

## **“PRESENTING CHRIST IN TODAY’S CULTURE” (Matthew 9:9-13)**

8.4.19

### **INTRODUCTION**

I was planning to continue our “The Big Questions” series today. But another series interrupted those plans. It was a series of articles that came across my radar over the past week right up until last night, that I just felt moved to address. These kinds of things happen from time to time, so I hope you will bear with me.

How many of you have heard of or read the book, “I Kissed Dating Good-Bye” by Joshua Harris? It came out in 1997. It strongly advocated against premarital sex and same-sex marriage. It also took the position that dating was not a healthy alternative — in his words, dating was accomplishing no more than preparing a couple for divorce — and that God would in his time provide the ideal mate for somebody.

Well, this past Monday, Joshua Harris, author and former pastor of a Maryland megachurch, was all over the news:

- 1) First, he announced that he and his wife Shannon, with whom he has been married since 1998 and have three teen-aged kids, had separated and will be divorcing: “We’re writing to share the news that we are separating and will continue our life together as friends. In recent years, some significant changes have taken place in both of us. It is with sincere love for one another and understanding of our unique story as a couple that we are moving forward with this decision. We hope to create a generous and supportive future for each other and for our three amazing children in the years ahead.”
- 2) Second, he announced that he no longer considers himself a Christian: “I have undergone a massive shift in regard to my faith in Jesus. The popular phrase for this is ‘deconstruction,’ the Biblical phrase is ‘falling away.’ By all the measurements that I have for defining a Christian, I am not a Christian. Many people tell me that there is a different way to practice faith and I want to remain open to this, but I’m not there now.” He went on to conclude: “I don’t view this moment negatively. I feel very much alive, and awake, and surprisingly hopeful.”
- 3) Third, he sought to “apologize” for any harm the books he wrote or his pastoral ministry did to anybody; in particular, “to the LGBTQ+ community, I want to say that I am sorry for the views that I taught in my books and as a pastor regarding sexuality. I regret standing against marriage equality, for not affirming you and your place in the church, and for any ways that my writing and speaking contributed to a culture of exclusion and bigotry. I hope you can forgive me.”

This made national news this week — a former Christian pastor saying, in effect, “Forgive me; I didn’t know what I was doing with any of my writing or my speaking or my faith.” One of the responses I found interesting was in the National Review, where journalist David French wrote: “For Christians, it’s a sad statement, but it’s also full of real integrity. Rather than try to jam Christianity into his evolving worldview, he respects orthodoxy by opting out.”

And then of course, as if that wasn’t enough, Newsweek reported on Tuesday that a married, 55-year-old “Christian” therapist, a psychologist who in addition to his practice had been featured frequently on an evangelical radio program called “Divine Direction For Men,” and who on his Facebook page has written that he felt that God had “gifted” him for ministry as a therapist, surrendered his Florida license to practice after admitting to police that he had been pursuing a sexual relationship with a female teenaged client who he had been counseling as a result of her being a two-time rape victim.

Is it any wonder that Christians are often looked at with, to put it politely, skepticism. With the recent high-profile removals from ministry of James McDonald and Bill Hybels, along with these stories from just this week, it seems there's always some news about Christians that makes Christianity look a whole lot less than desirable. Christians are often characterized as dumb, naïve, gullible — and those are on the good days. Otherwise you'll hear that Christians are bigoted, judgmental, arrogant — and even dangerous, depending on the context and all the possible harm that Christian thinking is credited with being capable of — and that's not even getting into the flat-out predatory behavior of that Florida therapist. Or maybe you're just like me in that you'd like to get right in front of all of them and just say, "Get off my side." And as our culture moves farther and farther away from Biblical standards, we see other impacts on our faith: Some sections of the Bible are now legally considered "hate speech" due to their perceived treatment of the homosexual community. Many sections of the Bible are considered mythology. And, if all religions are the same, or are getting us to the same place, the Bible itself is increasingly considered wholly irrelevant — as are the people who claim to follow it.

Then, of course, in case we as Christians start to overlook old arguments against our faith while dealing with the constant new challenges to Christianity, an article appeared in "Air & Space" this past Thursday, written by a professor who teaches at both Arizona State and Washington State universities who specializes in the areas of astrobiology and planetary habitability, with the unassuming title: "Darwin's Ideas About How Life Arose On Earth May Be Right After All." Wow; who needs God? Of course, the article admits that, within the construct of evolution, they are still clueless as to the origin of life. But since they have removed God from their list of possibilities, I guess we're just left with their guesses.

And on top of all that is the culture that is currently in place in the world in which we live. It has become, to put it politely, very adversarial — and I'm not even thinking about the clichéd "gridlock" that seems to be perpetually in place in our nation's capitol. I'm talking about the fact that the number of hate groups in our country has risen by 30% since 2014. And just consider the hate and strife that are apparent in a moment's look at headlines; these caught my eye just yesterday afternoon while I was getting this sermon ready: (1) "20 dead, 26 wounded at El Paso Wal-Mart mass shooting," (2) Hundreds arrested in Moscow as protests pile pressure on Putin," and (3) Hong Kong protests: Chaos rages as residents turn on police for using tear gas in their neighborhoods." There's literally not a spot on the planet where this question is not absolutely appropriate: What's going on with our world? The media keeps pushing the question as both sides — conservative and liberal — often resort to simply attacking "the other side." And, unfortunately, that too is not confined merely to the secular press. You can find articles in "Christian" circles as well, attacking the theologies or personalities or lifestyles of people that, at least in theory, are our brothers and sisters in Christ. It's not the disagreements (those happen); it's the venom and anger and just plain hurtfulness that is so willing to be played out from all sides — including from an historic faith that says we should know better.

And then, at the same time that society seems to be conspiring to push people farther apart, this headline, also from this week: "22 percent of millennials say they have no friends." A recent poll told us that, for people ages 22-38, 30% of them admit to feeling lonely. In fact, the highest ranking number for the answer in the poll, "How many friends do you have?" was "0." Isn't it interesting that, in an era that boasts the quantity of social media platforms that are available, not to mention the convenience of cell phones, that an age that many of us would consider the "prime of life," with career paths and family decisions all a part of the landscape, would consider themselves lonely? We

have almost more social media connections available than we can name, but actually meaningfully being connected to one another seems to be another matter.

Yet this is also the culture into which we've been placed. This is the time into which we've been directed. So it seemed that it was worth taking a pause in our "Big Questions" series to contemplate, in light of these stories, how we are to present ourselves as ministers of the gospel to this time and place and people in which we find ourselves today. So, with all that in mind, let's begin.

#### **TEXT (HARMONIZED WITH MARK 2:13-17 AND LUKE 5:27-32)**

*Once again Jesus went out beside the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. As Jesus walked along [and] went on from Capernaum, he saw a man named Matthew (a/k/a Levi son of Alphaeus) sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up, left everything and followed him. Then [Matthew] held a great banquet for Jesus at his house. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, a large crowd of many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw this (Jesus eating with the sinners and tax collectors), they complained to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" On hearing this, Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE MERCY, NOT SACRIFICE.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" — Matthew 9:9-13 (quoting Hosea 6:6).*

#### **ANALYSIS**

We see Jesus in mid-ministry, teaching and preaching on the north end of the Sea of Galilee near the village of Capernaum, which was serving as kind of an unofficial headquarters for Christ and his ministry at this time. A crowd is around him (like usual) and he is teaching them (also like usual). But then he sees a guy sitting at a tax collector's booth; he stops and calls to the man, whose name is Matthew, to "follow" him. The Greek word here is AKOLOURTHEO (ak-ol-oo-theh^-o): literally, to be going the same way (think of stepping into the footprints left by somebody leading the way in the snow), to accompany, to go with together, to follow; specifically, to follow a teacher, i.e., to be or become the disciple of someone, in this context meaning to accompany him personally. This would have been a stunning development to those gathered around Jesus. Didn't he know that Matthew was a tax collector? Tax collectors at this time were Jews who contracted with Roman tax officials to collect taxes from the Jewish people. These people were seen as the lowest of the low: Not only were they working with an occupying, pagan enemy, but they were exploiting their own people for profit (tax collectors were notoriously unscrupulous, and had a virtual free hand to extract as much from the people as they could; as long as Rome received their due, there was little if any oversight of their activities). And yet Jesus seems to want to start a relationship with this guy — an unthinkable arrangement with such a man, who doubtless had been ostracized from his community (both social and religious). But whether it was from shock or sincerely being moved by Jesus' invitation, Matthew in that instant gets up from his toll booth, "leaves everything," and indeed begins his life's journey, literally as well as figuratively, with Jesus.

Later that day, Matthew hosts a dinner party, a banquet, where Jesus is the honored guest. But not only is Jesus in attendance, and his disciples, but also other tax collectors and other "sinners," so judged by the Jewish religious leadership because they were not perceived as living up to the standards of the law, which the leadership prided themselves on observing. These were people that, in the Pharisees' "humble yet accurate opinion," if Jesus was interested in being a respectable rabbi, he should distance himself from immediately. So they ask his disciples (notice indirectly to them instead of directly to Jesus), "Doesn't your master understand who these people are? Why would he

associate with the likes of them?” In response, Jesus essentially say, “This is who I came for — not those who think they’re healthy, but those who know they’re not. This is why I’m here — restoration from sickness to health. If no one needed a doctor in this house (mankind), I wouldn’t have come — but here I am.”

What do we see from Jesus?

- 1) He publicly connects with anyone and everyone; no one is turned away. He has no fear of being associated with anybody who wants to be with him; in fact, he is the personification of “welcoming,” as he said so well later in Matthew’s gospel: **“Come to me, ALL you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” — Jesus Christ, Matthew 11:28-30.**
- 2) He knows what his “ministry” is and who his “clients” are. He views everyone he meets with God’s eyes, and not the culture’s. As he said at another time when he received similar pushback for reaching out to a sinner, ironically, another tax collector: **“[T]he Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” — Jesus Christ, Luke 19:10.**
- 3) He is completely unafraid to establish and build relationships with anyone and everyone. He knows that relationship is where the ministry of discipleship begins. As he told his disciples following his interaction with the Samaritan “woman at the well,” **“I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” — John 4:35b.** And what is the perspective that allows us to view these fields correctly? Jesus himself gives us the answer: **“God so loved the world” — Jesus Christ, John 3:16a.** Simply put, we love the world as Jesus did — as Jesus DOES!
- 4) He understands that ministry is a matter of heart, not religion. And he understands that God’s heart is based on inclusivity — reaching out to everybody. The religious leaders of Jesus’ day judged worthiness before God as being the equivalent of worthy before them. Basically, “Are you as good and pure and God-fearing as I am?” Jesus met people where they were. Jesus came to meet the entire world where it was. As he said so memorably to his disciples: **“[T]he Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” — Jesus Christ, Mark 10:45.**

## APPLICATION

So how should we present the Christ of the gospel to the culture of the world? There are obviously many solid suggestions for what that looks like in our present day, so this is by no means an exhaustive list. But these are five (5) ideas that struck me:

- 1) **Love.** Love is one of the giant hallmarks of those who claim to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Paul said it so well in his letter to the Galatian Christians: ***The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love — Paul, Galatians 5:6b.*** Love is to be the great “calling card” of believers in Jesus Christ because it is the purest reflection of who he was. As he himself said to his disciples: **“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” — Jesus Christ, John 13:34-35.** What is being meant when the NT speaks of “love,” using the Greek word *agape*? When it is love from God to us, it is the idea of expressing both the deep and constant love and interest from a perfect Being towards beings totally undeserving and unworthy of that affection; as a result, a love is created within those beings both to return that love to the Originator and to reflect that original love to all those around them as a response to that original love. When being directed towards other believers or towards anybody in general, love is intended to be expressed apart from any feelings; it may often run counter to what would seem to be a natural response, and it seeks to encompass

all regardless of any personal viewpoints. It seeks the welfare of all, seeks no ill will to anybody, and it looks, in fact it goes after, opportunities to do good to all — springing from the foundational desire to reflect Christ without limits. Now is there sin all around us? Absolutely. Horrific displays of godlessness? Tell me something I don't know. But think of all the issues that were alive and well when Jesus was here. How did he address them? He changed the issues by changing the heart. And as he reminds us while he spoke with Nicodemus: **“God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” — Jesus Christ, John 3:17.** That needs to be our approach as well: Judge the sin, but love the sinners! That's what Jesus did.

- 2) **Ambassadors.** The idea is that our lives in Christ are supposed to look like something — something that is going to make people turn their thoughts to God because our behaviors remind them of His Son. That's what Paul had in mind when he wrote the Corinthian church with these words: **[God] has committed to US the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us — Paul, II Corinthians 5:19b-20a.** Do you understand what that means, what Paul is saying there? God sent his message of salvation and reconciliation in the life, message and ministry of Christ. Once Christ returned to heaven, that same mission became ours. The mission never ended. That is why Christ told us: **“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” — Jesus Christ, the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:14-16.** As Paul encouraged the Philippian Christians: **Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life — Paul, Philippians 2:14-16a (quoting Deuteronomy 32:5).**
- 3) **Meekness.** This hallmark of being a Christian is a little tougher to get an accurate English rendition of because there really is not an English counterpart to the Greek word *PRAUTES* (prah-oo^-tace). But the general idea is very different from how it is often understood in contemporary English: a mildness that suggests weakness, something that the person cannot help in themselves. Meekness in the Greek however suggests, instead of weakness, power. This was the meekness of Jesus: He chose to display a selflessness as he ministered to all those around him; this selflessness was not based on weakness but rather on the infinite resources of his Father. Meekness in this sense is not self-serving or self-promoting; it is the power to come alongside people in ministry to seek the best outcome for their lives; as Jesus himself said: **“I have come down from heaven not come to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me” — Jesus Christ, John 6:38.** This is what Peter is promoting when he wrote in his first letter: **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness (Greek, “meekness”) and respect (Greek, “fear” but in the moral sense, meaning respect and honor) — I Peter 3:15b.** Such a servant's heart is impossible without meekness. And, as Paul reminds us: **[N]one of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord — Paul, Romans 14:7-8.**
- 4) **Prayerful.** Paul said it this way at the end of his first letter to the Thessalonian church (and I love how the King James says it): **Pray without ceasing — Paul, I Thessalonians 5:17.** Translation: Don't stop praying. Pray about anything; pray about everything. Why? Three big reasons:

- (a) Praying without ceasing reminds us that we should be talking with God about everything; there is nothing excluded from all we should share with God . . . AND
  - (b) Praying without ceasing reminds us that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, that we can ever do in our own strength. As Paul said: ***I can do ALL things THROUGH CHRIST who strengthens me — Paul, Philippians 4:13 (NKJV) . . . AND***
  - (c) Praying without ceasing reminds us that God’s viewpoint is all that matters. How does God see this situation? How is God directing me? How can I show Jesus in this situation? God’s viewpoint will be presented into our hearts as we sincerely pray for his Spirit to be flowing through our lives. We can’t see the world through our culture’s lenses; the only view that matters is how God views this moment, or this relationship, or this conversation, or this ministry.
- 5) **Joy.** Joy is absolutely essential for display to the world. Christians claim to present the gospel of Jesus Christ. What does gospel mean? “Good news.” And there are fundamentally two (2) huge reasons for joy that should invade and overrule everything else in our lives, and therefore in our presentation of the gospel:
- (a) Joy because we are seen by God as sinless, as perfect in his sight because, as Christians, we have claimed the blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross for all mankind, that offers to completely wash away the sins in our lives. As Paul so famously celebrated with the Roman Christians: ***[T]here is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit — Paul, Romans 8:1-4, AND . . .***
  - (b) Joy because our eternity is guaranteed by the blood of Christ to be spent in the presence of God the Father and God the Son. As Paul rejoiced to the Philippian Christians: ***[O]ur citizenship IS in heaven — Paul, Philippians 3:20a.*** Note the present tense; it’s as if we are already there. In God’s view, by the reality of Jesus Christ living in our lives, we are! Joy should completely permeate our lives. We should be soaking ourselves in joy — not because it’s based on us, or feelings, or things going our way. Such joy can be based on only one thing: Jesus Christ. That’s a joy that, like him, will never pass away. Now, are there trials and difficulties in this life? Of course — but tell me one thing, any thing in this life, that is a bigger deal than being seen by God as sinless, and having heaven as our home.

Ultimately, we have a walking, talking, breathing model of how God wants us to conduct our lives while as Christians we live as ambassadors for the kingdom. The apostle John said as much: ***In this world we are like Jesus — I John 4:17b.*** The common element in all the verses that follow? They all preach Jesus Christ as the model for how we do everything we do for him:

- 1) ***This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did — I John 2:5b-6.***
- 2) ***Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly — I Peter 2:21b-23 (quoting Isaiah 53:9).***
- 3) ***“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” — Jesus Christ, John 13:15.***

- 4) *Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God — Paul, Ephesians 5:1-2.*
- 5) *Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again — Paul, II Corinthians 5:14-15.*
- 6) *Have this attitude in yourselves that was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross — Paul, Philippians 2:5-8 (NASB).*
- 7) *[Christ] is the one we proclaim — Paul, Colossians 1:28a.*
- 8) *“[W]hoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” — Jesus Christ, Matthew 20:26b-28.*
- 9) *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you — Paul, Ephesians 4:32.*
- 10) *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son — Paul, Romans 8:29a.*

Now, while these are meant to be goals for us both in our individual lives as well as in our collective lives, there is one more way in which we need to reflect the intentions that God has for us as a body, as a family of believers: Unity.

In a culture divided in as many ways with as much hostility as ours, do we have any idea how powerful the message of unity can be? Marriages struggle to find it, families struggle to find it, sports teams struggle to find it, nations struggle to find it. Basically, who doesn’t struggle with finding unity? Disunity is all around us. But the Bible says that the body of Christ should be known not for its disunity but rather for unity. That’s why Paul wrote to his churches:

- 1) *[M]ake my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind — Paul, Philippians 2:2.*
- 2) *Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity — Paul, Colossians 3:12-14.*
- 3) *Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you — Paul, II Corinthians 13:11.*
- 4) *I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace — Paul, Ephesians 4:1-3.*

That’s why how we speak to each other — to encourage one another, build up one another — is also so important. How we talk to each other, and how we talk about each other, is key to a body of believers maintaining unity. Christians of all people, from that basis for eternal joy that has claimed us, should be leading the way in speaking to each other in a way that is positive and loving — reflecting how Christ talked with his disciples.

Now, in the process of being ministers of the gospel, due to the kind of world in which we minister, we sometimes are presented with difficult scenarios that leave us asking: “How in the world do I

present Jesus in this circumstance?” My wife Linda has a great example. She has a friend that she has known since preschool. She was in her wedding and they stayed connected over all the years. One day she found out that this friend was leaving her husband and three kids for a lesbian relationship. I’ll never forget the phone call when she told me. She was bawling like a baby; I was sure somebody had died. Over time, as that relationship continued, and as same-sex marriage became legal in this country, Linda raised the concern: “What if I’m invited to their wedding? She’s one of my best friends so I don’t want to lose that, but I also don’t want going to her wedding to send the message that I support a sinful lifestyle. What should I do?” Here are some things to remember:

- 1) First, you are not alone. The Holy Spirit has promised to guide you in ALL situations. You will be provided what to say, and guided in what not to say.
- 2) Second, don’t assume that you are God’s only means of sharing him with that person. Nobody loves a sinner more than God; Christ’s death on the cross proves that. He is never confined to just one way, or just one person, or just one means.
- 3) Never judge friends as more important than truth. Always speak God’s truth. Speaking truth reflects true friendship — tough love when necessary. Jesus is the great example: He spoke the truth to the “rich young ruler.” The ruler walked away, but Jesus never changed his message. In fact, John 6 tells us that a whole bunch of people who had been following Christ became disillusioned with the difficulty of some of his teachings, and they left him — to the point that Jesus asked his disciples if they were planning on leaving him too. But he never changed his message. God gave us his word specifically to pass along to the world. That’s where his life is found! Don’t change it, not for a moment, and not for any circumstance. The whole reason God blesses his word and creates fruit from his word is precisely because his word is his truth. Don’t let a moment of awkwardness derail his message.

## CONCLUSION

Of all the things we have talked about today, I want to underscore one of them in particular: JOY! What we have in salvation, what is being prepared for us in heaven, nothing on this earth can even come close to matching. Always be willing to ask: What matters more to me — this moment on earth, or the eternity I have to look forward to in heaven? The joy that results from all we have in Jesus Christ should be what carries us through every moment of every day — not our strength, not our feelings, not our opinions. Jesus — he is all that should be carrying our days.

Folks, all we are here for, before anything else, is the Kingdom of God. We’re here to grow in it ourselves, and to present it at every opportunity. It is the ONLY activity here on earth that will be celebrated in heaven. Our politics won’t matter. Our incomes won’t matter. Our careers won’t matter. All that matters, as Paul said, will be *faith expressing itself in love — Paul, Galatians 5:6b*.

How can you show Jesus today? How can you reflect him to neighbors, friends, in the workplace, in the neighborhood? How can you reflect him to your fellow believers? That’s what matters — all because of the joy we are offered in Jesus Christ! Let’s make that the light that is always “on” at our church. Let’s pray!