

Weekly Newsletter: 20th June 2023

Reflection: What Does It Mean to Know Jesus as the Light of the World?

By Joe Barnard

One of the great dangers of being an adult is feigned competence. After having lived several decades, we slip into thinking that we have the wisdom and strength needed to manage our lives. Without being fully aware of what is going on, the attitude of dependence evaporates and we are left in a hardened state of self-reliance.

One of the ways we can avoid this threat is by meditating on Jesus' words, "I am the light of the world". Like a lot of Jesus' statements, these words have unfathomable depth. We need to avoid the mistake of thinking that, because we may have heard these words countless times before, the meaning of the words has somehow been exhausted. A lot of Biblical truths are like a coat of paint that needs to be reapplied to the heart regularly. Knowing about a truth and living a truth are not the same, and, as many an old Christian will attest, often it is the most simple of truths to understand which are the most difficult ones to put into practice.

To understand Jesus' words, we need to pause and reflect on the human relationship with ordinary, natural light. Let me quickly make five observations about the way light affects our daily existence. First, light is something outside of us. If we close our eyes, we do not discover there to be an "inner light" that enables sight. Rather, to shut our eyes is to be in darkness. Second, light illuminates the world around us. Although, at times, light can result in a mirage, in most cases what we see around us is real and true. Because of light, we can see objects that – though always present – were invisible in the darkness. Third, light enables safe movement. Anyone who has tried to take a walk in the pitch dark has felt the hazard of not being able to see obstacles. It is only when we have a clear path in front of us, that we can move freely. Fourth, light overcomes darkness. Darkness is nothing in and of itself. There are no bodies that emit darkness. Light, on the other hand, is a genuine thing. To turn on a light is to dissipate darkness. Finally, light unveils beauty. Claude Monet, the famous painter, once said, "Light is the most important person in painting". In saying this, he was drawing attention to the marvellous way in which light graces other objects with a beauty and glory that could not be relished otherwise.

Now, the question we need to ask is this: how do all of these observations about light help us to understand what Jesus means when he says, "I am the light of the world"?

First, Jesus wants us to know that revelation (the ability to perceive truth) depends upon an external source of authority. Just as the eyes need light to see, we need the grace available to us through Jesus to understand the most important spiritual truths. When it comes to questions about the identity of God, the

meaning of grace, the source of eternal life, or the essence of eternal life, such things are only made knowable to us in and through Jesus. Without Jesus, all of us are spiritually blind.

Second, the light of Jesus illumines things that are real, not imagined. Often in a secular world the term “spiritual” is another way of saying “not-fully-real”. We need to avoid this clever deceit. Just as light enables genuine objects to be seen, Jesus enables genuine truths to be known. God, eternal life, forgiveness, adoption, the indwelling of the Spirit – these are not just comforting ideas for unstable souls. These are truths as solid as mountains, trees, and boulders – the very truths upon which the universe itself is built.

Third, the light of Jesus enables us to navigate safely through a dangerous world. Jesus himself makes this clear. He says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:13). To have Jesus in your life is like having a cloud of fire to guide you through the wilderness. He makes clear a path of righteousness for us to follow that leads ultimately to the heavenly fields and golden streets of eternal life.

Fourth, the light of Jesus overcomes all darkness. At the cross, the world, the devil, and the flesh are conquered. From then on, a light shines in the darkness which will one day result in a new creation that has no need of sun or moon because “the glory of God gives it light and its lamp is the Lamb” (Rev. 21:23). And finally, the light of Jesus puts the beauty of God on display for the children of grace to worship and adore. The marvel of Jesus is that, in his face, we see nothing less than the perfect form of God the Father. Isaac Watts captures the unbelievable privilege of beholding God in Christ in the following words:

Go, worship at Immanuel's Feet,
See in his Face what wonders meet,
Earth is too narrow to express
His Worth, his Glory, or his Grace.

Nor Earth, nor Seas, nor Sun, nor Stars,
Nor Heav'n his full Resemblance bears;
His Beauties we can never trace,
Till we behold him Face to Face.

Eddie Little

Eddie Little passed away peacefully at home on Sunday 11th June. His funeral service will take place today (Tuesday 20th June) at 3.30pm at Meadowbank Church. The burial will be at 2.30pm at Craigmillar Castle Park Cemetery. Please pray for Edna and the family.

Pickleball and Table Tennis – this Tuesday

The church will be open on Tuesday evenings at 7pm for anyone wanting to play pickleball and/ or table tennis. Everyone is welcome and if you've never tried pickleball, come along and have a go at one of the world's fastest growing sports! Contact Joe for more details.

Baby and Toddlers and Warm Space

The Baby and Toddler Group and Warm Space have now finished for the summer. Baby and Toddlers will be back on **Monday 21st August** and we'll let you know when Warm Space will be restarting. The Mission Team are meeting tonight to discuss plans going forward - please remember them in prayer.

Summer Appeal 2023



The graphic for the Summer Appeal 2023 features the Holyrood Evangelical Church logo, a sun icon, and photos of Hannu & Hazel Sorsamo, Lorna Ferguson, and James Stewart. It lists their locations: Finland, Japan, and Singapore. It also includes logos for 'Write Bible Transfers' and 'OMF'. Below the photos, it provides instructions on how to contribute: 'To contribute please use the bank details on holyroodevangelical.org (use reference 'Summer Appeal'), send a cheque to our treasurer, Nick Archer, or speak to your elder.'

The summer appeal is open for 2023 and will go towards the support of our three missionaries – the Sorsamo family in Finland, Lorna in Japan and James in Singapore.

The church bank details can be found [here](#) and please use the reference 'Summer Appeal'.

Cheques (made payable to Holyrood Evangelical Church) and cash in an envelope marked 'Summer Appeal' can also be placed in the offering box or given to Nick Archer.

Prizegiving

This Sunday we will have our annual prizegiving for the children from the creche, Sunday Club and Bible Class. This will take place at the close of the service so please don't rush away at the end.

Plans for the summer

Joe and the family will be away in the US from Tuesday 27th June until Wednesday 26th July. We're delighted to have Neil Longwe and the family doing a summer placement with us. Here are the plans for our services:

Date	Morning service	Evening Gathering
2 nd July	Neil Longwe	Neil Longwe
9 th July	Neil Longwe	Neil Longwe
16 th July	Bob Akroyd	No service
23 rd July	Bob Akroyd	No service

Neil will be on holiday on 16th and 23rd July and we're looking forward to Bob taking our morning services. The prayer meetings will continue on Wednesday evenings as normal at 7pm on Zoom and in person on 5th July.

For any pastoral matters when Joe is away, please speak to Neil, an elder or a member of the Pastoral Care Team (Alison Nelson, Alasdair Roberts, Elaine Harley or Liz Scott).

Book Group

The book group this month will be discussing *We need to talk about race* by Ben Lindsay. Hazel Sorsamo will be leading the discussion and so the meeting will be on Zoom rather than in person. Please note that the meeting will be on 1 July. For more details speak to Anncris (anncris@gmail.com).



The Scottish Bible Society Appeal – Birifor Bible Translation



We have been praying for the Birifor Bible translation over many years. The Scottish Bible Society's latest appeal 'Hope for the Fearful' is for the work of translating the Old Testament into the Birifor language. If you would like to make a donation, go [here](#) or contact The Scottish Bible Society on 0131 347 9801. Many thanks.

Bethany Christian Trust - 40th Anniversary Praise Night

Over the course of the year Bethany are marking their 40th year of service in various ways. We are invited to join them at 7:30pm on Thursday 22nd June at Ps and Gs Church on York Place, for the Bethany Christian Trust 40th Anniversary Praise Night.



**Bethany
Christian
Trust**

The Praise Night is planned as a service of thanksgiving and praise for God's faithfulness and leading over the last 40 years, and to commit Bethany Christian Trust afresh to the purposes and love of God in the fulfilment of our mission. Register here - <https://register.enthuse.com/ps/event/AnniversaryPraiseNight>

Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Monday:
 - Baby and Toddler Group from 10am – 11.30am
 - Warm Space from 12.30pm- 4pm
 - Co-ordination Group at 7pm on Zoom
- Tuesday:
 - Pickleball and Table Tennis at 7pm
 - Mission Team Meeting at 7.30pm on Zoom
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting at 7pm on Zoom with Saheb Borgall, Tribals Transformation India
- Thursday: Elders' Meeting at 7pm in person
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching.
 - Home Groups



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