> <li>6. Unpack the meaning of the phrase "treasure in earthen vessels" from 2 Corinthians 4:7. Why is it significant that God's light shines through our human frailty?</li> <li>7. Which of the descriptors in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (hard-pressed but not crushed, perplexed but not despairing, etc.) resonates most with you currently? How does this passage encourage endurance?</li> <li>8. The story of Troas shows how God brought triumph through great difficulties in planting a church. What experiences have you had of God working greatly despite confusing or painful circumstances?</li> <li>9. Why is the exhortation to "look at the unseen" in 2 Corinthians 4:18 so crucial? How can we develop an eternal perspective amidst temporary troubles?</li> <li>10. What are practical ways we can choose to "focus on God" and "be the fragrance of Christ" to those around us who are being saved or perishing?</li> </ol>

## An Earthly Lightshow

### Introduction - The Cosmic Light Show - THE MAIN VERSE & A RECAP

**Eph 3:10** NKJV — "10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places"

**1 Pe 1:10-12** - How God's GRACE and GLORY is on the Church, and Angels long to look into these things. **1Pe 1:12** NIV - "... angels long to look into these things."

"Manifold" = *Poly Poikilos* - "Mega Multicoloured"

What does this cosmic lightshow look like from an EARTHLY perspective? What is it like for Christians, and non-believers who are "looking in" on this lightshow?

Is it all "easy"?

We will look at 2 passages from 2 Corinthians showing what happened to Paul as he left Ephesus:

### Paul's struggles as he left Ephesus

To give context as to how Paul was feeling as he left Ephesus (Asia):

**1Co 15:32** NKJV — "If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

**Rom 16:4** NKJV - "[Priscilla and Aquila] risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."

**2Co 1:8-9** NKJV — "8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,"

**2Co 7:5** NKJV — "5 For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears."

Paul then arrives in Troas and he says this:

**2 Cor 2:12-17** - "12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, 13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia.

**14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.**

FRAGRANCE - A thing is the most fragrant when it is pressed or crushed.

**2 Cor 2:15** For we are to God the **fragrance of Christ** among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

**Genesis 27** - Jacob steals Esau's blessing: **Gen 27:27** NKJV - "27 And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed."

**2 Cor 2:15** For we are to God the fragrance of Christ **among those** who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ."

## Earthen Vessels - an Earthly Lightshow

Speaking about this same time when he left Ephesus, Paul says:

WE HAVE THE SUPERNATURAL LIGHT OF GOD IN OUR HEARTS

**2Co 4:6-10, 16-18** NKJV — "6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

BUT...

**2Co 4:7** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power **may be of God and not of us.**

Cracks and pressure upon us display His light and give Him great glory.

WHAT PRESSURES DO WE FACE?

8 We are **hard-pressed** on every side, yet not crushed; we are **perplexed**, but not in despair; 9 **persecuted**, but not forsaken; **struck down**, but not destroyed —

(Reference to the riot in Ephesus as Paul left - Acts 19:21-41)

10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body...

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

ILLUSTRATION of looking through a big glass window that can show a reflection of me **and** the beauty on the other side.

## THE TROAS STORY - The 4 times Paul mentions Troas

### 1) 51AD - FIRST VISIT - CONFUSION

Acts 16:6-10 NKJV - "6 Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. 7 After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. 8 So passing by Mysia, they came down to **Troas**. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them."

**2) Early 56AD - SECOND VISIT "ON WAY TO MACEDONIA"** - LONELY(forsaken), PERPLEXED, HARD PRESSED, PERSECUTED and ATTACKED (struck down) OPPRESSED, FEARFUL...

**2 Cor 2:12-17** - "12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, 13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia. (See also Acts 20:1-3 for the context)

**3) Later in 56AD - THIRD VISIT - A DISASTROUS MEETING WHERE EUTYCHUS DIED.**

Acts 20:6-13 - 6 But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at **Troas**, where we stayed seven days. 7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. 9 And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking

into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. 10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." 11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. 12 And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted. 13 Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot."

#### **4) 62-66 AD - NEAR END OF LIFE - NOW A COSMIC LIGHTSHOW**

2 Timothy 4:12-13 NKJV - "12 And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13 Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come--and the books, especially the parchments."

Troas is a place of comfort, friendship, light, a successful Church where Paul had friends, left his belongings, and the parchments (Scriptures) were kept there.

## **Conclusion**

Fix your eyes on what is unseen, on Jesus, on His Light inside you, and what He is achieving, and He will work His miraculous plan through you.

## 2 - Notes on How to Preach a Sermon

The SUNDAY sermon is normally not an in depth teaching time (this is usually done in other times and settings). Usually the Sunday Sermon achieves 3 main goals:

- It attracts non believers,
- It inspires believers and
- It educates everyone.

A sermon should not be too long (30 minutes is a good maximum time).

The mood and tone is important as people will often remember a FEELING more than information. People must sense and feel the love, joy and excitement of Jesus and the Christian life along with being motivated by GRACE, rather than legalism, guilt or religion.

### A 4-Point Checklist for Sermon Preparation ...

- 1) You** must be able to articulate in your own mind what the talk's one big message is. You should be able to state this in one sentence before you give your talk, and this would also work well as the introductory sentence of your talk..

**1 BIG  
IDEA**

It should be a compelling and motivating idea that is captivating and important, and it must have HELPED YOU in your life. If it is real for you, it will be real to those who hear you. As a general guideline, this idea should inspire people to faith, hope and action, and it is based on joy rather than on legalism or duty.

- 2) To** back up and support your big idea, you should have around 3 main points which are helpful and along the same theme. People should be able to follow your logical progression and see how the three points back up the main idea. You can have more than three points if you are making the same point from several different angles OR if you are using several different Bible verses to support the same idea.

**3  
SUPPORTING  
Points**

- 3) For** each point you make, you should try to have one **story** or a **personal example** that illustrates what you are saying. They give a window to your sermon, allowing light to shine in, and bringing your points to life. Without illustrations, your sermon could feel like it's all "facts". Illustrations and stories engage people's imagination and emotions, and can show how the truths you are speaking of have impacted and affected you in a personal way.

**ILLUSTRATIONS  
&  
STORIES**

- 4) There** should be a practical way that people can apply what you have said – it should change people's lives, and you should conclude with this application. There is a **general** life application – "how will I live differently going forward?" – and there is also an **immediate** application – "what is God saying to me right NOW?" Encourage people to "do business with God" right then and there and to make decisions or commitments if necessary. This "life application" can be a good conclusion to your talk, OR the main idea that you started with can also be helpful as a concluding summary.

**PRACTICAL  
APPLICATION  
AND SUMMARY**

## 3 - General notes on How to lead a Small Group

The following notes give a guide on how to lead a group and a discussion on ANY passage of Scripture.

Remember that the aim of the small group is to foster discussion and community, rather than for the leader or one individual to preach to everyone.

**1** - Often an **Icebreaker question** is a great way to start discussion. You could ask a question like those below, or use an “app” like <https://letsplunge.yesheis.com/> :

- What were the highs or lows of your week?
- What is your earliest memory?
- If you had to describe yourself as one animal, what would it be and why?
- What is your favourite type of holiday destination?

**2** - Next, **read the passage**. You can ask various people in the group to help by each reading a portion of the passage.

**3** - These are the **main questions** to ask to understand the passage:

- What is the main message of this talk / passage?  
Allow discussion and even diverging from the main topic if it is helpful.
- What did you find particularly helpful or challenging?
- What did you not fully understand?
- What can we do PRACTICALLY in response to this teaching?

**4** - Close by offering **prayer** for each person.

- Ask, “how can we pray for you / each other now?”
- Ask each person to pray or you, as leader, pray for each person’s need

**The blessing** and opportunity in Small Groups is the possibility for...

- Each person to contribute and/or ask questions,
- People to pray for each other and to ask for prayer,
- People to learn to use and grow in their gifts,
- Community, friendship and intimacy in relationships.

God Bless you in this very important ministry.



## 4 - Small Group Bible Study Questions for this message

The small group video (for playing in a small group setting), can be found on our [website](#), and it's shown in the "related videos" pane to the right when viewing the main sermon video on our site. The small group video is usually about 7-13 mins long. It is a summary including excerpts from the main video, and it includes discussion questions at the end of the video.

### **THE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THIS SHORT VIDEO ARE:**

1. Do you feel like you are the "fragrance" of God? Why or why not?
2. How do Paul's struggles encourage you OR discourage you?
3. How can we daily fix our eyes on what is unseen? What will help you to do this?
4. Spend some time thanking God and praying specifically for each person's needs.