

Lunchtime Service - I am the Light of the World

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[0:00] We're continuing our series on the seven I am statements in John's Gospel. And as a reminder, in John, Jesus says seven times the words, I am something. I am the bread of life. I am the good shepherd.

And these seven statements are really significant because this is Jesus telling us who he is. So if you want to get to know someone, you can't just guess who they are.

You can't rely on rumours. They can be wrong. But if you want to know someone, they have to sit you down and tell you who they are. Well, this is Jesus sitting us down and telling us who he is. And we are on the second I am statement today. And it's just one verse I want us to look at. John 8, 12. Again, Jesus spoke to them saying, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light. Of life. It is a wonderfully simple but powerful statement of who Jesus is.

[1:06] Jesus says, there is a darkness in this world, but I am the light of the world. And light and darkness is a big theme in John's gospel.

I heard a preacher once say, when you read John's gospel, it's like your eyes are constantly dilating and closing with this constant talk of light and darkness.

Light and darkness. Think about the nature of light and darkness. Light and darkness are a pair, aren't they? One defines the other. Darkness is the absence of light.

Light is the absence of darkness. They are a pair. But they are a pair that never exist together. Where there is no light, there is only darkness. But when a light shines, it destroys the darkness. It dispels it. Light. So you enter your kitchen in the middle of the night. It's pitch black. But you switch on the light and the darkness ends. Light transforms darkness.

[2:10] Replaces it. Where there is light, there cannot be darkness. Darkness. And Jesus is saying he is the light that dispels the darkness of this world.

But what is this darkness? What does Jesus mean? He is the light in the darkness. Well, if light and darkness define each other, look how Jesus defines the light.

Do you see how Jesus describes it in verse 12? This light is the light of life. Which means, what is the darkness?

It is the darkness of death. And I want us to look at both those things today. I want our eyes to dilate and look into the darkness and really grasp exactly what it is.

And then I want us to let Jesus switch the lights on and really see who he is when he says, I am the light of the world. But to understand that, we need to first look into the darkness.

[3:13] And I want us to see it is the darkness of death. The darkness of death. The darkness Jesus speaks of here, it really encompasses the whole realm of sin.

All that is part of the fallenness of this world. And so darkness, first of all, it means the evil of this world. That's what Jesus says back in chapter three.

People loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. In this world where there is evil, where there is wrongdoing and corruption and godlessness, that is the darkness.

And we even use that language, don't we? We speak of the dark web, the dark underworld of crime. We speak of what happens in the shadows and in all our fairy tales.

We all know evil lurks in the dark. And where do we find this evil? It's everywhere. We see it in the headlines.

[4:19] And when we walk past the needle wrappers in the street, we hear it in the sirens. It's there when we lock our doors. And when we are very honest with ourselves, we realise the darkness is closer than we like to think.

We see it there in our own hearts. When we realise what our hearts really want, and if it weren't for God's mercy, what we are really capable of.

The whole world has been plunged into this darkness. Which means darkness is also unbelief.

That's why the Bible, when it speaks of not trusting in Christ, it describes it as blindness.

Complete darkness in our eyes, like walking into the abyss. In fact, that's how Judas is described. Later on in John, when we get to the moment Judas decides to betray Jesus, that stark moment of unbelief.

It says, Judas immediately went out and it was night. Unbelief is like walking into the darkness of night.

[5 : 31] And so our friends, our neighbours, our colleagues, people at the school gates, West Ealing during Friday prayers. It may all seem normal.

The sun may be shining. But Jesus says there is a darkness. But darkness encompasses even more than that.

It is all the suffering of this world. It is all the misery that the fall has brought into our lives. It is the darkness of disease. It is the darkness of broken relationships.

And broken lives. And broken minds. It's no wonder depression and anxiety. It feels like a dark cloud has descended.

And like the colour has gone from life. Well, that is all a part of the darkness Jesus is speaking of here. Evil and unbelief and suffering.

[6 : 27] In a word, it is the darkness of death. All those things are the absence of life, aren't they? They are not the way life should be.

And so that darkness is the presence of death. And there is a reason Jesus calls this darkness of all things. It is because God is light and life.

And when you go away from God, there is only darkness. And so there is only death. And the world as we know it, it is a world that has turned from God and run in the opposite direction.

And the further you go away from God, the deeper you go into the darkness. And so the world is as dark as we know it.

The state of our lives and our community and the state of our nation, it is as bad as it is. Because the world has gone very, very far from God.

[7 : 28] It feels like the world is unravelling, doesn't it? And things just feel gloomy and at times hopeless. We can think, how is there any solution to this?

And often we don't even need to open up the news apps to feel that. We can see it in our own lives. Well, when we feel that, that is the darkness.

And we are all longing for it to end, for something to be done about it. We are all longing for light. Well, into the midst of that darkness, Jesus appears.

Our pupils constrict. And Jesus says the words we are in desperate need of. The answer to all of this, I am the light of the world.

Which means if darkness is death, then Jesus is the light of life. And this is the second thing I want us to see.

[8 : 28] The light of life. Now, this isn't the first time we hear of light in John's gospel. It actually opens with it. So just look to John 1 with me.

Turn to John 1. John 1. And just look to verses 1 to 4. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

So the word here is the person of Jesus, the divine son of God who existed before the creation of the world. And in verse 2, he was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

In him was life. And the life was the light of men. Just follow what this is saying here. Jesus is the eternal word, the son of God.

And all things were made through him. He created all things. He is the one that gives life to all things. So verse 4, it says, in him was life.

[9 : 34] We all here today, we all have life from the son of God. And when you have this life, you also have light.

The life was the light of men. You may not realize it at first, but to be a human being, it means you have a light flickering inside of you.

And this light, it is the knowledge of God. That's why verse 9 says, the true light which enlightens everyone.

It's just what Paul Evey was preaching last Sunday. Everyone deep down knows that there is a God. That they have this divine itch they are trying to scratch.

A nagging feeling that there is a God and they are accountable to him. That this sense of divinity. And that is because we are made by him. We have life by him.

[10 : 32] And when you have life by him, you have this light. This knowledge of him. Light and life go together. But in sin, what have we done?

We have blocked out the light. Suppressed it deep down inside of us. Shut it out like putting a blackout blind. Over our hearts so that we can forget that the eternal word was ever there. Forget he ever gave us life. And we can just live our own way. We should be bursting with the light of life. But we have become very dim.

And what happens when you shut out God? Shut out that light. You shut off life. And we plunge ourselves into the darkness of death.

And so what do we need? We need to truly know God again. We need for him to come to us. And to know him. And for his light and life to burst forth into our lives.

[11 : 38] And for the darkness to disappear. And Jesus stands in the midst of that darkness and says, I am that light. I am the light of life that created this world.

That flicker of knowledge that burns in every heart. That is my light. And so if you know me. You will truly know the God who created you.

And so Jesus stands there to shine into this world in a new and brighter way. Not just the light of creation, but the light of salvation.

If we have made the light a faint glow in our hearts, Jesus stands there coming as a floodlight. Light to dispel all the darkness of this world.

And so life to restore all of the death of this world. This divine light is now undeniably shining in this world.

[12 : 43] And where there is light, there cannot be darkness. Jesus is saying what he has come to do in this world. He's come to overcome the evil that is everywhere.

And to turn it into light to holiness. To turn the unbelief of this world into the light of worship. And to transform this suffering, this death, into everlasting life.

To find any other fix is just to find more darkness. No, there is only one place to turn. We need light. And so there is only one person to turn to. Jesus says, I am the light of the world. And so he has come to bring light into your darkness.

To transform your life and bring you hope when you thought that there was no hope. And how? How can the lights turn on in my life?

[13 : 49] How can the darkness end? Jesus says, follow me. Trust me and you will never walk in darkness. But you will have the light of life.

Whatever darkness lingers in your life, there is hope. Jesus is the one who can break the power of darkness. The power of sin in your life. The guilt of all that you have done.

It can be dispelled. Gone forever. It is by the light of his forgiveness. The light of the cross. His death.

The death of our Lord. It was a dark day in history, wasn't it? The sky was even physically dark. But actually, it was the day when the light shone the brightest in this world.

It was the day when it was guaranteed the darkness will not win. Christ has shone into our sin. And where there is light, darkness cannot exist.

[14 : 51] This world may seem dark, but praise God, there is a light. And if you haven't yet experienced that, you can have this light.

Whatever darkness there may be in your life, nothing is too dark. Jesus is bright enough to shine even into the darkest corners of your life and all of it.

Follow Jesus and you will never walk in darkness again. And for those of us who are following him, we can already see that light in our life.

As you go out today, there is a light already shining in your life. The light of your sins forgiven and that light can never go out.

As you head into the week and you are worried about the things that you have to face. And it's like the darkness is overwhelming you. You are not walking out there alone into darkness.

