

# The light of the world

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[0:00] A bit of a different way to most sermons. I want us to start by closing our eyes if you're! If you're comfortable, close your eyes. When you close your eyes, things get a bit dark.

You can't see the people around you or the things around you. You don't see the light that's coming into the room. It's a glorious sunny day today. I want you just to use your imagination for a moment and think of the time before this universe came into existence. We read earlier from Genesis 1, it was formless, it was empty, it was dark. But then God spoke, let there be light and you can open your eyes if you've got them shut. Light came into the world, came into a place full of darkness and this was the beginning of life. Light means life. Because there was light, it meant there could be water and sky and plants and trees and crocodiles and chickens and pigs and goats and lions and monkeys and tigers and tigers and tigers and tigers and tigers and tigers and animals and creatures of different kind.

And human beings like me and you. Life came into the world and light equals life.

Light came into the world and light means life. When you're at home and it's dark, I wonder maybe you go into a dark room and you can't really see what's around you. You might be able to make out things a bit, but then you turn on the light and suddenly things become clear, don't they?

You can see what's around you. Maybe you're in your bedroom and you turn on the light and you can now see the bed. You can see the Lego on the floor. You can see what's around you.

[2:16] And without light, it's a bit dangerous. If we can't see properly, you might trip over something that you didn't know was there. Light is good. Light is amazing. It brings life and colour to the things around us. And this morning, we're going to see that Jesus is amazing because Jesus is the light and he brings life. If we don't remember anything else this morning, let's remember that. Jesus is amazing and he is the light and he brings life.

So the first thing, the first thing that we see is Jesus is the light of the world. Jesus is the light of the world. That's what he says here in John 8 verse 12. When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, I am the light of the world. This comes at the end of the festival of tabernacles. We've been talking about that quite a lot though over the last few weeks. A couple of weeks ago, we said how water played a big role and Jesus said to people, come to me if you're thirsty. And now we get to light and light played a big role in this festival too. There was lots of lights being lit and apparently there were particularly four big lights that were lit. And as the festival comes to a close and those lights are blown out, Jesus says, you see those lights? Well now look at me because I am the light of the world.

It's amazing. Because light is amazing. It brings life and Jesus says he is the light. He says, I am the light of the world. I was reading yesterday on the internet, what would happen if the sun stopped shining? What would happen if the sun stopped giving us its light? Well the world would look very dark and it would become very cold. Plants, animals, food, it would die out and we would die too because the world would get very, very, very, very cold. The sun gives us light and it keeps life going. Light means life.

And Jesus is the light and he brings life to the world. My favourite thing about my phone, I'm going to show it to you because I think it does a really cool thing that I don't think all phones do. And my favourite thing is that when I shake it, the light appears. That may amaze a few people. It may just be really normal or your phone might do some better thing, but it amazes me that I can just shake it and the light goes on and off. It's rather fun.

And it's very useful in the middle of the night if I need to go to the toilet or something. I can see just by shaking a light. It's great. It's very useful. But this tiny little light on my phone is absolutely nothing compared to Jesus who says he is the light of the world. If you're going to compare him to any light at all, you'd compare him to the light of the sun. Jesus says he is like the sun. He gives light and life to the world. But he is even better. I am the light of the world, he announces.

[6:20] But you might think maybe that's a strange thing for Jesus to say. The sun gives light to the world and I've dropped my remote, that's fun. But Jesus is the light and he never sets. He never sets in the evening. He is always giving light and life to the world. Jesus is talking about light in a different way to the sun. We've spoken about Genesis 1 quite a lot where God says, let there be light. The world was full of light and life. But two chapters later, you get to Genesis 3 and Adam and Eve, well, they turn their backs on God. They rebel against God. And so suddenly the world that was full of light and life, suddenly darkness appears. The sun still rises and it gives light, but there is evil behavior.

Human beings have turned against God. They do wrong things and we call those wrong things sin. It's human beings saying, we think we know better than you, God. We say, shove off God, I am in charge, not you. That's what we do when we sin. But John's gospel starts in quite a similar way to the beginning of the beginning of the Bible. We read that earlier too. In the beginning was the word, in him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Jesus is that light, that light who brings life.

Jesus is the light of the world. The light for our dark, dark world. And we are dark. We have darkness in us. We sin, we turn our backs on God. There is darkness inside us. But when someone believes in Jesus, light comes into their lives, just like when we turn the light on in a dark room and the darkness disappears, Jesus shines and it reveals our darkness as he shines his glorious light into our lives.

It shows up our darkness. We see it for what it is. We see, oh wow, there is darkness in me. Because when I turn the light on in my room, I often turn it on and I see, the room's a bit of a mess, isn't it? There's clothes on the floor. It's a bit messy.

[9:37] The light reveals the mess inside my room. And as Jesus is the light of the world, as he shines his light into our world, it reveals the mess of our lives, of our dark worlds. It's dark and it's messy.

We see. We see in Jesus, in the Bible, we see someone who is perfectly good, perfectly right in everything.

He is light in whom there is no darkness at all. But then we look at ourselves and we see that we are not. We look at the world around us. We see war in Ukraine and Russia and it reminds us of the darkness in our worlds.

But we look at Jesus and we see someone who comes to bring peace. When we hear about sickness, and there's been a lot of sickness in the church family over the last few weeks, we're reminded of the darkness of our worlds.

But we look to Jesus and we see in him someone who has the power to give light and life to people.

[11:08] When we hear about someone being bullied at school, it reminds us of the darkness that is inside us. When we look at Jesus and we see someone who is gentle and loving.

When someone we know dies, we are sad and it reminds us of the darkness of the world. But we look to Jesus and we see someone who is the resurrection and the life.

Who himself did not stay dead but rose again. And that gives Christians certain hope beyond the darkness of death.

When Jesus shines his light into our own lives, it shows up our mess. We see the mess of the world around us too.

That's what Jesus showed in the verses we looked at last week. He showed to people the darkness in their lives. There were some people who brought this woman to Jesus and they said how sinful she is and how she deserved a judgment.

[12:20] She deserved to be stoned to death, they said. And Jesus said, well, that's okay. You can do that if you're without sin too.

And each one of them realized that they sin too. That they were dark. That there was darkness in them and they walked away. Each one of them walked away because of the darkness in their lives. Jesus is the light of the world and he shows us our darkness. But Jesus didn't just leave us to stay in darkness.

There is good news. Jesus says, I am the light of the world and he comes to deal with our darkness. And he did so on the cross.

It's a messy room that I forgot to show you. That looks terrible, doesn't it? Luke 23, verse 44 to 46. [13:27] It says, it was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. The sun stopped shining.

And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. And Jesus called out with a loud voice, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. When he had said this, he breathed his last.

Those verses tell us that as Jesus, the light of the world was dying on a cross. The world around him went dark.

It went dark for three hours. That would be like us. And it was the middle of the day. So that would be like us walking out of this place this afternoon.

And it was dark. It's dark. That would be really scary. Something strange would be happening.

Something big would be happening. And it happened on the day that the light of the world died.

[14:32] He took on the darkness of our sin. And died a dark and terrible death. To take away our darkness.

So that we can look to him, the light of the world. And look to him. And if we believe in him, we can know someone who takes away our darkness.

Who forgives our sin. And that is great news. Great news that the light of the world comes to deal with our darkness.

And as our next song tells us, the light of the world was by darkness slain, but he rose again from the grave. We're going to sing together this great song.

In Christ alone, my hope is found. He is my light, my strength, my song. This cornerstone, this solid ground firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

[15:44] Let's stand. Let's sing together. Jesus is light and light means life. And the second thing we see is that Jesus' followers will never walk in darkness.

They will never walk in darkness. Jesus goes on to say, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Now we heard before the song, didn't we, that the world is in darkness. We ourselves are dark. But it's good news for us that Jesus came into this dark world to take our darkness on himself.

And so that means that Jesus could go on to say to us that whoever follows him will never walk in darkness.

If we follow Jesus, then the light of the world has come into our dark lives and will never walk in darkness. Let me tell you about this guy.

[16:58] This guy is called Emmett. He is from one of my favorite movies of all time, the Lego movie. He, Emmett, lives a very simple life as a Lego man in a Lego world.

He's a construction worker. He loves following rules. And he is weirdly happy all of the time. His favorite song to wake up and sing is Everything is Awesome.

Quite the life that Emmett lives in the Lego world. But in the Lego movie, Emmett goes on quite this journey, really, of discovery.

He discovers that not everything in life is actually awesome all of the time. He discovers that there's a wicked plan going on.

And it's a plan that involves superglue. Superglue sticking Lego pieces to one place so they'll never be able to move again.

[18:08] Emmett discovers that there is darkness in the world. But Jesus says to us, if you follow me, you'll never walk in darkness.

But many things in our world, and we've mentioned many of them already, are dark. We do live in a world that is dark. We've mentioned war, death, sickness.

If we follow Jesus, we still sin. There is still darkness even in us. So what does that mean?

I think it means we see the world differently. The light's been switched on and we can see things clearly in this dark world in a way that we couldn't see before.

A few weeks ago, I'm currently living with Pastor Phil and his wife Maria, which is really good of them, kind of them.

[19:18] And a few weeks ago, I was asked to cook. So I cooked the one thing I know how to cook very well, spaghetti bolognese.

And I was there cooking. And to be honest, I was struggling to see. Until Phil came into the kitchen and he turned the light on.

And I discovered that the reason why I was struggling to see is because I was basically cooking in some sort of darkness. It was very gloomy. And it meant I could see things a lot more clearly.

I could see that I was actually putting the right things into the right thing at the right time. So that we could eat some edible foods.

It meant I saw things clearly having the light on. Now we, when we come to follow Jesus, the light of the world, we see our lives and our worlds differently, clearly.

[20:25] It means that when we're following Jesus, the light of the world, when we sin, instead of not thinking anything of it, it means that we see that it's dark.

It means that we turn to Jesus and say, I'm sorry that I've sinned. There is still darkness in me. Help me to follow you, the light of the world.

And not only do we see ourselves differently when we're no longer walking in the darkness, but we also see our worlds differently.

We see that it is darkness, that it is dark. We see that there are people walking around. I'm not going to try and put this on, but walking around. And it's like they've got blindfolds on them.

They don't see Jesus, the light. The light is not coming in. And so that means that we're going to pray for them.

[21:36] That means we're going to try and tell people about Jesus, the light. That means that maybe we're going to think about who we might invite along to the meal with a meaning in a few weeks' time.

And things like that. And we pray that God will use it to shine into their lives. So that their eyes can be opened to see the world clearly, to see Jesus, the light of the world, who comes to rescue us from darkness.

Jesus says, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

We see ourselves, we see our worlds differently, clearly, because of Jesus, the light of the world.

But maybe you're here this morning, and you're hearing these things, and you see that you are actually walking in darkness.

[22:48] You're recognizing that in the things that we're saying and thinking about and singing, you're recognizing that there is darkness inside you. Jesus says, I am the light of the world, and you can follow me.

You can even start following me this morning. By coming to Jesus and saying, sorry. Sorry for those dark things.

Help me to follow you, the light of the world. And finally, Jesus says that his followers will have the light of life.

We will never walk in darkness, and we will walk in the light of life. Instead of walking around in the darkness, Jesus' followers, they have light.

This is not light from ourselves. It is Jesus. It is his light shining in our lives. And he makes all the difference as he shines in our lives.

[23:57] It's like we're walking around with a big light shining down on us. It's from Jesus. It's not from ourselves. We are dark. And we walk with him through this dark world.

When I was younger, I used to be terrified of the dark. I used to hate going to sleep because I knew it would be nighttime, and I knew it would be dark.

Until my mum and dad bought me a nightlight, which they plugged in, and it meant there was a light. And it meant that the room wasn't completely dark.

It meant I could look at that light, and I knew things were safe. Everything changed when that light came. And in this world, it's like that.

It's dark. It can be scary at times. But Jesus is the light of the world, and he is with us, even in the most dark and terrifying times.

[25:05] It was great to hear of Katie's testimony earlier of God's faithfulness to her in some dark times.

It means for us that if we wake up at nighttime and we struggle to sleep because we're scared of the dark or something that's going on in our lives, we can know that Jesus is the light of the world, he is with us, even then.

It means that if we're struggling with sickness, Jesus, the light of life, he's still with us. The sickness may not have gone away yet, but we have life in Jesus.

It means that if we're worried about the darkness of war in the world, we can keep looking to the light of the world, to the Lord Jesus.

And you know what? One day, one day, darkness will go. If we're following Jesus, we're going to live in a world full of light.

[26:18] A world where there won't be any need for the sun. A world free from all darkness, no more death, no more sickness, no more worry, no more sadness, no more war.

That may sound a bit strange. A world where there's no sun? Well, Revelation 21, 23 says this. The city does not need the sun, nor the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives its light, and the lamb is its lamp.

The great truth is that for Christians who are following Jesus the light, have a world to look forward to where Jesus, the glory of Jesus is the light, the light of the world.

A world free from all darkness. That's something for us to look forward to and remember. As we go through our life, walking with Jesus in the light of the life that he gives us.

[27:34] Let's pray together. Jesus said, Father, we thank you.

We thank you that Jesus would step down into our world full of darkness. But he did not leave us alone and without hope in this dark world.

But Jesus is the light of the world. Thank you that he took on our darkness to bring us light. We pray that you'd help us to keep following Jesus, the light of the world, even as we journey in this dark world, we pray.

Amen. We're going to sing a final song. And in each verse of this song, it says, Let there be light. It's a prayer for our dark worlds.

That the light of Jesus will shine. God, whose almighty word, chaos and darkness heard, and took their flight. Hear us. Let there be light.

[28:54]