

Jesus the Light of the World

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] Now we're going to begin our worship singing today firstly in Psalm 34, Psalm number 34, that's on page number 40, a tuneless St. Stephen.

At all times I will bless the Lord, I'll praise Him with my voice. Because I glory in the Lord, let troubled souls rejoice. Together let us praise the Lord, exalt His name with me.

I sought the Lord, His answer came, from fears He set me free. The theme of our sermon this morning is Jesus, the light of the world, and that's following on from the Young Folks Club yesterday, which had that theme of Jesus, the light of the world.

And in this psalm we find those who are looking to God, who look to Him, that means believing in Him, trusting in Him, that they come to shine with joy. They are like lights, as God gives them that joy.

So Psalm 34, verses 1 to 9, At all times I will bless the Lord. At all times I will bless the Lord, I'll bless Him with my voice.

[1 : 21] Before us I will bless the Lord, let the Lord, let the troubled souls rejoice.

To get that grace, praise the Lord, and so will live with me.

I sought the Lord, His answer came, from fears He set me free.

To get that grace, praise the Lord, let the Lord be with me.

To get that grace, praise the Lord, let the Lord be with me.

[3 : 09] He set His people free. Come, take and see the Lord's truth, who does the heaven is blessed.

O hear the Lord, you say, you will not be oppressed.

Let's now pray briefly. Our prayer, first of all, is focusing on the children and the young folks.

Lord, our gracious God, we thank you that we are together once again here to worship you. And we thank you for the guidance you give us in your word as to how we are to come to worship you.

And in what spirit and frame of mind we ought to come to give praise to your name. Help us, Lord, as we have been singing of those who look to you and were brought to shine with joy.

[4 : 22] That we too, Lord, we pray to shine with that joy that knows Jesus as the joy of the world and the joy of our lives as well.

We ask today your blessing, Lord, to follow what was done yesterday at the club. And we pray for all the children who attended, for their families and parents. We pray for the children here today.

We give thanks for them and we give thanks, Lord, for the interest their families show in bringing them to church, bringing them to the gospel and teaching them the things of God.

Lord, bless them, we pray today, and graciously apply your word to their hearts. Help them in their young lives, Lord, as they develop to continue to look to you and to continue to see you as the light of the world so that they may be guided in that right path and be kept, Lord, and protected from all the evil that is in the world.

Lord, we know that there is much darkness in the world, many things that are contrary to what you tell us in your word and would lead us astray and lead us into a different kind of life to what you require of us.

[5 : 34] And so we pray that you would continue, Lord, to give us your light and to enable the children themselves to walk by the light of your word to guide them through life. Receive our thanks now and go with us into what remains of this day and of this service now.

And all we ask is with the pardon of our sin, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Now, yesterday you had Jesus as the light of the world, as the theme of the conference, and that's what we're following through today as well.

I was reading recently about a little boy in America, and the little boy had been given some verses to learn or some scripture to learn, and it was in fact this scripture, Jesus being the light of the world.

And he was to recite or remember the words of that verse when it came to the assembly or the program that they had for Christmas. So his mum was a wee bit afraid that he wouldn't remember the words.

I suppose all mums are like that, or all dads are like that, when their children are taking part in a Christmas concert or something, there's always the fear, well, I hope they don't forget what they were meant to say.

[6 : 50] And sure enough, this mum was afraid that her little boy would actually remember, would forget the words. So what she did was she made sure that she got a place in the front row of those who were at the assembly, so that if she saw the wee boys beginning to struggle for remembering the words, she would just mouth them and hopefully he would follow.

And that's what happened. Sure enough, he actually forgot the words when he came to this line. So as mum went, and the boy still didn't know anything of what she was saying, so the silence just continued.

And then she leaned forward out of her seat and whispered, Jesus is the light of, I am the light of the world, is what she said. And the boy said, my mum is the light of the world.

And of course that destroyed any sense of concentration. And of course, his mum wasn't the light of the world, or she might have been very bright. Jesus is the light of the world.

And that's what the Bible, of course, tells us. That's what we're going to be looking at today.

Because the Bible tells us that there is a lot of darkness in the world, bad things.

[8 : 13] There's a lot of darkness in ourselves as well until Jesus gives us his light. And it's the light of Jesus that enables us to see properly into the darkness and to shine on our lives in such a way that provides for us a safe way onto heaven.

Because if we listen to a lot of other voices that tell us, no, you should do this. Forget about God.

Forget about the Bible. Jesus, the light of the world. You don't need all of that stuff.

Well, that's going to lead us into darkness and into trouble. And we know that that's not going to be good for us at all. So Jesus, as the light of the world, has given us his word, which also is described as a light for our feet in the Psalms.

And apart from everything else, Jesus himself is the light of the world. And as he shines brightly into our lives, what does he show? He shows us that we need himself.

He shows us that we actually need to have our sins forgiven, that we need to be cleaned up spiritually, and he's the one who forgives our sins.

[9 : 20] That's why he was given the name Jesus. Remember that the angel came to Joseph and said, Don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child that will be born, she will bear a son, and you will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

That's what his name Jesus really is about. The Savior who saves his people from their sins. So today, as you've been learning about Jesus, the light of the world, we're going to be looking in the sermon later at how we come to know this light for ourselves, and how we need his light in our lives, whatever age we're at.

And you today as children are not too young at all to know Jesus for yourselves as the light of the world, the light that gives us eternal life.

Now we're going to say the Lord's Prayer together at this point, so let's just say the Lord's Prayer. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

[10 : 41] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

I'm going to sing again now. This time we're singing from Psalm 119. It's on page 163, verses 105 to 112.

The tune this time is Eventide. And there's the words there that tell us about God's Word being a lamp that shines us for our feet, for our path.

Your Word's a lamp that shines before my feet. It is a light that guides me on my way. The oath that I have taken, I have confirmed that all your righteous laws I will obey.

We'll sing the four stanzas down to verse 112. Your words, a lamp that shines before my feet. Your words, a lamp that shines before my feet.

[11 : 56] It is a light that guides me on my way. The oath that I have taken, I have taken, I confirm, that all your righteous laws I will obey.

O Lord, you know that I have suffered much. All night that has OH keep my mind.

My rest. Set the lower O Lord, I will notice, We guide you wholly off, Though constantly my life is in my hands, Although the wicked set us there for me, I have not left the path of your commands.

Your statutes are my heritage always, And every day they make my heart rejoice.

[14 : 13] My heart is set on keeping your degrees, And to the very end they are my choice.

Let's now read God's Word as we find that today in the Gospel of John. John chapter 9, and we're going to read verses 1 to 25.

So John chapter 9 from the beginning. As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth, And his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, That he was born blind?

Jesus answered, It was not that this man sinned, nor his parents, But that the words of God, The works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me, While it is day, night is coming, When no one can work.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. Having said these things, He spat on the ground and made mud with saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud, And said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, Which means scent.

[15 : 41] So he went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbors and those who had seen him before, As a beggar, were saying, Is this not the man who used to sit and beg? Some said, It is he.

Others said, No, but he's like him. He kept saying, I am the man. So they said to him, Then how were your eyes opened? He answered, The man called Jesus made mud, And anointed my eyes, And said to me, Go to Siloam and wash.

So I went and washed and received my sight. They said to him, Where is he? He said, I don't know. They brought to the Pharisees, The man who had formerly been blind, And now it was a Sabbath day, When Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes, So the Pharisees again asked him How he had received his sight.

And he said to them, He put mud on my eyes, And I washed and I see. Some of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, For he does not keep the Sabbath.

But others said, How can a man who is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, What do you say about him, Since he has opened your eyes?

[16 : 58] He said, He is a prophet. The Jews did not believe that he had been blind, And had received his sight, Until they called the parents of the man Who had received his sight, And asked them, Is this your son, Who you say was born blind?

How then does he now see? His parents answered, We know that this is our son, And that he was born blind. But how he now sees, We do not know, Nor do we know who opened his eyes.

Ask him. He is of age. He will speak for himself. His parents said these things, Because they feared the Jews. For the Jews had already agreed, That if anyone should confess Jesus to be the Christ, He would be put out of the synagogue.

Therefore his parents said, He is of age. Ask him. So for the second time, They called the man who had been blind, And said to him, Give glory to God.

We know that this man is a sinner. He answered, Whether he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know, That though I was blind, Now I see.

[18 : 10] And so on, And may God bless to us that reading From his holy word. Let's now engage in prayer once again. Let's call upon the Lord. Our gracious God, We do give thanks that you are the one who opens the eyes of the blind.

That you are the one whom your people call As the God who has done miraculous things. And we know that while this miracle That we've been reading about here, Lord, That happened so long ago, Is now in the past, And was a natural opening of the eyes.

We thank you, Lord, For these spiritual openings that you cause, That enable us to see and to know yourself. We have thanks, Lord, For that great truth of your word, That your people are able to

testify That whereas they were once blind, Yet now they see.

And that they attribute this to your amazing grace. We thank you, Lord, Today that you are still opening eyes In various places throughout the world, And even amongst ourselves.

That you are the one who brings your light Into the darkness of human life. And that you are the one who, As the light scatters the darkness. And we thank you, Lord, That we ourselves can look to you To enlighten us today, And to bring to us that light of life, Which you alone are able to give.

[19 : 37] And we thank you for the opportunity We have now To worship you together here in this place. And we thank you, Lord, That as we worship you here together, And so you impress upon us from your word, The many reasons why we worship you.

The many things concerning your great name, That constrain us to worship you. To give glory to your name. To uplift your name in worship. And we thank you as we bow in your presence, That you are worthy of that worship, That worship of heaven itself, Which is perfect.

And that worship that we seek to give you, Lord, As we come together today. Bless us then, we pray, And bless your word to us. Help us to see by the light of your truth.

Enable us to have the testimony of the psalmist, Who could say as we have been singing, Lord, That your word was a lamp to his feet, A light to his path. We thank you for your word.

We thank you for all that it contains. For the many ways in which it brings to us Such great truths that we are required to believe. And that we do believe, Lord, Despite the fact that so many of them Are beyond our full understanding.

[20 : 49] Give us faith, we pray, To embrace your word. Faith to live by the light that it gives us. Faith to trust in you through what your word tells us about you, And about ourselves.

And we do give thanks today, That your word does not withhold the truth from us, About ourselves, About the world in which we live, And about why we are in the state we are in, In our lostness, And in our sinfulness.

And that it does not hide from us the solution that you have provided, In the Lord Jesus Christ, The light of the world. We thank you, Lord, That you came into this world of darkness.

And that as the light that you are, That you came to scatter the darkness in human life. We pray today, Lord, for all your people. We ask that you would bless them throughout the world today.

Lord, we know that there are many of them In very different circumstances to ours. That many of them know the power of darkness Even more than we ourselves know.

[21 : 53] The pressure of persecution, The constraint that they are under from evil forces and powers That seek to have them follow the works of darkness.

Lord, we give thanks that No amount of power on the part of darkness Is able to drive out the light that you create In the hearts of your people.

And we pray, Lord, That today, Your people throughout the world may be encouraged. Even despite the many difficulties they face. We pray for them today that they may know That you have given them the light of your truth.

And the light of your truth is A light that is always inextinguishable. And we'll lead them safely on.

Bless them especially in places where Persecution, Where war, Where terror, Where deprivation Is faced by them.

We thank again, Lord, Of the nation of Ukraine. And we pray for them today As they continue to suffer Adversity and suffer attack From Russian forces, From missiles, From strikes against their infrastructure That seeks to demoralize them.

[23 : 05] We pray that you would Maintain in them, Lord, That spirit that they have shown thus far. The spirit not only of resistance, But on the part of many of them, The spirit of trusting in the living God And trusting in Him For their salvation, For not only this darkness That's come to invade their land, But also that moral and spiritual darkness That they seek to be extinguished, Lord.

We pray that in our own land too, The way in which darkness Has so much come upon us As a people Instead of the light of the gospel. Oh, Lord, We pray that the light of the gospel itself Might be blessed by you To our good.

And we pray that that will penetrate To every area of our society, To those in government over us, Right through to those Who are in the greatest need. Gracious Lord, We ask for your blessing.

We pray that you would Turn us to yourself And enable us To know you as the light of life, But ourselves as a people. For this is why You came into the world As you tell us in your word.

You came that we might have life And have it the more abundantly. And so, Lord, We pray that today Your light will truly come To enlighten our paths through life So that we may follow you safely. [24 : 27] We pray your blessing for all today Who have difficulty, Trials, adversity. We pray especially today, Lord, For these families Belonging to us as a congregation That mourn the passing of loved ones In this past week itself.

Lord, we pray for them, For those who have had funerals In the past days. For those who are expecting Funerals in this week to come Graciously provide for them, we pray. Grant them your comfort. Lord, bless those who are ill At this time too. Bless those who are receiving treatment. Those who have gone through surgery. Those who have been waiting a long time For treatment or surgery Due to the circumstances, Lord, That prevail in our land at this time. We ask that You would bless them. We pray that You would bless The National Health Service too. So much in the news, O Lord, In these days. And we pray that You would continue To provide resources By which they may fully engage In the work You have called them to. And we pray for everyone involved In the work of the NHS. But we pray especially for those Who are at the front line of services And serve You so diligently From day to day In hospices and hospitals And in various clinics Throughout our land.

[25 : 45] Lord, we pray That You would continue To encourage them And that You would continue To provide them With not only substantial And sufficient monetary gain But also That You would give to them, Lord, The strength of spirit By which to continue In the face of What may at times Be so discouraging.

Remember the preaching Of Your Word. Remember today Your Word As it goes forth, Lord, Throughout our land. Remember every congregation Where Your Word is proclaimed. Graciously provide for Your people The strength and the encouragement To go on serving You To be lights in this world.

Continue with us now, we pray here. And help us as we sing Your praises. And as we come shortly To look into Your Word And seek its meaning for our lives. Lord, we pray that We may know the guidance of Your Spirit Giving to us What we ourselves don't have.

The light of Your truth to be blessed. Hear us, we pray for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to sing Before we turn to God's Word. Sing once more.

This time it's in Psalm 27. And it's on page 236. Psalm 27 from the beginning. Verses 1 to 5. To the tune Jackson.

[27 : 09] The Lord's my light And saving health. Who shall make me dismayed? My life's strength is the Lord. Of whom then shall I be afraid? When as mine enemies and foes Most wicked persons all To eat my flesh against me rose They stumbled and did fall.

These verses, Psalm 27. Verses marked 1 to 5. The Lord's my light. The Lord's my light. The Lord's my light And saving health He shall make me dismayed My light's strength is the Lord.

Of whom then shall I be afraid? When at my end Mees and foes Most wicked persons all To eat my flesh Against me rose They stumbled and did fall.

Against me though And who stand calm My heart yet fear And sins Though Lord Against me Christ I have Be confident In this One thing I offer For desire And will see To obtain That all days of my life I may Within God's heart Remain That I

The purity Of the Lord Behold me And admire That I In this Holy Place May For■■■■OME Let's turn again for a short time to John's Gospel, chapter 8 this time, and the words you find in verse 12.

[30 : 48] John chapter 8 and verse 12. Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world. Lord, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

When you look at the structure of John's Gospel, it's really interesting how you find him making statements like these, what's usually called the I am statements. Here it's I am the light of the world, but there are several of these throughout the Gospel of John, as you know, I'm sure.

And the interesting thing is that the statements themselves are often, not always, but often accompanied by a miracle that helps to explain what he meant by the statement.

For example, here you find, I am the light of the world, and you have to take this passage with you right into the next chapter, because there he opens the eyes of a man born blind to illustrate the fact that Jesus brings light to the blind, and of course that is also the case spiritually, which is what these miracles really reveal to us.

You find the same chapter 6, when he spoke of himself as the bread of life, that's related to the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. You find in chapter 11, Jesus saying to Martha, I am the resurrection and the life.

[32 : 10] Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? And he demonstrated the truth of that by the miracle of raising her brother, Lazarus, back from the dead.

In other words, there is an explanation in miracle of the words that he uses to speak about himself, I am such and such. And here you find, we see the light of the world, I am the light of the world, illustrated, if you like, as we said, by the following miracle in chapter 9 here of the gospel.

Now, it's interesting that when Jesus says, I am the light of the world, I am the bread of life, he's taking what we know as ordinary aspects of life as we know it, things in the natural world such as light and bread and so on, and he's using them in a way that provides profound spiritual teaching. That's one of the features of John's gospel, that he takes such things as here in the words of Jesus, things like light and darkness, and presents the truth, spiritual and moral truth, through these things so that we can better understand these concepts for ourselves.

And as you know, light has certain properties. Light moves. Light is really a form of radiation in a sense, electromagnetic radiation.

[33 : 43] That's about as far as I know the physics of it. I know that light is something that travels very fast, and light, of course, is measured by scientists in those terms.

And light is made up, white light, made up of the spectrum of light. All the colors that you know make up the spectrum, which you can see when white light is divided into the color spectrum by putting it through a prism of some kind.

So light has lots of properties, things that are true about it, things that you can measure, things that actually define it as light. But darkness has no properties.

Darkness has no properties. Why is that? Because darkness really, essentially, is the absence of light. Where you find darkness, you can say for certain, there is no property of light in this place. It's only when light comes into a dark place that the darkness is then ended, because that's one of the things that light does. The properties of light are properties that remove darkness.

[34 : 56] Wherever you shine a light into darkness, the effect is that the darkness is done away with. And that's really so interesting when you come to think of what Jesus is saying here.

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. In other words, he's really saying it is possible, and indeed it's true, that people walk in darkness.

He means spiritual and moral darkness because they don't have the light of Jesus in their lives. And it doesn't matter how well constructed their life may be.

It doesn't matter how much they may live a decent and high-quality moral life. It doesn't matter how much they might have achieved in society. What Jesus is saying is, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness.

And by implication, whoever does not follow him is walking in darkness. We need the light of Jesus in order to avoid walking in the darkness or to be delivered from the darkness that is naturally true of every one of us.

[36 : 05] So, two things. First of all, Jesus as the light of the world. You remember in 1 John 1, verse 5, that John begins that first epistle that he wrote by... In chapter 1, verse 5, he gives a definition there of God.

God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. And you come to John's gospel, and you discover that Jesus is the light of the world, and that he's the light of the world as God, because Jesus is God.

In other words, what we remember at this time of year in terms of the Christmas story, whatever term we use, and it's not just at Christmastime we remember it, Jesus, the Son of God, coming into the world, the Son of God, taking our human nature to himself, joining it to himself, working the work that the gospel tells us about, especially culminating in the cross and in his resurrection.

That is God. That is the light that God has always been. And he's come into the world in the person of Jesus, not just a human being that he chose to represent him, but a human nature that he joined to his own divine person, the Son of God.

Or as John puts it in the beginning of the gospel here, the Word which was with God, and the Word was God. Light reveals itself.

[37 : 35] God revealed himself in the person of Jesus. God is light. The light came into the world in the person of Jesus to lighten up the darkness for us, to deliver us from darkness.

That's essentially what is in this definition that Jesus is saying, I am the light of the world. Now, the context here is interesting. As I said, you go back to the previous chapter as well, in fact, and on into chapter 9.

And in verse 37 of the previous chapter 7, you find on the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

And you have to follow that right through into chapter 9 because it's the same incident, really, that you've got different aspects of brought before you. And the interesting thing there, the important thing, is that the feast there was the Feast of Tabernacles, an annual event for Israel, which followed through into the days of Jesus.

And during that time, the practice was they would actually light up four gigantic candelabras, you might say they were, or four gigantic chandeliers, you might call them, but out in the open, massive, massive things filled with lights.

[39 : 02] And we're told that the light from these four giant lights would actually go out and flood the whole town with light. And you can imagine Jesus in that context and with that background and in these circumstances and with all that going on, standing up and saying, I am the light of the world.

Here is Jesus saying, these lights that you are seeing, they're brilliant lights, they're shining up the town, the whole city is actually invaded by this light and covered by this light. But I am the light of the world.

And whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. So the incarnation, as we call it, the coming of the Son of God into the world, the Christmas story, it's about the light that God is in the person of Jesus, His Son, coming into this world so that He now is the light of the world and that those who follow Him should not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.

You'll find back in the Old Testament such verses as, for example, you find in Isaiah chapter 9, we quote them very often, or you'll find them maybe on your Christmas cards as well.

If you come to have Christmas cards, you'll find such verses as this in chapter 9, verse 2, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

[40 : 41] And you go down through the chapter, you come to verse 6, for unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, and so on.

That is obviously a prophecy about the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matthew 4, verse 16, that passage from Isaiah is quoted in respect to Jesus being born into the world, Jesus being the light of the world.

Here is John saying the same thing, I am the light of the world. Friends, there is no other light that is adequate to meet the requirements of the darkness.

Our world has so much in it today, that fills us with almost a sense of despair. Our own land has so much in it that you can attribute to the works of darkness, to the work, to the mind of darkness, to the mindset of darkness.

What is going to scatter that darkness, that moral and spiritual darkness? Those things that we know are contrary, so much to the Word of God, so much to the Word as a light to our feet.

[41 : 59] So many attempts made, even on the part of those in government, to extinguish the light of the world, to extinguish the light of the gospel, to extinguish the moral and spiritual light that's provided for us in Jesus Christ, in the preaching of the gospel, in the emphasis of Jesus alone being the way, the truth and the life that leads us to God, that leads us to salvation.

And the only antidote to that darkness and to these movements of darkness is the light of the world, is the blessing of the gospel, is Jesus coming to show Himself as the light of the world.

Because there is no alternative to lighten up our path. There's nothing in between, morally and spiritually, there's nothing in between darkness and light, the light that Jesus is.

You don't find shades of truth. You don't find penumbras, if you like, in terms of moral or spiritual attributes. There is light in the darkness.

And if we're not in the darkness, we're in the light and vice versa. I am, he says, the light of the world. But then he talks about following Him.

[43 : 15] Whoever follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life. Well, following the light, obviously following Jesus. What does that mean?

How do we come to follow Jesus? What is it to come to know Him as the light of our life, so that we will have what he calls the light of life?

Well, John's gospel actually tells us in many ways what that involves. And we don't need to go out with John's gospel for our study today to see the answer to the question, what is involved in following Jesus as the light of the world?

Well, there's first of all, coming to Him. Let me just cast your mind back, if you follow me through, and just look up chapter 3 with me just now, chapter 3 and verse 21.

We can read from verse 19. John chapter 3, verse 19. This is the judgment. The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil.

[44 : 25] For everyone who does wicked things hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But whoever does what is through comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God.

Now, you can see the two contrasting groups there that are mentioned, those who come to the light and those who don't come to the light. And there's a little explanation as to why it is some come to the light and why it is some don't come to the light.

And indeed, you'll find something like that illustrated in the natural world as well. There are different creatures that help to illustrate that very point for us. If you light a lamp or something outside, especially on a nice evening, when it comes to darkness, you'll find a lot of moths attracted to that light.

Light attracts the moths. They come to it. They flutter around it for ages. But if you have a creature like a cockroach, and cockroaches are scurrying about in the darkness of a room, and when you put the light on, what do the cockroaches do?

They scurry back somewhere for cover away from the light. I'm not saying that. Don't think that there are cockroaches in the moths, not as far as I know, but that's the property, and that's what cockroaches do and creatures like that.

[45 : 57] As soon as the light goes on, the cockroach just makes its way into somewhere where it can hide in the darkness. As soon as the light comes on, the moth is attracted to the light and comes to the light.

That's how it is in our human life as well. That's what Jesus is saying here, what John is saying in chapter 3, as we've read. Whoever does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen that they are carried out in God.

Everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. That's exactly how it is in your life and mine. Because when we come to think about our lives, when we come to think about our relationship with God, our relationship to God's truth, we are very much aware whether we're actually concerned or desirous of coming to God or else staying away from Him.

What did Adam and Eve do once they fell, once they became sinners, once they became afraid of God? They went and tried to hide from Him. Instead of being out in the light like they were created, they wanted somewhere dark, somewhere to hide, somewhere away from God if it were possible, which it wasn't.

But that's our natural human heart. That's our natural human desire to be away from the light, to actually have our deeds kept, as it were, away from the eye of God, from the verdict of God, from the declaration of God as to what we're like and how He sees us.

[47 : 28] But God is light. And whatever is true of your life and my life, God is seeing it anyway whether we try to hide it from Him or not. And sometimes we're experts at hiding things from other people.

We cannot hide things from God because He is that eternal light that shines in every way into our life to discover what's there in our lives.

But here we are. Whoever does the truth, John is saying, comes to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they may be made clear that they are in God.

Now, how do we come? How do we come to God as the light? Well, we come to God as the light because Jesus, as the light, shines into our hearts and shows us our need of Him.

And He shows us that we are, in fact, darkness in ourselves, even if we think well of ourselves, as all of us, I'm sure, do naturally. But in terms of God's acceptance and God's approval, we need more than our own opinion.

[48 : 35] We need more than what other people might tell us. We need more than the philosophies of this world. We need to be right with God. So, we come to Him in repentance.

We confess our sins. We pray for His forgiveness. We pray for His acceptance. We come to ask Him to shine more light into our lives, to show up what is there that still needs to be attended to. We want God's approval. We seek God's approval. So, how do we get God's approval? We come to Jesus as the light of the world. We come to ask Him to receive us, to forgive our sin, to cleanse us, not just to dress us up a little bit or to wash us here and there, to do some sort of repair job on us, but to make us into a new creation, to give us the life that God Himself approves of. We come to the light. We come to the light without confession. And we are assured that God will not actually turn us back.

Chapter 12 also has a reference to the light and is a point that we can make in relation to what we're saying just now. In chapter 12, verse 35, I love the sound of these turning pages, you know, because it shows that you're following what's being said and there's nothing better for a preacher than to hear an audience or a congregation turning the pages and following the way that we're trying to unfold the truth to you.

[50 : 15] So chapter 12 and verse 35, you can see how the light appears there as well where Jesus, now this is coming to the point in John's gospel where Jesus' public ministry is coming to an end.

From now on, He's just going to be speaking mostly to His disciples, but His public ministries, public declarations are almost at an end. And bear that in mind when He says, Jesus said to them, the light is among you for a little while longer.

Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in darkness does not know where he's going. While you have the light, believe in the light that you may become the sons of light.

What a great text that is. It almost explains itself to us. While you have the light, believe in the light that you may become the sons of light.

In other words, there's the light of the world saying, believe in me, trust in me, come to me, give your life to me, become lights by trusting in me, receive the life that I have to give you.

[51 : 23] And so you will become the children of light or the sons of light. It's exactly what you have here in our text in chapter 8. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

So you follow Him by first of all coming to Him. But that's only the beginning of the journey. You then follow Him as the light that Jesus is when you've come to Him.

That light then follows you into the journey of life, the journey of your life through this world. That's what He means by walk. You walk after the light that Jesus is.

You follow Him. You live life by His terms, in other words. You regard Him as the way, the truth, and the life. And you're concerned to build up your life by more and more being like Himself.

I'm old enough now to remember when there were no streetlights. Some of you are perhaps as old as that or even older, but I remember walking home in tongue before there were any streetlights whatsoever there.

[52 : 29] And although there was an outside light, well, eventually there was an outside light at our house, but if I was walking up that final part of the road, there was simply no streetlights whatsoever.

And it's hard for young folks to imagine nowadays what it's like without streetlights. It's darkness. And walking up that part of the road, my native village, honestly, seriously, many a time I was going like this sideways to just work out where is the ditch?

So that I wouldn't actually walk into the ditch and then finding out, oh, there's the ditch, so take a step back, go forward another few steps. And eventually you'd reach the house and you'd come to where the light outside the house was.

But that's when there's no streetlights, when there's no light, but when there's just darkness, you don't know where you're going. You're fumbling about in the darkness.

You're trying to make your way, hopefully, by the way that you yourself think best. And that's what it's like in our human life as well. It's so easy to stray off the verge that keeps you safe, straying onto where the darkness is.

[53 : 41] So easy just to accept the darkness for what it is and say, well, this is how I've always been. And even though you're not right with God, it's all too easy to let the evil one, the dark power, tell you, it's all right.

You've managed so far. You don't need to become religious. You don't need to actually follow Jesus the way other people are following Jesus. That's all right for them. But just listen to what Jesus is saying.

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness. You need to follow him or else you're walking in darkness. And I have to put that to my life.

You have to put that to yourself. The safe way through life is the way that follows Jesus. The way that has your life in his hands in him as the light.

Psalms 27, we sang together, begins, the Lord is my light and my saving health. The Lord is my light.

[54 : 43] Not my own ingenuity. Not what somebody else tells me. Not what the philosophy of some other religion says. Not a mixture of all kinds of beliefs and somehow or other that provides me a safe way.

No, he says, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life. And you know, some people might be, maybe yourself today, might be afraid to take that step.

You might be afraid to just step into the light if you like and begin to follow Jesus and to do so meaningfully and fully and openly. I once read about a young girl whose father was a lighthouse keeper way back in the old days when lighthouse keepers were required to live in lighthouses and she had a little lamp herself that her father had given her so that when they were going to go back upstairs through the lighthouse, of course, the stairs wind round so very quickly her father disappeared as he went ahead of her with his light and she was following with her own little light and she began to panic when her father went round the corner as he went up the round stairs and she said, Dad, Dad, I can't see you.

And he said, it's okay. The light you've got is enough for each step. Just look at each step as you carry your lamp and you can go on safely up the stairs.

That's what God is telling you today. The light you have today is sufficient for the steps of today. Don't try and live tomorrow today. Don't try and go ahead of yourself and all the fears that that will engender in your own thinking.

[56 : 27] How am I going to manage this? How am I going to manage that? How is this going to work out? How is that going to work out? Here's the light for today. Here is Jesus for you to follow today. And whatever steps or step you might have to take today, don't look to tomorrow.

Look to the light that he is and you'll find that he's more than adequate for the steps you need to take today. I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness.

But he says, will have the light of life. In other words, the light which consists in life, the life that Jesus gives is here compared to a light. So, you know, that opens up a whole new area of study for us.

We don't have time at all to go into it just now. But it's the area of truth that speaks about Christians, the followers of Jesus themselves being light.

And you remember that's how Jesus spoke, Matthew 5, 14, you are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a candle and put it under a covering, but on a candlestick so that it gives out its light.

[57 : 37] Here is Jesus saying, when you come to know me as the light of your life, your life is transformed into being a light as well. And this world out there needs not just the light of Jesus as the light of the world, but the light of Jesus in human lives to make them, you and I, lights by which people will see Jesus for themselves.

They don't read their Bibles. They don't come to church. They don't know the gospel. Many people out there today in the darkness of sin and of the ways of sin, how are they going to find light for their lives?

They're not going to find it in church. They don't come to church, though we want them to come to church. They don't know the gospel. They don't read their Bibles. So they have to see that light in

your life and mine. And if your life and my life is not a light for them, then they are going to stay in the darkness unless God miraculously comes to change it for them.

So the question you see today is not so much, well, there is this question, do I know Jesus as the light of my life, as the light of the world? Is the light of the world shining in my life today?

Have I come to trust Him? Have I come to know the Christmas story for myself in my own inward soul so that I'm no longer walking in darkness, so that I have the light of life?

[59 : 07] That's the first thing. The second thing, and it is a challenge for me and for you too, is my life. Is our life as a congregation?

Because Jesus there was, in Matthew, talking to a crowd of His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount, you are the light of the world. There's our concern today as we come to approach Christmas and give out the Christmas story, but here must be our concern always, every day, every moment of every year that goes by, that as a people and as individuals, we will prove to be the light of the world, the light that shines out by which people see the Lord and by which people will come by His blessing to follow Him.

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. To use his own words, come to the light, follow the light, be light for Him.

May God bless these thoughts on His Word and bless His Word to us again today. We're going to conclude by singing in Psalm 36. Psalm 36, and the Sing Psalms version again.

Verses 5 to 9 to the tune London New. That's on page 44. Your steadfast love is great, O Lord, it reaches heaven high.

[60 : 51] Your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky. And so on to verse 9, which speaks about God being a source of life and light for us. They feast within your house and drink from streams of your delight.

What with you is the source of life in your light. we see light. Verses 5 to 9 as we stand to sing. Your steadfast love is great, O Lord, it reaches heaven high.

Your faithfulness is wonderful, your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky.

Your righteousness is wonderful, your righteousness is very great, like light.

Your righteousness is great, like mountains high and steep. Your righteousness is great, like ocean and earth, O man and peace to be.

[62 : 17] O Lord, my precious is your steadfast love, what confidence it brings.

For the name of you is Jesus, O enseñ and louvers, O platformer did you pray e'en the sky? O nuestra fields, who are ως hot? how are you? as you thunder, the soul of your eye■■■, The shadow of your wings.

They feast with the new eyes and trail From saints of pure delight.

For with you is the source of life In your light we see light.

If you let me get to the main door, please, after the benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore. Amen.

[63 : 43] Amen, Father. Amen. Amen, Father. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.