



**Theme: The Gospel on Broadway 2026**  
***“Phantom of the Opera – Light and Love”***

Sermon preached by Jeff Huber, April 25-26, 2026, at Summit Church, Durango

**Weekly Memory Verse:**

***<sup>5</sup> This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. – 1 John 1:5***

**SONG      The Phantom of the Opera**

[CHRISTINE]

In sleep, he sang to me  
In dreams, he came  
That voice which calls to me  
And speaks my name  
And do I dream again?  
For now, I find  
The Phantom of the Opera is there  
Inside my mind

[PHANTOM]

Sing once again with me  
Our strange duet  
My power over you

Grows stronger yet  
And though you turn from me  
To glance behind  
The Phantom of the Opera is there  
Inside your mind  
[CHRISTINE, *PHANTOM*, CHRISTINE & PHANTOM]  
Those who have seen your face  
Draw back in fear  
I am the mask you wear  
*It's me they hear*  
Your spirit and my voice (*My spirit and your voice*)  
In one combined  
The Phantom of the Opera is there  
Inside my mind (*Inside your mind*)  
[PHANTOM, *CHRISTINE*, CHRISTINE & PHANTOM]  
In all your fantasies  
You always knew  
That man and mystery  
*Were both in you*  
And in this labyrinth  
Where night is blind  
*The Phantom of the Opera is here* (The Phantom of the Opera is  
there)  
*Inside my mind* (Inside your mind)  
[PHANTOM, *CHRISTINE*]  
Sing, my angel of music  
*He's there, the Phantom of the Opera*  
[PHANTOM]  
I have brought you to the seat of sweet music's throne  
To this kingdom where all must pay homage to music, music  
You have come here for one purpose and one alone  
Since the moment I first heard you sing

I have needed you with me to serve me, to sing  
All my music, my music

**SLIDE      The Gospel on Broadway: Phantom of the Opera**

As we continue this series of sermons where we are wrestling with the themes of the gospel that we find in some of the most popular Broadway musicals, I want to begin with a question for you. What I've discovered as I've looked at each of these stories from these Broadway musicals is that they all have an underlying question they are asking and wanting us to wrestle with. They each point to parts of our human condition and to the divine response to that struggle, whatever it might be. So, here's the question for you that jumped out at me when it came to the Phantom of the Opera.

**SLIDE      Have you ever wanted to hide part of yourself?**

I remember as a teenager wanting to hide my big feet, pimples, and braces, but having nowhere to hide. This reality is part of our human condition. We all have parts of ourselves we want to hide. Maybe it is something physical, or maybe it is something inside like jealousy or anger or pride. I believe *The Phantom of the Opera* is the longest running show in Broadway history because this is one of its major themes. The show celebrated its 10,000th performance in February of 2012, becoming the first Broadway production in history to do so. By 2019, it had been seen by over 140 million people in 183 cities across 41 countries. The movie versions have been watched by more than 500 million people, not to mention those who have read the book.

I think one of the reasons for its appeal is that all of us want to hide parts of ourselves and we are not sure people will accept us if they see all of who we are. We have been recognizing each week some of the universal themes we find in these musicals and how it is the gospel intersects with those themes and often connects us to how we might find healing and wholeness.

The Phantom of the Opera is based on the 1910 French novel by

Gaston Leroux of the same name. It is about a young opera singer named Christine, who works at the Paris Opera House. Christine was orphaned because her father who was a famous violinist died, on his deathbed her father said he would send her a guardian angel; an angel of music. She is haunted by this Angel of Music as she goes to work at the opera house as a common chorus girl.

We learn this grief creates a whole in Christine's heart, and into that void step a man who wears a white mask and who calls himself the Phantom of the Opera. His name is Erik, and we learn that he was born with a deformed face and was abandoned as a child. He was relentlessly teased and treated horribly, even used as a so called "devil boy" in a circus where people paid to laugh and taunt him. He finds shelter in the opera house where he develops in isolation as a musical genius, living in the lower catacombs of the theater. The Phantom haunts the opera house and terrorizes the people who work there, inflicting on others what has been inflicted upon him his entire life.

The Phantom falls in love with Christine and her voice, and he is determined to make her a star so that the world can finally hear his music (of the night), sung by her. She becomes convinced this man is her guardian angel and she falls in love with him as he gives her singing lessons in his lair so that she can stand out from the other chorus girls. When Christine's childhood sweetheart Raoul comes back into her life, the Phantom becomes jealous and more terrible things start happening in the opera house. And yet, Christine continues to be drawn to the Phantom. Who should Christine choose? Raoul or the Phantom? Or will she choose both?

*The Phantom of the Opera* musical contains strong Christian undercurrents focusing on redemption, unconditional love, and the conflict between darkness and light. Key themes include the necessity of forgiveness, overcoming social ostracization, and the dismantling of personal masks to reveal the heart, with the Phantom's journey mirroring a search for divine acceptance.

**SLIDE****Act I – Scene I – The Masked Self**

Many may not know that the Phantom is loosely based on a true story in which a man travelled to help build an opera-house. He was an architect, designer, and composer, and he could sing. His face was deformed. He was bullied throughout his life and when the opera house was done being built, instead of going back home, he elected to stay behind. Rumors say that he found secret catacombs under the opera house to live in and that at one point he had a romance with a young girl who worked there. Some people say they can see shadows watching them as if a ghost were there in that opera house even today. In case you have never seen the Paris Opera House, it does lend itself well to this musical and story.

**GRAPHIC**            **Paris Opera House Aerial**

**GRAPHIC**            **Paris Opera House Exterior**

**GRAPHIC**            **Paris Opera House Staircase**

**GRAPHIC**            **Paris Opera House Interior**

In many ways, the building itself represents this first biblical theme of the tendency for us to mask imperfections by putting forth our best selves. While it might look good on the outside, it has its issues on the inside. “Masquerade” is one of the musical numbers which highlights the theme of hiding one's true self behind masks of insecurity, paralleling the biblical truth that God looks at the heart rather than the outward appearance.

In our Hebrew Bible, what we call the Old Testament, we have the story of the prophet Samuel looking for the first king of the Israelites. God sent him to the House of David, and he looked at all these strapping young men who seemed perfect for the role of the king because they were strong and beautiful. But God tells Samuel to look deeper and to go outside and find the scrawny shepherd boy who is watching the sheep and spacing out a bit by playing his harp. In 1

Samuel 16 we read these words.

## **BIBLE**

**<sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to Samuel, “Don’t judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn’t see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”**

There are some who argue that the Phantom is meant to be a reflection of King David who was first chosen because of a pure heart but then after all the power got to his head he did everything from seducing and possibly sexually assaulting a young woman to having her husband killed to lying about it to everyone around him. This idea of trying to appear like royalty on the outside but having issues on the inside is pointed out by Jesus when he's talking to religious leaders in Matthew 23.

## **BIBLE**

**<sup>27</sup> “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs— beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people’s bones and all sorts of impurity. <sup>28</sup> Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.**

While it's easy to pick on religious leadership because of this verse, I do believe that Jesus was speaking to all of us who tend to try to cover things up when they aren't going well. The apostle Paul picks up on this theme in Romans 7 when he is explaining about how he used to kill people who believed in Jesus, but now is a different person.

## **BIBLE**

**<sup>19</sup> I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. <sup>20</sup> But if I do what I don’t want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that**

does it.

## **BIBLE**

**<sup>24</sup> Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? <sup>25</sup> Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So, you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.**

This theme runs throughout the musical, from the darkness inside each of the characters in the story. Yes, the Phantom is hiding from his past and his hurt and his pain, but Christine is also hiding from her grief and the loss of her father as a young child.

## **SONG      Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again**

You were once  
My one companion  
You were all  
That mattered  
You were once  
A friend and father  
Then my world  
Was shattered

Wishing you were  
Somehow here again  
Wishing you were  
Somehow near  
Sometimes it seemed  
If I just dreamed  
Somehow you would  
Be here

Wishing I could  
Hear your voice again

Knowing that I  
Never would  
Dreaming of you  
Won't help me to do  
All that you dreamed  
I could

Passing bells  
And sculpted angels  
Cold and monumental  
Seem for you  
The wrong companions  
You were warm and gentle

Too many years  
Fighting back tears  
Why can't the past  
Just die?

Wishing you were  
Somehow here again  
Knowing we must  
Say goodbye  
Try to forgive  
Teach me to live  
Give me the strength  
To try

No more memories  
No more silent tears  
No more gazing across  
The wasted years  
Help me say  
Goodbye

### **Act I – Scene II – Light vs. Darkness**

Christine's prayerful song seeking guidance and comfort in the churchyard, reflecting a desire to move past grief and fear. It captures this second gospel theme we find in Phantom of light vs. darkness. Paul captures this idea in his letter to the Ephesians, chapter 5.

## **BIBLE**

**<sup>8</sup> For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So, live as people of light! <sup>9</sup> For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.**

When we are grieving or struggling with hurt, we can find ourselves pulled into darkness. I think of the funerals I have done for people who have taken their own lives. The world feels so dark, we can hardly see a way out. It feels overwhelming. The Phantom, living in a "cold and dismal" underworld, represents a fallen figure seeking light and love. I am reminded by his character that **hurt people hurt people. Evil consumes and it distorts the soul.** The Phantom even calls himself a **"pitiful creature of the darkness."**

The Gospel answer to this is light that comes from God. 1 John 4 speaks of this when he writes.

## **BIBLE**

**<sup>16</sup> We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.**

**God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. <sup>17</sup> And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So, we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.**

We talked last week about how we are commanded to love God with our heart, soul, mind and strength. **Beauty comes from the soul, which is where music comes from.** When you learn to sing, you learn to breathe from your diaphragm. A big part of this story of Christine in

the Phantom is her learning how to sing. She is looking for that angel that brings her the gift of music. She sang about that in her grief and received that from the Phantom in the flesh.

**SLIDE      Act II – Scene I – Redemption and Mercy**

The climax hinges on Christine offering compassion to the Phantom, a "kiss from God" that heals his soul and allows him to break free from his vengeful existence. Her sacrificial love is often viewed as a Christ-like figure, acting as a redemptive force through love. What we remember as followers of Jesus is a powerful truth that **we can't give what we don't have**. We as humans cannot manufacture light and love. They come as a gift from God.

**SLIDE      Love and light are initiated by God**

One of Christine's closing lines is with the Phantom and Raoul as she is being forced to choose what to do when the Phantom is holding Raoul hostage captures this perfectly. She gives the Phantom a gift he has never received but recognizes she cannot do that on her own.

**SLIDE      "God give me strength to show you you're not alone."**

The invitation is to remember that God is the one who meets us in the darkness and who brings light and love. We sometimes think that we should be able to generate that on our own or that someone else, like another human being, should be able to do that for us. I have seen many relationships where people expect the other person to provide that light and love that they have never received and in the end they feel let down because the only one who can provide that is the one who made us to love us.

The phantom of the opera shows us what happens when we expect that from others and we don't receive it as he lashes out in anger and rejection. It's important to note that it's not enough just for Christine to love him but that she allows God to give her the strength to do what she cannot do on her own and as a result it feels like a

sacrificial gift that changes the phantom as he allows to let Christine and Raoul go, recognizing he can't force love or force anyone to love him.

Our scripture memory verse this week is one that we all need when it feels like there is darkness and no one is meeting our needs. It's why Jesus said it starts with loving God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and then we can love our neighbor, and we can love ourselves. We can't do anything to earn love or deserve it; it's simply a gift that comes from God. If you're willing, would you say this verse out loud with me? My challenge would be for us to pray this every night before we go to bed this week so that we can experience the light and love that God offers to each of us.

#### **BIBLE**

***<sup>5</sup> This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. – 1 John 1:5***

I want to close by inviting you to hear this song which we find both in the middle of the musical as Christine and Raul are singing these words to each other, but then at the end also where we find them singing it not just to each other but to the phantom and in many ways to the audience, reminding us that God is the initiator of love and light in our lives and in our hearts.

#### **SONG      All I Ask of You**

No more talk of darkness  
Forget these wide-eyed fears  
I'm here, nothing can harm you  
My words will warm and calm you  
Let me be your freedom  
Let daylight dry your tears  
I'm here with you, beside you  
To guard you and to guide you

Say you love me every waking moment  
Turn my head with talk of summertime  
Say you need me with you now and always  
Promise me that all you say is true  
That's all I ask of you

Let me be your shelter  
Let me be your light  
You're safe, no one will find you  
Your fears are far behind you

All I want is freedom  
A world with no more night  
And you always beside me  
To hold me and to hide me

Then say you'll share with me one love, one lifetime  
Let me lead you from your solitude  
Say you need me with you here beside you  
Anywhere you go, let me go too  
That's all I ask of you

Say you'll share with me one love, one lifetime  
Say the word and I will follow you  
Share each day with me, each night, each morning  
Say you love me, you know I do  
Love me, that's all I ask of you  
Anywhere you go, let me go too  
Love me, that's all I ask of you

**SLIDE**                      **Prayer**

**April 25-26 Order**

1. Countdown
2. Jenny or Nathan welcomes people and invites them to stand in body or spirit.
3. Song – “Death Was Arrested”
4. Jeff welcomes and shares:
  - A. QR Code
  - B. Invites people to greet each other.
5. Announcement Video
6. NO Sermon Video Intro (Song will open the sermon)
7. Sermon
8. Offering (Restore and Rebuild heading out this weekend)
  - a. **GRAPHIC Native Hope Offering 1**
  - b. **GRAPHIC Native Hope Offering 2**
9. Med Moments
10. Song – “Who Shall I Fear”
11. Prayer and Lord’s Prayer
12. Care Ministers
13. The Bridge
14. **GRAPHIC DWTP March 2026**
15. **GRAPHIC Native Hope Blessing Slide**
16. Closing Prayer