

Thought for Sunday 6th December – Advent 2

The world is looking pretty dark at the moment, isn't it? Not only are night's drawing in, days growing shorter; we're facing uncertainty about Christmas celebrations, worries about ourselves and those we love, and the world seems a little dark for many of us.

Two of the accounts of Jesus' life, Matthew and Luke, tell us about Jesus' birth – where and when - as they outline the familiar events of the Christmas story. But John, in his account, talks about the significance of Jesus' birth; the significance of the events we celebrate at Christmas. He speaks of light entering darkness; of darkness trying but failing to overcome that light. Here's John chapter 1 verse 5;



*The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;
the darkness couldn't put it out. (John 1:5, The Message)*

It's a theme John has picked up from Jesus himself. When Jesus talks about himself as the light of the world, he's outside in the full blaze of the sun. Sunlight brings life and health, light which enables us to see clearly what's around us. Light so bright we can't look directly at it; but every day we rely on that light. Jesus, the life-light, blazes into the darkness at Christmas. And darkness is helpless against Him.

Jesus talks about us as well. He calls us light, light-bearers, and tells us to shine. Have a closer look, and you'll see that when Jesus speaks of his followers as the light of the world, he uses pictures of lamps and candles. That light – our light - comes from being lit; lit by the Holy Spirit and by the love of God in and working through us.

Jesus said,

"You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine!" (Matthew 5:14,15, The Message)

This Christmas, Jesus wants us to bring light to dark places. He wants you to be a light-bringer – in your family, in your home, in your community, wherever you are and wherever you go. Will you do it? Or will you sit and rage against the darkness, the fear, the uncertainty as so many are doing?

There's a Chinese proverb which says "Better to light a candle than to curse the darkness". It's clear from the Bible that God agrees, and the candles he chooses to light this Christmas season are you and I. He chooses people who are following the life-light, blazing out of the darkness; followers of Jesus, Immanuel, God with us. He lights us up and calls us to shine.

So may the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness" make his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ this Christmas season, so that we can shine for Him wherever we are (2 Cor. 4:6).

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