

Text: John 9 (NIV)

Sunday 12th July 2020

Brightons Parish Church

Let us take **a moment** to pray before we think about God's Word. May the words of my mouth, and the meditation of all our hearts, be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Boys and girls, you probably can't see me just now, but I am here. What do we need for you to see me? We need...LIGHT! (SWITCH ON LIGHTER) Give me a moment to light a candle here. (PAUSE)

We need light to see – and when we don't have light, darkness can be very overpowering and scary; darkness can suck the life out of us. So, here's a question to **think about at home**: what else does light do? It helps us see, but what else do light do? I'll give you 30 seconds to think or talk about that at home just now. (PAUSE)

I wonder what ideas you came up with, why not share them in the Live Chat just now.

Light is a fascinating, amazing thing! Do you know that we need light to see rainbows? And the light from the sun, also provides us with warmth, in fact, that warmth hitting the earth, especially at the equator, gives us weather and if we didn't have the light from the sun we wouldn't have rain or clouds or wind or heat – did you know that?

So, light helps us to have life – and we see this with plants. For plants to grow, they need light. A plant without light is not going to grow big and strong, and our world, without light, would not be the amazing world that it is! We could say, light gives life.

Jesus said in verse 5 today: ‘...I am the light of the world.’

You talked about that earlier at home and hopefully you came up with some good ideas. Jesus doesn't explain what He means by this, neither does the Apostle John. But maybe that's because this isn't the first time in the book of John Jesus has been described as light.

If you go all the way back to the beginning of John's gospel, **we read there**: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. **Through him** all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.’ (John 1:1-4)

Jesus, light and life are all wrapped up together. At the beginning of everything, there was Jesus, and He helped bring light and life to all mankind. Genesis 1 paints a picture of God taking the dust of the earth and from that dust bringing life to mankind, a life they get to enjoy in the light of that new creation at the beginning of history. We're meant to imagine Adam opening his eyes up for the first time and seeing the light of the new world around him, and also the God who is there in front of him. Does that sound familiar to you at all?

For in our passage today, Jesus uses mud, literally the dust on the ground, to bring light and life to a man. Because Jesus isn't just restoring this man's sight, Jesus is giving this man life, for he would be poor, homeless, without family, without purpose, without value or hope.

Living in darkness sucks the very life out of us, physically, but also spiritually.

As Jesus bends down to make some mud out of the dust, He is re-enacting those first moments of creation, when life and light were brought to mankind. Because that is **who Jesus is:** He is the light of the world, and that is part of what makes Jesus unique. He did it at the start of creation; He did it for the man in our story; and He will keep doing it because it is who He is: Jesus is the light of the world; He is about bringing light and life to mankind, and He's still doing it even today.

To hear more stories of how Jesus is bringing life and light to people in our time and in our community, join us for Testimony Tuesday this week, when 6 people from our

congregation will share how Jesus has made a difference in their lives, bringing light and life to them.

Now, let's go back to our story. There are many characters in it and we are meant to wonder, who I am most like? So, let's think about two of them for a moment, starting with the religious leaders.

Here is Jesus upending their traditions, their preferences, their way of understanding the world, and especially of understanding God. Jesus, the light of the world, is trying to help them find true life in God, by taking apart what they hold dear. **But the religious** leaders won't accept that, they don't welcome it for it's just too much for them, and so they push Jesus away; they'd rather stay in the dark, than come into the light given by Jesus and find true life.

I wonder, if we're like that at all? In our own personal lives, have we welcomed Jesus or are we pushing Him away? **There are many reasons we might push God away – maybe He seems to ask too much. Maybe a hurt or a difficult experience in our lives, raises within us a desire for some distance. Maybe we simply think we don't need Jesus. Each of these, is pushing Jesus away, and we're meant to see, that when we push Jesus away, we push away His light, and so we push away His offer of life.**

Or what about on a corporate level, either as Brightons Parish Church, or as the Braes Churches? Where is Jesus bringing His light that we might see something new about Him and His purposes? I wonder, where is Jesus trying to lead us out of old patterns, old traditions, so as find the new life He wants us to experience?

I don't know about you, but I don't want to be like those religious leaders; I don't want to stay in the dark, I want to know Jesus, and experience the light and life that He offers. But to know this we must become like the man in the story, who comes to see Jesus as God in the flesh. For at **the end of the passage**, we read: 'Then the man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshipped him.' (v38)

That man's journey is a model for us, and **it began in verse 7**: '...the man went and washed, and came home seeing.' The man stepped out in faith because some guy he'd never known, clearly never seen, told him to go wash off some mud. Why do that? Yet he does, and that simple act of faith, of obedience, brought him light and then life.

Jesus said in chapter 8: 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' (v12) To follow Jesus, is more than liking the stories, the songs, the ideas of Jesus. To follow Jesus, is to heed His command, it is to respond in faith through obedience, it is to embrace Jesus as Lord.

Who of us needs to do that? Some of us might need to do that for the first time; some of us, who call ourselves Christian, might have a specific area where Jesus is saying to follow Him now, today, in one particular area of our lives. So, will you heed Jesus? Will you follow Him? Will you embrace Him by submitting to Him as Lord?

Because, it's only when you walk out of the darkness, it's only when you make that choice, and step into the light, His light, that you can then know His life, true life.

I pray that we will all make that choice, today and all the days before us. May it be so. Amen.

We close our time together with our final hymn...

HYMN *MP-445 Shine Jesus shine*