

# Light and Dark

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I couldn't travel both, and be one traveller, yet I stood. And that was the beginning of the poem that John read this evening, that ends, I took the road less travelled by, and that's made all the difference.

And that poem, it's a wonderful poem, I love it, and I read it quite a lot, and it's all about how you make a choice. And what we've heard this evening is just two wonderful stories of people choosing to take one road rather than the other.

And it's a privilege to have heard those two stories, so thank you both, because Jesus was a storyteller. And when we tell stories, we just do what Jesus is doing. So it's wonderful.

I want to talk about light and dark this evening. Fiona and I travel very often, most weeks, across from Whitby to Leeds, and we leave normally at 6 o'clock in the morning to get into Leeds and Bradford for half past 7, 8 o'clock in the morning.

And there are two sorts of experiences of that journey, and we often come back late at night. It's either the middle of winter, cold and it's dark.

[ 1 : 1 9 ] And the road from Whitby to Pickering is a dark road. There ain't no traffic lights. And, eh? Where are you going to streetlights? There aren't any streetlights as well. The point I was making was a... I was trying to make a very niche point about traffic lights, but we'll go with the streetlights, shall we?

Because that's more to the point. Thank you. Thank you. And you have to drive carefully. We know the road very well.

We know where it goes up and down and round and up and down. But there are very often times where, as we're driving in the dark, I suddenly find myself thinking, where exactly am I?

And I know, broadly speaking, where I am. And then the light, the days become lighter, the morning become lighter, and it's a glorious drive. And if you haven't driven the Moors Road at 6 o'clock in the morning, but it's well worth it.

[ 2 : 2 1 ] You see beauty. You see beauty. We've seen owls. We've seen all sorts of animals. We've seen... It's been great. Sheep.

Many sheep. Sometimes on the road. Sometimes not. But it does make a difference. If it's dark or if it's light. It does make a difference.

So, let's have the next slide, please. A few verses. Oh, gosh, that's quite small. Sorry. You're the light of the world. This is Matthew chapter 5. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

You are the light of the world. Follow God's example. Ephesians chapter 5. Therefore, as dearly loved children, for you were once in darkness, but you are now light in the Lord.

- [ 3 : 29 ] Live as children of light, for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. And find out what pleases God. You know, those verses, there's about half a dozen sermons in there, and I won't do them all this evening.
- But the really important thing is, and the really important point, first point really is, you're light. If you know Jesus, you're light.
- And you're light because you can see more clearly. I can see clearly, now the rain has gone. There you are. But you can see clearly because the scales have fallen from your eyes.
- And you see the truth of who Jesus is. And we've just heard some wonderful testimonies of what that means in reality. But being light has a responsibility, which I'll come back to in a moment.
- Next slide, please. But we're in a battle. And there is dark. There's dark in this world.
- [ 4 : 43 ] As there is light, there is darkness. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world. And against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms, Ephesians chapter 6.
- We mustn't forget that we are in a battle. And we mustn't forget that just as there is light, there is darkness.
- Darkness. Isn't that a modern verse for bitter.
- Isn't that a modern verse for Isaiah chapter 5? written hundreds and thousands of years ago. You know, you listen to people on the television, on the radio, or read the newspaper, and you think, up's down and down is up.
- Good is bad and bad is good. Light is dark and dark is light. And that's the struggle.
- [ 6 : 10 ] That's the struggle that we have in the spiritual realm. Of making sure that we hold on to good. We hold on to light.
- We hold on to truth. And it's part of our responsibility as Christians to take that battle seriously. And to take the right and wrong.
- The light and dark. The bitter and sweet, or the sweet and bitter. In the right way. Because children of the light. Next slide please.
- There are some lovely characteristics of children in the light. From those verses in Ephesians. Follow God's example. It says.
- What a good idea. What a good piece of advice that is. Follow God's example. Walk in the way of love. Walk in the way of love.
- [ 7 : 11 ] Clothe your life. Clothe your behaviour. Allow your behaviour to be flavoured by love. Love. Not a Hollywood love.
- But a love for brothers and sisters in Christ. A love for those who don't know Christ yet. Self-sacrifice.
- In a world which says self-promotion. God thinks you're fabulous. You haven't got to prove to God your worth.
- Because he thinks you're fab. And he loves you loads. There's no need to prove anything to God. And the world will demand that you prove yourself to it.
- And that ain't what we need to be doing. We need to be doing the will of God. Goodness. Righteousness. Truth. Lovely words.
- [ 8 : 16 ] Words that are just the way that we can shape our personality and character. Of goodness. Truth. Righteousness. Following the way of God's example.
- Okay. And the next slide please. How do you experience Jesus, the light, in your life?

It's an interesting question that. How does Jesus illuminate your life? How does he light it up?

On your walk with Jesus, how does he act as the dawn of the day? And you can see the way. You can see the way over the moors.

And it's safe. Because God's lighting up your path. How do you experience light when you're in situations which feel pretty dark?

[ 9 : 25 ] Which feel pretty threatening? Or alarming? Or unpleasant? I don't know about you.

I like, if I go to a different city, particularly in this country, and I go to lots of different cities. I like to go for a walk. But I don't take a map. I just wander around. And I quite often get lost.

And I quite like that. It's quite good fun. But one day I did that in a city, not in this country, in a different country. Which was war-torn.

And had been under quite a lot of difficult things. And I went for a wander out of the hotel. And I went across the road and into this particular part.

And I suddenly thought, I don't want to be here anymore. And there were bullet holes in the walls and all sorts of stuff. And I come out of it pretty quickly. Sometimes we find ourselves in dark situations.

[ 10 : 27 ] And when we're in those, we need to get out pretty quickly. We need to choose to find the light. But how do you experience the light of Jesus in your life? It's worth just reflecting on this week.

And once you know, don't hide it. Don't hide it like you put a lamp under a bushel. I always thought in Sunday school that was a weird phrase.

You know, what's a bushel? Anyway, don't put your torch in a pan. Because you won't be able to see anything. Stand up on a chair and wave it around.

And then you can see things. There you are. There's the modern translation for you. But we're not trying to make ourselves look good.

As we put our light on a stand. We're there to show people Jesus. And what we're doing this evening and the purpose of these evening services as we go forward is just to have an opportunity to say, Hey folks, do you want to come and have a look at Jesus?

[ 11 : 35 ] Let us show you. Let us show you by our words and our deeds. By our actions, by our smiles, by our just being.

Would you like to meet Jesus? We're not trying to self-promote. We're trying to be children of light. We're trying to show the light of Jesus to the world.

Last slide, please, Josh. And so, be children of the light. And this week, inhabit the light. In the name of Jesus.

Amen. Amen.