

HURC Mid-week Service – Weds 12th August 2020 – led by Michael Tillett

- Light a candle
- Music; Here I am to worship Word used on Power point
- Welcome and Opening Prayers.

Awaken us Lord
To your light
Open our Eyes
To your presence

Awaken us Lord
To your love
Open my heart
To your indwelling

Awaken us Lord
To your life
Open our minds
To your abiding

Awaken us Lord
To your purpose
Open our wills
To your guiding

Lord you are in this place
Fill us with your power
Cover us with your peace
Show us your presence

Lord help us to know
We are in your hands
We are under your protection
We are covered by your love

Lord we ask you today
To deliver us from evil
To guide us in our journeys
To defend us from all harm

Lord give us now
Eyes to see the invisible
Ears to hear your call
Hands to do your work
And hearts to respond to your love

(Tides and seasons, D Adam)

The Lord's Prayer

- Reading; John 8.12- 20
- Reflection

Jesus said "I am the light of the world"

It is one of the most well-known of Jesus' I am sayings in John's Gospel. The "I am" declarations point us to the Divinity of Jesus. They are unique, unrivalled and challenging. In the OT "I am" was the name that God gave to Moses when Moses asked God to explain who he should say He was if challenged by the Egyptians. God said say I am has sent you. In that phrase we catch an understanding that it can mean - I was, I am and I will be. The eternal dimension of God is made known.

Today though let's stay with "I am the light of the world".

What is special about this? What was Jesus saying? To understand more fully I think we need to think a little about Light itself. What does light do...?

Light dispels darkness

Do you remember the soothing nursery song..."? Like a little candles shining in the night" A memory of a number of us of a certain age I suspect.

Darkness for many, is a place of fear and dread. A place where imaginings overwhelm reason and good sense. These Covid times are times of darkness for many...

- For the young mum in the tower block confined with young children for so many weeks
- For the elderly living in fear of catching the virus which can snatch life away
- For those in the BAME communities where their very social fabric puts them at greater risk
- For those struggling to breathe and fearing their next breath might be their last.
- For those with mental health issues where isolation brings new fears

Yes, times of profound darkness for sure.

Into that darkness come words of hope "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness"

Like a candle flame.....

What surrounds us might be dark, but what can be found within is the light of Christ risen and ascended, a light that the darkness did not put out.

Light reveals colour.

I have always been amazed by the way nature responds to light. For sure light reveals the beauty of the colours of nature, and light is instrumental in bringing such colour to birth.

For some the lockdown gave them the opportunity to stand (or sit) and stare at the beauty around them. For others the joy of Spring and Summer was taken away by Covid 19.

As Christians we can look to Jesus “the perfector of our faith” the one who reveals the joy and colour of life still. His was a life lived out in perfect obedience to the will of His Father. No matter what life threw at him He could still draw on the strength of the light and love of God.

So I believe we can, in the most difficult of times. In the midst of the darkness God’s light and love still shines. Our lives can still be lived in the light...and in that light truth is revealed. Perhaps we can see now more clearly what really matters, health, love, family, neighbourliness. All these bring colour to our lives.

Light brings shadow and depth.

I suspect in the last few days many of us have been relieved to find shady places away from the glare and especially the heat of the sun. Light and shade complement each other, without light we cannot have shadow. shade of depth.

In life as in nature we need both light and shadow. Shadow brings depth, in humanity it can bring questioning too.

David the Psalmist writes “Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil”

It is true but not always comfortable to admit that without the shadow that light brings life can be superficial and empty. Shadows in life help us to face reality and forces us to bring our fears to the light. I suspect these times have been for many the valley of the shadows... how much brighter then, the light of God can shine in our hearts if we give him room.

Light leads us on.

We have all experienced the power of a torch beam to shine on the path ahead.... Showing the way (always fascinated by the strength of Torch beams on TV Dramas, my torches have never worked so well!).

Seriously though, we need to see the way ahead...Jesus the light of the world offers us that light. Like the good shepherd He is He leads us into a future however uncertain it may seem to be in human terms.

I am sure that as we reflect on these last few months we will have come to realize that that few of life apparent certainties are certain any more.

What is certain though is the love of God revealed to us in Jesus Christ. He is the light that beckons us on into an uncertain future. He promises that he will be with us until the end of time itself.

That is the light that brings confidence and sureness of step....it is like the pillar of fire that led the fearful Israelites at night in the darkness of the Wilderness.

Jesus said " I am the light of the world" a promise of hope for now and whatever the future brings!

- Music; Like a Candle Flame. Pictures See Separate Powerpoints
- Prayers centered on

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Time to offer our own prayers

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive Your people's praise.

Time to offer our own prayers

Lord, for our land in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care:
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Time to offer our own prayers

Lord, for our world when we disown and doubt you,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain,
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without you:
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

Time to offer our own prayers

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us -
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us:
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Lord accept our prayers for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

- Final Words and Blessing

The Goal

With God to find hopefulness
In the land beyond all stress
In the place of gentleness
Where He will your soul caress
Where there is a new liveliness
Where the Father will you Bless

May the hills be gentle
May the valleys be bright
May the sun shine upon you
May the moon by night
Until your pilgrim soul
Come to its eternal goal.

(Tides and seasons, D Adam)

And may the Blessing of God, Father Son and Holy Spirit rest upon us, upon those for who we are concerned and upon those for who we pray. Amen

Music; Light has dawned.