



Sunday 7th March Light – Gaining Wisdom



Welcome

Greeting

Leader Praise God! For the Lord our God the almighty reigns!
All Let us rejoice and be glad and give him the glory.

Leader Happy are those who have been invited
to the wedding-feast of the Lamb.

All Amen. Praise the Lord!

Hymn To God be the glory

To God be the glory, great things he hath done:
so loved he the world that he gave us his son,
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
and opened the lifegate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory, great things he hath done.*

Oh, perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
to ev'ry believer the promise of God.

The vilest offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives

Great things he hath taught us, great things he hath done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son,
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.

Opening activity Scruff n Beaky ~ Truth

Confession

Leader God shows his love for us
in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Let us then show our love for him
by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:
**All Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Absolution *(we are reminded that God forgives all who repent)*

This or another absolution may be said

Leader May the God of love
bring *us* back to himself,
forgive *us our* sins,
and assure *us* of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Collect *(Prayer for the day)*

Leader Almighty God,
Whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he
suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was
crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way
of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our
Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

All Amen

'Faith in our everyday lives'

Song The Splendour of the King

The splendour of the King,
clothed in majesty;
let all the earth rejoice, all the earth rejoice.
He wraps himself in light
and darkness tries to hide,
and trembles at his voice, and trembles at his voice.

*How great is our God,
sing with me: how great is our God.
And all will see how great, how great is our God.*

And age to age He stands,
and time is in His hands;
beginning and the end, beginning and the end.
The Godhead, Three in One,
Father, Spirit, Son,
the Lion and the Lamb, the Lion and the Lamb,

How great is our God...

Name above all names, worthy of all praise;
my heart will sing: how great is our God.

How great is our God...

Bible readings

Isaiah 9:1-4 – Geoff Pugh, St Peter's

¹Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan–

²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

³You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder.



⁴For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.



John 1:4-10, 5:35-36 – Helen Maguire, *St Peter's*

⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

⁶There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

John 5:35-36

³⁵John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

³⁶"I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me.

Sermon – Jenny Jones

So, we are now on week three of our lent series, exploring our spiritual essentials for the journey! We have our compass, we have some nourishment, and this week we are grabbing a torch.

Now, I have actually had cause to use all three of these items on the same journey when doing night orienteering.

So, orienteering is basically cross country running but you have to navigate yourself around the course. And we did a lot of orienteering competitions growing up, and still do apart from Covid-19, and normally these events would take place during the day. But sometimes clubs would get a bit more adventurous and host night orienteering events.

One of these events, which took place each year was an overnight relay race that we took part in. So I would be woken up at 2 or 3 am, quickly grab some food to wake me up, and get ready to head out on a course into the pitch-black forest with my map, my compass, and my head-torch. And of course, this head-torch was incredibly important – it meant I could see the map and know where I needed to go; it meant I could see the path in front of me, and for the most part it stopped me from tripping

over every tree root or clump of grass. This head-torch helped me to gain the knowledge I needed – knowledge of my surroundings, and knowledge of my route.

But the light we are talking about today isn't quite like my head-torch. We're not talking today about physical light, but about spiritual light. And that spiritual light is the truth.

A few weeks ago, we heard Jesus declare: "I am the way, the truth and the life"; and in the Gospel of John, he also declares: "I am the light of the World". When Jesus came into the world, he brought truth into the world, a truth that could not be overcome by the spiritual darkness – as was made evident when Jesus defeated death and rose again.

But we're not quite there yet! In our reading, we are introduced to two people: Jesus – the light, the truth; and John – not the light, but the lamp, a witness to the truth.

And as I mentioned before, Jesus isn't a light like the light this head-torch produces. Or like other worldly light that we may think of – whether that's our car headlights, the sun, or even the amazing, if slightly blinding Christmas lights that cover houses throughout December. First, worldly light goes out. I can turn my head-torch off, the batteries can run out, even the sun disappears at night-time. But spiritual light, truth, cannot be turned off. In our reading, it said: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it".

And the darkness has certainly tried to overcome, to destroy the light. Whilst many people did follow Jesus, many also did not like what he was doing. They didn't like what he was saying. They didn't like what he was revealing about them. They had him tried and killed – yet even that could not overcome the light, and he rose again three days later.

The second difference between worldly light, and spiritual light, is that not everyone can see worldly light. Some people are born without sight, others lose sight whether to illness or to injury. And there is a huge range in how much light different people are able to see.

But spiritual light is there for everyone, and it cannot be taken away by our circumstances. Verse 9 in our reading said: "The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world". Spiritual light is light for everyone. Jesus came into the world for all people, as he demonstrated

throughout his ministry, as well as in his death. Although, as we just looked at – not everyone was happy about that, and not everyone chose to accept that light. But that light forces everyone, all of us, to make a choice – to live in light, or to live in darkness.

The third difference between worldly light, and spiritual light, is that in the world light is not the only solution. With my head-torch, I can see the tree roots in front of me as I run, and that helps me to not fall over them, but if I were to fall over them, I would still gain the knowledge that there was in fact a tree root there. And there are also other much less painful ways for us to gain knowledge without light. Braille is a writing system that uses touch for example.

Spiritual light on the other hand is different. Jesus coming into the world, is the only way for us to know truth. Although the world may try to find alternative options, or decide to reject that truth, Jesus is the only way for us to know truth. And this was part of God's plan since the fall. In our reading from Isaiah, we hear of Jesus' coming being foretold: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned". We need Jesus, and Jesus alone, to know truth.

The fourth difference between worldly light, and spiritual light, is that humans block worldly light. If I place my hand in front of my head-torch as I'm running along, I won't be able to see anything. If I stand in front of a light, I will create a shadow – darkness – behind me. But the second person we are introduced to in our reading, is John. And John did not block the light that Jesus brought into the world.

In fact, our reading tells us that John was a witness who testified about Jesus' light. He told people about this light that was coming. And he makes sure to stress the fact that he himself is not the light. Chapter 5, verse 35 said: "John was a lamp that burned and gave light" and here again we see this distinction. John was not the light, Jesus was the light, John was a lamp.

John didn't block Jesus' light, he shared it, he testified about it, it was within him and it shone to those around him. And we too are called to be lamps, just like John.

Matthew 5:14-16 says: "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a

bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” And this reading gives us some good advice as to how we are to be lamps too.

We aren't to be hidden under a bowl, blocking other people from seeing Jesus. We aren't to be hidden in a corner, trying to stay out of the way. We aren't to be sharing our light with just a few people.

Instead, we are called to be uncovered – drawing attention to ourselves. We are called to be in the middle of the room – going out into the world, Covid-19-allowing, just like John went out to speak with people. We are called to be a lamp that shines for all people, so that everyone who meets us can see the light of Jesus in us. They should see us: see our actions, hear the words we speak, see the way we treat other people, see the choices we make, and they should know the truth of Jesus which brings glory to God the Father.

So, as we continue on our journey with our compass, our food, and now our light, we want to be sure that the light that guides our way is not worldly light like this head-torch, but the light and truth of Jesus. A light that cannot be overcome, a light that is for all people, a light that is our only source of truth, and a light that we are called to share with others.

Hymn My light house

In my wrestling and in my doubts
In my failures You won't walk out
You're great love will lead me
through
You are the peace in my troubled
sea (Repeat)

In the silence You won't let go
In the questions Your truth will
hold
Your great love will lead me
through
You are the peace in my troubled
sea (Repeat)

*My lighthouse, My lighthouse
Shining in the darkness
I will follow You
My lighthouse, My lighthouse
I will trust the promise
You will carry me safe to shore
Safe to shore (x3)*

I won't fear what tomorrow brings
With each morning I'll rise and sing
My God's love will lead me through
You are the peace in my troubled
sea (Repeat)

Fire before us You're the brightest
You will lead us through the storms

Creed (We stand to declare our faith)

All We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers ~ Pauline Wilde, *St Peter's*

After each prayer I will say 'Lord in your mercy' please respond '**hear our prayer**'.



Heavenly Father we thank you that you have brought us safe to the beginning of this new day. We give you praise for the first signs of spring with daffodils in bloom and blossom appearing on the trees. We thank you that we are able to meet together via the technology of YouTube and Zoom and pray for all those who bring your word each week.

Lord in your mercy
hear our prayer.

We thank you that your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. As we journey this Lent looking at how Jesus guides us and shows us the way, give us the nourishment we need and now shine the light in the darkness. Help us as individuals and as a church to shine as beacons of light in our parish.

Lord in your mercy
hear our prayer.

We continue to pray for the government and scientists as they try to balance the infection rate and start to return the country back to normal activities. We pray especially for teaching staff and school support staff as more pupils return this week and pray that although restrictions are being eased people will continue to keep to the rules so that the infection rate doesn't increase. We thank you that the vaccination programme is going well and that vaccines are beginning to be shared with the developing world, we pray that this will continue so as we can all be protected from the virus.

Lord in your mercy
hear our prayer.

As the pandemic continues to affect all our lives we pray for those who have been hit the hardest, those who live in care or nursing homes and have been denied a visit from a member of their families we pray that as this is being relaxed that it will be beneficial for both those in care as well as their families. We also pray for those who live on their own as we can now meet with one person outside socially.

Lord in your mercy
hear our prayer.

We bring before you those who we know personally who are in need of your healing and comfort at this time. We especially pray for Eileen and Peter Bliss, Patrick Chapmen, Enid Hardman, John Hunter, Lynda Kirk, Trevor Lloyd, Catherine McCormack, Olive Park, Joy Storkey and our mission partner Malcolm Pritchard. Ease their pain and fill them with the warmth of your love now and always.

We also pray for those who bereaved at this time especially for the family and friends of Bill Smith. We ask you to accept all these prayers for the sake of your son Jesus Christ **Amen.**

We conclude our prayers by saying together the Lord's Prayer

The Lord's prayer

Leader As our Saviour has taught us so we pray.

**All Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Notices – see N&N

Hymn Give me oil in my lamp I pray

Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning
Give me oil in my lamp, I pray
Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning
Keep me burning 'til the break of day

*Sing hosanna, sing hosanna
Sing hosanna to the King of kings
Sing hosanna, sing hosanna
Sing hosanna, to the King*

Give me love in my heart, keep me sharing
Give me love in my heart, I pray
Give me love in my heart, keep me sharing
Keep me serving 'til the break of day

Sing hosanna.....

Give me joy in my heart, keep me singing
Give me joy in my heart, I pray
Give me joy in my heart, keep me singing
Keep me praising 'til the break of day

Sing hosanna....

Give me faith in my heart, keep me praying.
Give me faith in my heart, I pray.
Give me faith in my heart, keep me praying.
Keep me praying till the break of day.

Sing Hosanna....

Blessing

Leader The love of the Lord Jesus draw you to himself,
the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen you in his
service,
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your hearts;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

The Grace

**All The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
And the love of God,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
Be with us all evermore. Amen.**

Worshipping ▶ Loving ▶ Sharing ▶ Growing

