



GUIA DE ESTUDO

"Light in the Shadows" with Pastor Kandace Zollman - May 2, 2026

Kandace Zollman

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Remembering the Light in Loss

This sermon begins with a deeply personal image of loss and love: Pastor Candice Zollman remembers her grandmother Graham, who rocked her, read to her until her voice was gone, corrected her as she grew older, and still left no doubt that she loved Jesus. From that family memory, she moves to the congregation's grief, especially those who have lost loved ones in the last year. Her central claim is that grief can feel like darkness, but remembering the people who carried Christ's light into our lives can lift our faces back toward warmth, hope, and the true light of Jesus.

A Grandmother Who Passed On the Light

Pastor Candice speaks honestly about Graham: she was part of the Christianity of the fifties, sixties, and seventies, and the preacher admits that some of her views were legalistic and sometimes off base. Yet none of that erased the central truth: Candice never doubted that her grandmother loved Jesus. That love was not theoretical. It was lived out in reading stories, rocking a child too big for the chair, paying for and sending Candice to Adventist Academy when she was 14, and shaping her understanding of faith more than anyone else in her world. Even Alzheimer's and eventual death could not stop that legacy from reaching her.



But you know something I never ever doubted? In all my years, I knew that my grandmother loved Jesus.

— Candice on Graham's faith

PARA REFLEXÃO

Discuss the Light We Remember

1. Who are the people in your life whose love still feels like light to you?
2. How does the preacher's story of Graham show both human imperfections and lasting spiritual influence?
3. Why do you think grief often makes remembrance feel both painful and healing at the same time?
4. What does it mean that Jesus can use people who did not fully know him to still bring light into our lives?

REFLEXÃO

Sitting with Grief and Gratitude

Think about someone you have lost who still feels present in memory. What specific details do you remember most clearly: a voice, a phrase, a room, a habit, a correction, a smile? The sermon insists that remembering for even one or two minutes can bring us back into the warmth. Consider how your grief may be mixed with gratitude because someone helped you see love, faith, or Jesus more clearly.

Remembering as a Biblical Practice

Pastor Candice turns from her family story to Scripture's repeated call to remember. She notes that the Bible uses the word remember many times and shows several patterns: God remembers, God's people ask him to remember, people remember one another, and God tells his people to remember what he has done. She points to God's acts for Israel—such as the Red Sea, manna from heaven, and deliverance from enemies—and also to Deuteronomy 32:7: "remember the days of old." In her view, remembering is not nostalgia; it is a spiritual discipline that helps God's people move through present darkness by recalling past faithfulness.



When we remember for just a minute or two, we step back into the light and lift our faces to the light and the warmth once again.

— Remembering and warmth

APLICAÇÃO PRÁTICA

Practice Holy Remembering

Set aside time this week to name, out loud, the people who were light to you—grandmothers, elders, friends, or mentors—and name one concrete thing each taught or gave you. If appropriate, look at old photographs, keep a memory journal, or tell the story of their faith to children and grandchildren. Like the preacher's memory of Graham, let your remembrance move beyond sentiment to gratitude for the ways God used them.

The True Light Is Jesus

The sermon carefully distinguishes between human lights and the one true light. Pastor Candice names biblical figures such as Abraham, Moses, Naomi, Samuel, and Elijah as people who reflected light, but she insists they had no light of their own. John the Baptist bore witness to the light, yet even he was not the source. Jesus alone is the true light of the world, the one who can shine without fading. This matters especially in grief, because loved ones can only reflect what they have received; Jesus is the source that never runs out.



There is only one true light. Jesus said, I am the light of the world.

— Jesus as the source

PARA REFLEXÃO

Who Is the Source?

1. Why does it matter that the preacher distinguishes between reflected light and the true light?
2. How do biblical names like Abraham, Moses, Naomi, Samuel, and Elijah help us understand spiritual influence?
3. In what ways can grief make us search for light more intensely?
4. What do you think it means to "believe in the light" in the middle of loss?

Walking Through Darkness with Jesus

When Pastor Candice comes to John 12, she reads Jesus' warning to walk while there is light before darkness overtakes us. She connects this to grief, saying no grief can leave us feeling more in total darkness than loss does. Yet Jesus understands darkness better than anyone. The preacher emphasizes that Jesus does not simply sympathize from a distance; he entered darkness fully, especially in the final days leading to the cross. In her telling, the triumphal entry and the resurrection are full of joy, but the darkest day in history is the day Jesus walked toward death to carry a guilt that was not his.



He promised him that he would be with Jesus in paradise because you see, that was Jesus' mission.

— At the cross

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Prayer for Those in the Valley

Lord Jesus, thank you for understanding darkness and grief better than we do. Thank you for walking into the darkest day and carrying what we could not carry. Help us to trust your mission when sorrow feels overwhelming, and let your light reach the places in us that still feel shadowed. Amen.

The Thief on the Cross and Grace

The preacher highlights the thief on the cross as a powerful example of grace and recognition. Unlike the disciples who were huddled in fear, the thief understood Jesus' mission and asked, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus promised him paradise. Pastor Candice uses this moment to show that Jesus came to save the lost, that his death was purposeful, and that even a dying criminal could grasp the heart of the gospel. The message for the congregation is clear: salvation is not earned by goodness; it is received through Jesus' mission of love.

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Grace in the Middle of Shame

1. Why do you think the preacher highlights the thief's understanding of Jesus' mission?
2. How does this story challenge the idea that being "good" is enough?
3. What does it mean that Jesus promised paradise in the middle of crucifixion?
4. How does this story speak to people carrying guilt, regret, or shame?

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Let Jesus' Mission Shape Your Hope

When you think about loved ones who died in faith, resist the temptation to imagine that their goodness earned heaven. Instead, remember the preacher's emphasis: nobody reaches heaven on anyone else's coattails, and Jesus alone opens the door. In conversations with grieving family members, keep pointing to Jesus' mission, not to sentimental memory alone. If you are struggling with your own shame, bring it honestly to Jesus as the thief did.

Losing People, Finding the Father of Lights

Pastor Candice reflects on how the death of loved ones leaves real absence: their laughter, insight, warmth, and even the times they made us mad are gone from daily life. She names dementia, divorce, dysfunctional family relationships, and desertion as forms of grief that can feel like darkness. Yet she also says these people were gifts from the Father of lights, reflecting God's love in their own way. When the lights go out, we miss them and long for their warmth, but that longing can draw us back to Jesus, the only source of true and lasting light.



When the lights go out, we miss them, and we long again to be in their warmth.

– When lights go out

REFLEXÃO

Where Do You Long for Warmth?

Think of a person whose presence made you feel safe, seen, or loved. What about their presence felt like warmth? What do you miss most now that they are gone? Ask yourself whether your longing is pointing you toward remembering them more clearly, or toward seeking Jesus as the deeper source of the light you miss.

The Hope of Reunion and the End of Night

The sermon does not leave grief in the grave. Pastor Candice turns to Jesus' promise that sorrow will turn to joy and that no one will take that joy away. She also points to the future promise of Isaiah's new heavens and new earth and to Revelation 22:3-5, where there will be no more curse and no more night. The emphasis is not merely that heaven will be better, but that darkness itself will be gone. God's own shining will be enough, and those who have walked in Jesus' light will live in joy, worship, and reunion.



But until then, we must be the light. You and I, we are called to be the music.

– Hope beyond the grave

APLICAÇÃO PRÁTICA

Carry the Legacy Forward

The preacher says that when loved ones are gone, we become their legacy to the world. That means speaking their names, telling their stories, and especially passing on the light of Jesus to the coming generations. If you have children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, or younger church members, tell them what your loved one taught you about faith, prayer, worship, or hope. Let the next generation learn, as the sermon says, that they are the light left behind.

You Are the Light They Left Behind

Near the end, Pastor Candice calls the grieving congregation to a responsibility as well as a comfort: those who loved us and have gone before are not the end of the story. Through us, their legacy continues, and through us, future generations can learn the name of Jesus. She says that the light of Jesus shining in our eyes is desperately needed, and that God's children—broken, often lost in shadows—must lift their faces to his warmth and carry his love to others. The sermon closes with a clear summons to become light bearers who lead others home.



You are the light they left behind.

– A legacy to carry

PARA REFLEXÃO

Living as Children of Light

1. What does it mean for you personally to be “the light they left behind”?
2. How can your story help the next generation learn the name of Jesus?
3. Which part of the sermon gives you the most comfort about those you have lost?
4. What is one concrete way you can carry love, warmth, and faith forward this week?

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Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank you for every grandmother, parent, friend, and mentor who reflected your light to us. Comfort those who are grieving with the warmth of your presence. Help us to remember without being crushed, to hope without pretending, and to trust your promise of reunion and eternal life. Make us children of light, and let us carry forward the love that was entrusted to us until the day there is no more night. Amen.