

Be the Light

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Date: 18 October 2026

Preacher: Kate Maliphan

[0:00] Well, first of all, I would like to say on behalf of everybody at TLG, a great big thank you for all the hard work that you have done as really a beacon of excellence since 2017 with TLG and that is very much appreciated.

So, thank you. We're going to have another look at the Bible passage that Hen read for us really nicely. So, coming up on the screen, we should be seeing the Genesis passage about the darkness and the light.

And I don't know about you, but darkness is out there and darkness can engulf anybody. So, I had a bit of, and it's nobody's fault, I had my own sort of battle with darkness this time last year.

My sister was seriously ill. We knew that she was going to die. She was determined that she wanted to die at home with no hospices or anything like that.

She lived a long way away and she just wanted me there and a friend of hers who lived around the corner. And we did manage to get some carers as well, but they weren't there all the time.

[1:15] And you can imagine, I mean, I don't have any medical qualifications whatsoever, nor did the good friend. So, this was quite a dark and difficult time. There are lovely district nurses, but it can be quite a long wait whilst you're waiting for them to come.

And this went on for 10 days. So, darkness. But all the time, I knew that no matter what I was experiencing, God knew all about it.

And I don't know why, in a fallen world, dark stuff does happen, but it does, and it is nobody's fault. And the other thing that I really learnt from that period was, if there is anything at all that I can do to try and bring light into somebody else's darkness, then that is something that I would really like to do.

And when you look around the world at the moment, you know, I don't need to tell you about all the bad stuff that's out there, social unrest, cost of living crises, all those kinds of things, cracks and creaks in provision that should be there but isn't always.

And I've got a few statistics which are going to come up now for us to have a look at. So, that is the Department of Work and Pensions statistics.

[2:35] 4.3 million children growing up in poverty in our country. We have another one, I think. And 48% of parents say that they have skipped a meal in 2025 in our country.

And there might be another one. And this is just heartbreaking, the fact that one in five children and young people have a probable mental health disorder.

And I think we have one last one to look at. In over a third of children, the onset of these disorders takes place before the age of 14.

14. So, what can we do about it? Well, we've already heard from Hen when she read us a really lovely passage about what Jesus says to do.

So, I won't read it again because Hen's read that for us. But I'll give you a minute or two to read it and think about it. And that's just amazing and such a privilege that Jesus calls you and me the light of the world.

[4:05] And that he asks us to shine for him. With deeds that we can do to wage against the darkness. And so that's where TLG comes in.

One of the things that TLG does, as we've been talking a lot about this morning, is early intervention. Where a coach commits for a year to visit a child in a primary school for an hour a week.

And I'd like to tell you the story of one of the children that I've coached. I've coached quite a few children over the years. I was foolish enough to always take on too many children.

So, last year I had four in two different schools. This year it's a bit more manageable with just two in one school. But one of the children that I coached, when I first met him, he was six.

I know he should have been seven. But his needs were so extreme that the head teacher said, please, please, please. So, I did. And he had suffered two very close bereavements of people who should have been there in his life to look after him.

[5:13] There was a lot of other very sad stuff going on in his home as well at the time. And not surprisingly, he was too frightened to come to school. And so, he didn't a lot of the time.

He would make himself physically sick if he did get to school. But over time, we built up a relationship, a friendship over Play-Doh and snakes and ladders.

And one day he said to me, I came to school today because I knew that today's the day I get to hang out with you. But it still took a while because the issues that he was facing were very dark. And I would pick him up from class and his head would be down on his table, hoodie over his head, just lost in his own private, very dark and sad world.

But we talked about worrying with our tummies. And we worked out some of the things that this child could do to help make worrying with his tummy more manageable.

[6:11] And he realized that if he ran about outside or even indoors, we did a bit of throw and catch indoors on rainy days. But he learned that for him, throwing, catching a frisbee, a football, whatever, just getting some exercise was a great way for him to feel that he was in control of all those feelings in his tummy that were making him physically sick.

This child, when he left primary school recently, he was so proud of his 98% attendance record. He'd done really well in his SATs.

He was a sports captain. And I recently saw a photograph of him on his first day at secondary school in his brand new uniform.

And what a transformation from that child I'd known when he was six years old. Because body language just looks so confident and cool and up for absolutely anything that that school had to offer and anything that the world had to offer him.

And for all the world, he looked like the future head boy. And I was completely choked at seeing that photograph. And it is such a privilege being able to be a part of a child's journey like that.

[7:34] We've got a video coming up. We're going to skip a couple of, we don't want to see Jo's video, but we're going to look at a video about somebody called Karis.

And we can see, Karis will tell you what coaching meant for her. And you'll be able to see some of the coaching process. Thank you. Karis is a...

She was a whirlwind of fun. We would always say about Karis that she had leadership qualities beyond her years. But she would find it very difficult to regulate her emotions.

And she found friendships quite difficult to navigate. I was sent to the head teacher's office multiple times. And I wasn't really proud of that. When I met Karis, she was quite sad and lonely because she didn't have any friends.

When the other children had their birthday parties and things, she wasn't invited. When I started coaching with Faye, I got overwhelmed with joy. And I told her everything that happened.

[9:05] And she used to tell, give me words of advice that would help me. Faye was there for me. Talking to her made me reflect on my character. It taught me how to regulate myself around people. Because of that, I learned how to make friends and how to keep them and how to make sure our friendship was secure.

I started getting invited to parties. And it really made me happy. Because now I knew that our friendship was strong. Every session I did with Faye, it had a meaning to me. I felt like so.

And I was pinching every negative emotion down. And for cooking, I felt like I was just spreading my joy. Do you remember when we were making the cookies? We were so busy. Oh, I forgot the sugar. We were so busy talking. So we had to roll all the pastry up together. Do you remember? Yeah. And I sprinkled sugar all over the pastry and we rolled it again. But it tasted all right. It was delicious. After a year of coaching, life for Karis in school, from my point of view, looks far calmer.

She's really grown as a child. And those leadership potential characteristics we've seen in her for years and years and years seem to have really come to fruition in a lot of ways.

[10:11] Ms. Daryl was getting tired of seeing me. Now that I know to say no, I told her, I'm not going to come to your office anymore. And she said, we'll see about that. And then once after, she said, you really kept your promise, didn't you?

She was so proud of me. The funding for something like TLG Early Intervention is not something that we could afford. The money that's given to allow that to happen is having a huge impact on the children.

They're happier. They feel seen and heard. TLG Early Intervention is having a huge impact. Not... I don't know why we haven't got the last sentence.

I think that there's a glitch there at head office. But you can imagine what the last sentence would have been. And TLG, we are just enormously grateful to people like you who have faithfully coached children over the years.

Last year, 5,000 children and their families in one year alone. And I just love what William Booth said. I am not waiting for a move of God.

[11:25] I am a move of God. And that's what all of us can be when, as a church, when we all individually want to shine our light and do what we can. Jesus calls us the light of the world.

And we must believe that every flicker of light that we give makes a difference. And, you know, and to be realistic, sometimes on a Tuesday afternoon when it's raining and you might have a better offer, you might think, is this going to make a difference?

But we carry on and we persevere because we know that we are the light. And sometimes it might take time to bring a change and transformation. But we carry on.

So thank you for carrying on since 2017 as well. That's really great. Now, I mentioned that I would talk about maybe ways that you would like to get involved with this.

So we are very grateful for a number of types of support. We love, we're very grateful for prayer support. Thank you to all the people who have prayed for the work of TLG over the years.

[12:33] You'll see that under most seats there is a leaflet and a pen. If you put your details down, that just gives us permission to stay in contact with you so that you can find out what things TLG are doing.

Anyone who fills that in, I have a book which the founder of TLG, founder Tim Morphin, wrote. And he tells the story of how this charity started and how it's been flourishing, how it's been providing light against the darkness for 25 years.

Another thing is, and please don't feel, please don't feel under pressure about this because I always say to people there's a difference between a good idea and a God idea. So I knew it was a God idea when I took up, when I had changed churches so that I could be a TLG coach.

So if you think it's a God idea, then we love it when people give money, but please don't feel pressured by that. If you would like to be a coach, please fill in the forms as well and please let us know because we would love to have some more coaches.

We'd love to have some more people to join a really thriving, happy team. That would be great. And before I hand over to Kate again, I would just like to say, I'd like to show you some really impressive statistics.

[13:59] And this is your work and this is what you in Cleveland have done. How you have been coaching since 2017.

How that is 79. 79. It's on a different, I think it's on a different PowerPoint. There's two slides and it will be coming up in a minute. 79 coaches.

Wow. Sorry, wrong way around. 79 children. 79 children have been coached by you over the years. That is fantastic.

79 children and their families have had the goodness of God poured into them through what you have been doing and that is great. And 39 people so far have trained for coaches.

So thank you for all those years of hard work. Thank you for the safeguarding team, the safeguarding videos that you've sat through. Thank you for all the admin-y stuff that you've done behind the scenes.

[14:56] Thank you. And this is really brilliant because it doesn't end when the coaching ends. I just love the way that you have your fridge. So I'm going to give you a plug for your fridge.

Because the fridge, of course, is a cool place to chill if you're aged between 7 and 11 on every second Monday in term time. And it's a great way for you to maintain the connection between the children, your coached children, and to have other children there as well.

And it's just a fantastic doorway for children to enter the church and families to become part of God's kingdom. So, you know, a big plug for the fridge here.

Thank you. And then we should have one last slide where this is what the children say. And this is really lovely. So children say things, children that you've been coaching say, My TLG sessions are calm and playful.

It's a place to relax and the time to forget your worries. Somebody else said, I love TLG. If I was feeling stressed, my coach would help me with ideas to make it better.

[16:15] Another child said, my coach is very good at helping me regulate after a rough morning and helps me with everything I need.

A teacher says, TLG coaching has been invaluable in helping this child feel heard and has reduced outbursts in school significantly.

So before I hand over to Kate, I would just like to say, on behalf of everybody from TLG, thank you so much for all the faithful work you've done over the years and the work that you are going to be continuing doing.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Kate. Thank you, Kate. Thank you so much. Wow.

Just such food for thought. And we're going to just take a little bit of time. We've got time this morning to be listening to God and noticing maybe what he's saying to us personally.

[17:23] But also, I'm aware that we always have on a Sunday morning those people that can't be here actually on this morning. They will get the opportunity to hear the talk by catching up with it.

But maybe God is going to bring someone to your mind who you think would make an incredible coach. So I'm just going to take a moment before we go into that.

And it is, for me personally, just such a, or has been, such a call on my life.

So when God called me to the church in 2012, I started a role here that Emmy now does so brilliantly. And I felt, we felt as a team that before long, God would be just stirring our hearts to be in school with those children that aren't necessarily going to be walking through our doors on a Sunday morning.

And it was in 2016 at the New Wine Leadership Conference that I met TLG for the first time and got Clive and Russ to come and have a conversation.

[18:31] Within a year, we were partnered with TLG. We had seven coaches train in the first year. We had nine coaches train the next year. By the following year, by 2019, we were the largest early intervention center in the UK.

We were working in five different schools and we had coaches out in all of those schools, including the secondary school supporting with transition. You don't need me to tell you what a massive interruption COVID was in all of our lives in so many different ways.

But the impact of the lockdown on children and young people has been exponential. I don't think we've even begun to sort of see the impact of that or understand it fully.

But it has also impacted our volunteer capacity. And God knows that. He sees us. He knows our hearts. And Kate, I love to thank you for your gentleness.

My word for the season is gentle. Your gentleness in saying there is never any pressure unless something is a God idea, then it is not for us to step into. But God led me from Christchurch to work for TLG for just a few months.

[19:47] I was the Southwest Regional Coordinator for the organization and then stepped into leading the early intervention program development. And I've just, at the end of April, left TLG, felt like God was calling me back to this community.

But one thing I want to share with you this morning is that I feel like God is stirring my heart for this work again in our local community. I believe that we could have, in a church our size, we could have 10 coaches in Clevedon School helping those year seven children who are settling in to Clevedon School.

Wendy sent this message this week just to say thank you for praying for my special meeting at Clevedon School today. I love the way we keep our coach children anonymous.

Wendy calls hers her little friend. Thank you for praying for my little friend. It was a good meeting and hopefully one with good outcomes. I won't go into the detail. But as she left, the teacher said to her, would she be coming into school again soon to work with another young person?

Some coaches, as Kate's described, worked with more than one child. And some people just know that God is laying on their heart the invitation to just work with one child.

[21:08] It is about going after the one, folks. That's what Jesus told us to do. And there are so many ones that need our help in our community.

Emmy and I talked before the service. Our vision is to have five coaches in Yeomore School. We've got two at the moment. And five coaches in St. Nick's. We've got two at the moment.

So that 10 children, or if any of those coaches are able to coach more than one child, more than 10 children are supported. And we have really good links with Clevedon School.

And the transition into Clevedon Secondary School for many children is very hard. So I'm about to start coaching a year six child now at October half term because a year will take us through to that child being at Clevedon School, settling them in there.

So we're going to just pause. I'm going to play a little bit of music. I think with Zoe is going to lead us into a worship song that she will begin by just singing over you as you pray and ask God, what might he be saying to you this morning?

[22:17] Who might he be asking you to encourage? Or as you pause, perhaps he's encouraging you. The equipping that TLG brings is really good.

It does really help anyone who's thinking, oh, I'd love to. I just, I can't do that. And me and myself will journey with you to help you into school.

So Lord, I pray as we come into a posture of prayer, just each of us before you, just us and you, Lord.

Lord, I pray that you would speak to our hearts. Would you give us words and would you give us pictures? Would you remind us of who you have called us to be in this season?

And Lord, would you break our hearts once more for the children that often we don't see or we don't notice?

[23:27] Those children who are grieving. Those children who are struggling with change or with emotional overwhelm.

Lord, would you break our hearts. Show us your heart for the children and young people in our community, Lord.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen.