

Light of the world

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[0:00] We've got lights all over the place this evening in various forms. Lights are very Christmassy. Words you may have heard sung on the radio recently.

! Those Christmas lights, they light up the street, down where the sea and city meet. May all your troubles soon be gone.

Oh, Christmas lights keep shining on. Very Christmassy Christmas lights are. It strikes me that they're a welcome thing.

You get to the end of October and things feel really rather dark, don't they? The nights draw in very much quicker.

The days feel a lot longer. The weather gets colder and wetter and we struggle just a bit more. In England. This is very true.

[1:04] Maybe, like me, you've had the experience of heading out into a dark place and actually struggling to see the way ahead of you.

Occasionally after work, and I do say occasionally, I will go on a run in Preston Park. And since October time, when I've gone, I need to take my head torch with me to be able to see the way ahead.

Otherwise, it gets all a bit scary. But when it comes to the end of November, you start seeing those Christmas lights come. You start seeing the lights of the trees shining out the window.

So, it's a beautiful thing as the area is transformed as we're getting ready for Christmas Day.

Perhaps you've seen lights in other places.

Perhaps you've been into town and seen these lights. Aren't they fantastic? By the clock tower. I love going into town and seeing them. I take the same sort of picture every year of them because I easily forget.

[2:12] We put up all our lights, but we still can't get rid of the darkness. Darkness is still around us.

In one of the readings we had this evening from the book of Isaiah, we read of a people who dwell in a land of darkness.

A land of deep darkness. A people who are full of gloom. Part of this gloom that the people Isaiah is speaking to is fear.

People living in fear of the future. In fear of their well-being. In fear of their nation's future.

Let down by rulers. And in fact, with the threat of invasion from the Assyrians. Perhaps this evening fear is something you can relate to.

[3:16] Maybe even now you're fearful of what the future may hold. Well, through this year you have been. As we live in a world of darkness still.

Fearful about what the future holds in our world. As many governments have changed over this year. And new world leaders have come. Fearful of things a bit closer to home.

And whether we'll find a job. Fearful of our health. Fearful of the darkness in some way. I know that doesn't sound particularly Christmassy.

But darkness and gloom is a reality in our world. As met however many fairy lights we have up. And we sort of feel a bit powerless to extinguish the darkness.

But the message this evening. Is that for those that are in darkness, gloom and fear. There is a great light. That's what we read earlier.

[4:23] We're to think of a new day coming.

If you've ever been down by the seafront. When the sun is rising. It's a glorious sight. As a new day. As new light pierces into the darkness.

A sign of hope. And that's what we're to think of when we read these verses. A new day of dark and gloomy fears.

Will be driven away by this great light that's dawning. And so what is the light? A light has come to people who are feeling oppressed by the enemies.

A light is dawning. And here's what it's going to bring. It's going to bring an end. A shattering to the rod of their oppressors.

[5:36] We're told every instrument of war will be fuel for fire. It's the light of peace that is coming. Peace on earth.

But instead of asking this evening what is the light. We're actually to think who is the light. For the who is who we read of a few verses down.

For to us a child is born. To us a son is given. The one who's coming to bring the light of peace to fearful souls in a dark world.

Is found in this newborn son. In May next year. My wife and I are expecting a newborn child.

We're looking forward to seeing them and meeting them. And hopefully seeing their face light up with a smile. Looking forward to the joy that a newborn baby can bring.

[6:46] But we have no expectations that this baby will bring a whole nation out of darkness and gloom. You might be thinking this evening this all sounds a bit far fetched.

To say the hopes of a nation rest on a child being born. And I agree with you. Unless this was no ordinary child.

As we have heard in our readings. And been singing about in our carols. The child that was born. Is the Lord Jesus. He's the one who we sang was born once in Royal David City. He is the one that we called Emmanuel.

God with us. This sounds like no ordinary child. God. you might be thinking well how can that be is that not impossible a baby born who is god well this evening if we're at least prepared to think maybe there is a god we do need to think about someone who's more bigger and powerful than we are who is able to do what is impossible so let's thirdly see what light does this child bring and we see firstly that he brings the light of a new rule he will be a ruler and the government will be on his shoulders 2024 has been the year of elections in the world so many of them have been going on but no matter how much governments and rulers change we still see the darkness of war and strife we see economic fears we see health systems struggling and we long for a ruler who can truly bring about good and lasting change one who can truly bear the weight of government on their shoulders and bring light and hope to dark situations well in this child who was to be born we're told he can bear that weight of government that weight of rule but what is that going to look like well let's see what other light he brings we see secondly that he brings the light of being a wonderful counselor he's a wonderful counselor kings and rulers that they'll have advisors they'll have people to counsel them to give them wisdom in helping them as they seek to rule but this one is coming and he has all the counsel all the wisdom that he could ever need if you were to read through one of the accounts of Jesus's life on earth in Matthew Mark Luke or John you would read of the Lord Jesus who was this child born and you would read of his teachings you would read of how wise he is in what he says he brings wisdom to the world next we see that he is the light of mighty God that's what else Isaiah says about him we in our nation elect rulers to lead our country but we don't really know whether they're going to be up to the job until they start doing it well here Isaiah says this one is more than capable for he is mighty God he is all-powerful all mighty and yet he chooses to become a weak human baby yet he chooses to be a child born to the world he chooses to grow up in a weak human body but he is the mighty God of light come to dwell with us in our world of darkness and in the records of his life on earth you can see just how mighty he is

[11:47] he goes to a party a wedding party and they've run out of wine and so he changes water into wine he does many other miracles like feeding 5 000 odd people with just a few loaves of bread and some fishes he raised dead people back to life he healed the sick read of Jesus in the Bible and you see this is mighty God with us next we read that he brings the light of an everlasting father one who comes to deeply care for his people just as a good father should lovingly care for their children have you ever felt weary and heavy burdened of course you do it's Christmas um or Jesus the one who comes to show good lovingly care

to his people says come unto me all you who are weary and heavy burdened and i will give you rest he comes to bring the light of deep loving fatherly good care and this is one that is everlasting as something we human beings naturally long for is to be loved but human love comes and goes human love can disappoint us at times where is love that we can find that will never run dry that will never let us go it's found in the child born in bethlehem the lord jesus christ and finally he brings the light of peace he is called prince of peace we're told a ruler whose reign will bring about peace and not war but when we talk about hopes of peace with jesus don't think of a leader who's going to come into the world and make a peace treaty with warring nations that's not the sort of peace with to think about actually we need to think about peace on god's terms for this child as prince of peace we see that peace in him most clearly as he grows up and goes to the cross willingly and silently peacefully choosing to suffer for us completely innocent of all wrong and yet going there in order to bring about peace between us and gods you might be thinking why why would a ruler come to rule forever yet choose to die why would a mighty god choose the weakness of death why would the light of the world choose to be extinguished by the darkness of death you see the darkness in this land that isaiah speaks about is in their situation but it's also within them and the bible calls that darkness sin i wonder if you recognize that within you at all i know i am aware of the darkness in my own life where i have sent even this year what whatsapp messages to people that i wish didn't receive those two blue ticks where i have said that in the bible

where i have thought bad things about a fellow human being the bible the bible calls this darkness within me sin darkness is in my heart do you see it in your heart but the good news is that we're celebrating this evening is that god willingly chose to step down into this dark world and he lovingly chose to take on our darkness our sin on himself at the cross and as the light of the world face the darkness of the tomb just shortly after he rose again we might put up our fairy lights at christmas to try and extinguish the darkness but only he can really extinguish the darkness even the darkness of the tomb and so just as the light of the sun rises with each new day that dawns so in jesus your darkness your sins can be forgiven and you can know the light of the dawn of a new beginning in your life in order to know that new beginning you just simply need to say as you'll say to people who give you presents at christmas you need to say thank you and say god i am sorry that i have sinned please forgive me and help me to live for you here's some words we'll sing in our final carol which i used to close this talk hail the heaven born prince of peace hail the son of righteousness light and life to all he brings he's risen with healing in his wings mild he lays his glory by born that we no more may die born to raise us from the earth born to give us second birth will you gladly receive the light of everlasting love and peace in the son who's given for you well as you ponder these things perhaps you might want to just take away one or two things to help you as you think more about what we've heard and sung this evening on the table on the end in the entrance way on the way out you'll see a couple of books one is just simply luke's gospel from the bible to help you to to read through the life of jesus see who he is see this mighty god everlasting father prince of peace and you may have many questions with you this evening from what you've heard and there's this little book is christmas unbelievable which will just help to answer some of those questions you're more than welcome to take them as a free gift from calvary church and another thing to draw to your attention on your seats there's you