

WEDNESDAY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Christ Church, Crouch End Hill

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No: 75

"I am" sayings of Jesus in John's Gospel (2)

Jesus said to the people, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Objective :

To recognize Jesus as the "light of the world" and that "the light of the world" can help to make clear the truth and purpose of human life. John 8: 12

Brief Talk on John 8: 12– 20

Introduction

Most people must have noticed how sunlight streaming through a window shows up dust and grime in a room that would otherwise appear clean. It's one of the disconcerting characteristics of light. In describing himself as "the light of the world", Jesus tries to make it clear that he has come to confront men and women with the truth about themselves and their lives. Human instinct, however, is to keep the dark corners of our lives hidden. The Pharisees' anger showed how uncomfortable and threatened Jesus made them feel.

He showed the Pharisees that they lacked understanding and were not seeing things clearly. (8:14,19). It would be very sad if that were all there was to say. But it is not. Light does far more than show up harsh and sometimes shameful realities. As Jesus would have been aware when golden candlesticks were lit in the Temple at the Feast of Tabernacles, light can transform what is dreary and dismal into something glowing and beautiful. We see in our gardens that light with lots of warmth and energy helps flowers and plants to grow.

Questions for discussion

1. (a) What often-used expressions can you think of that equate darkness with evil, ignorance, etc. and light with good, hope, etc?

(b) What do these expressions tell us about our perceptions of good and evil?

2. Jesus confronted the Pharisees with their lack of understanding (8:14,19). We associate light with understanding; for example, when we speak of someone "seeing the light". (a) Does your understanding of who Jesus is change your understanding of life? In what ways? (b) Could this happen for others too?

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3. What kinds of darkness do you think men and women need to be freed from today? Comment on John 1:5 and 3:19
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- 4 (a) What does "I am the light of the world...Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness" (8:12) mean to you?

(b) Do you think this verse has anything to say to those who are afraid of the future? If so, put what it has to say to them into your own words. If not, what is Jesus talking about? How do you respond to His words in this verse?

5. (a) In today's urban and technological world, is daylight still associated with the opportunity to work (9:4)? If you think that it no longer is, does this affect the usefulness of the picture of the day as encouragement to do God's work?

(b) Does what Jesus say here make you feel that God's work is urgent? Why?

6. Jesus wants his disciples to live as people of the light. Yet some times even his disciples lived as if they were people of darkness. In what ways can we intensify other people's darkness by what we do or say? How can this be stopped?

Conclusion

The man born blind had his life dramatically changed when he encountered Jesus. If we open our eyes to the "light of the world", we may be faced with uncomfortable truths. But we shall also discover the possibilities of personal transformation and growth. We shall find our lives warmed and guided by the light of Jesus' love.

"I am the light of the world." - the world that "walks in darkness. To be in "darkness" means to be ignorant of God and the things of God. To "walk in darkness" means to live for self and want nothing to do with the Light. Because the world "walks in darkness." it wants nothing to do with the light. It fears the light because light chases the darkness away.

Jesus says, "I am the light of the world," ... "Follow me," ... "And you will have the light of life," That's a promise. Those who, by grace, receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour receive the light of life. Those who, by grace, follow Jesus gain life, real life. Those who, by grace, follow Jesus, share in His life.

Prayer . Pray for those who live in darkness because of ignorance, despair, and evil, and those who are afraid of what may be ahead.

Story of “The Littlest Candle”

Once upon a time a little candle stood in a room filled with other candles, most of them much larger and much more beautiful than she was. Some were ornate and some were rather simple, like herself. Some were white, some were blue, some were pink, some were green. She had no idea why she was there, and the other candles made her feel rather small and insignificant.

When the sun went down and the room began to get dark, she noticed a large man walking toward her with a ball of fire on a stick. She suddenly realized that the man was going to set her on fire. “No, no!” she cried, “Aaaaagghhh! Don’t burn me, please!” But she knew that she could not be heard and prepared for the pain that would surely follow.

To her surprise, the room filled with light. She wondered where it came from since the man had extinguished his fire stick. To her delight, she realized that the light came from herself.

Then the man struck another fire stick and, one by one, lit the other candles in the room. Each one gave out the same light that she did.

During the next few hours, she noticed that, slowly, her wax began to flow. She became aware that she would soon die. With this realization came a sense of why she had been created. “Perhaps my purpose on earth is to give out light until I die,” she mused. And that’s exactly what she did.

God created you and I to produce light in a dark world. Like that little candle, we all can produce the same amount of light, no matter how small we are or what colour we might be. But we can’t produce light until we receive it from an outside source. That source is Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

Also like the little candle, we have to die in order to produce light. If we try to preserve ourselves, our lives will be meaningless. But if we are willing to “lose our lives for Christ’s sake,” (Matthew 10:39) we will find our true purpose and meaning.