

Sermon
August 19th 2017
"The Light of the World"

John 8:12 and

John 9 (John 9: 1-7)

The bible has a lot to say about light. Light symbolises God himself.

Whereas darkness symbolises evil and all that is broken in our world. Light symbolises God's offer of love and life to us.

When Jesus states that he is the light of the world he is telling us that he is God incarnate.

He is telling us that he is the source of everything that exists.

How many of you have heard of the depressive condition known as S.A.D.?

SAD stands for Seasonal Affective Disorder.

It often occurs in the winter months or when there are long periods of dull over-caste weather.

Perhaps you have experienced it to some degree?

It's cold, wet, and miserable. Day after day the skies are grey and gloomy. Your mood seems to droop lower and lower like a sunflower without any sun to bring it to life.

Then the grey skies clear and turn a deep azure blue. The sun comes out and our mood lifts.

Sunlight is important to all living things. Without it everything – including us – would droop, fade and die.

How appropriate then that Jesus should call himself the light of the world.

If we associate darkness with fear or gloom or despair, surely we associate light with life and health, goodness and safety.

In our text we find Jesus at the feast of Tabernacles.

At night the temple precinct is ablaze with light from four huge candelabras that light up the whole city of Jerusalem. They symbolized God's exodus presence with his people.

Jesus "I Am" statement that he is the light of the world would have carried incredible impact against that background.

Then in chapter nine Jesus puts his money where his mouth is – so to speak. To back up his claim he gives sight to a man born blind. A man who only knew darkness from birth.

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Listen to what the Old Testament has to say about God being the light of the world.

Psalm 27

1 The Lord is my light and my salvation—

so why should I be afraid?

The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger,

so why should I tremble?

Isaiah 60:19

19 "No longer will you need the sun to shine by day,

nor the moon to give its light by night,

for the Lord your God will be your everlasting light,

and your God will be your glory.

Job 29:3 (NLT)

3 He lit up the way before me
and I walked safely through the darkness.

Micah 7:8(NLT)

8 Do not gloat over me, my enemies!

For though I fall, I will rise again.

Though I sit in darkness,

the Lord will be my light.

In his “Narnia Chronical” series, C.S. Lewis refers to our world in a very cryptic way. He calls it “The Shadowlands”.

He tells the four children Peter, Susan, Lucy and Edmund that Narnia is the real world while the world they live in is but a shadow of the real universe over which Aslan rules.

I think C.S.Lewis description of this life as being lived in the shadowlands is most apt.

Our lives here are often lived in shadows. For some life is bleak. The bible tells us that those who do not know Jesus are in darkness.

That’s why Jesus words are so wonderful. When Jesus comes into a person’s life it is like a light has been turned on and they can see what really matters for the first time.

They become aware that they are not alone but that God has been there all along, waiting for them to turn to him and find real life in his light.

If you have been in a darkened theatre in the middle of the day and then come outside after the movie is over you realize how bright and wonderful the light is.

Imagine if you had to live in darkness all your life. You would not understand what living in the light would be like.

So Jesus heals a man born blind and gives us a picture of what it is like to become a Christian.

If you read through all of chapter nine again you will notice two things that stand out.

Firstly you would notice the reaction of the people, the religious leaders and the man's parents.

There is a mixture of scepticism, surprise, prejudice and unbelief. The man's parents are concerned about how others will view them if they acknowledge this miracle by Jesus.

Seems to me that those are the typical reactions of people today who reject Jesus' claim on them and his invitation to follow him.

Now look at the reaction of the man born blind.

You will notice a gradual awareness of who Jesus is. That's because like stepping into the sun after being in the dark requires some adjustment to our world view.

Firstly verse 11 of chapter nine. Notice how the man refers to Jesus.

11 He told them, "The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.' So I went and washed, and now I can see!"

Then verse 17.

17 Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, "What's your opinion about this man who healed you?"

The man replied, "I think he must be a prophet."

Then verses 30 - 33

30 "Why, that's very strange!" the man replied. "He healed my eyes, and yet you don't know where he comes from? 31 We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. 32 Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he couldn't have done it."

Finally verse 38

35 When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 The man answered, "Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him."

37 *"You have seen him," Jesus said, "and he is speaking to you!"*

38 *"Yes, Lord, I believe!" the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.*

So this Jesus? Who do you think he is?

A Man? Yes but more.

A Prophet? Yes but more.

A man of God? Yes but more.

God himself. Yes indeed!

If he is all that and more what are we to do with him?

Why believe in him and follow him of course.

In the closing paragraphs of the final book in the Narnia series "The Last Battle", Aslan is talking to the children.

They are back in Narnia. They had died and were now in heaven.

Aslan tells them not to fear that he would send them back to the shadowlands again. Life for them will now be lived for ever in the light of God's love.

C.S. Lewis writes at the end of the series of Narnia books.

"And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can truly say that they lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning chapter one of the great story which no one on earth has read: in which every chapter is better than the one before.

Of course some may think that the story of Jesus is not a true story.

For you the question still remains. Is the darkness of this life all there is?

As for me I believe that Jesus is the light of the world who will return one day to dispel all darkness and all who prefer darkness to light.