

The Light Shines In The Darkness

HN/SS 25/12/05am

Reading: Isaiah 9:1-7, John 12:27f

Study Text: John 12:35-36

Psalms 100, 27:1-4, 23, 27:7-10

The year 2005 is almost over. This is last Lord's Day of the year. What will the New Year bring? Will it be joy or sorrow? Recall for a moment this time last year. Everyone was enjoying the holidays and celebrating just as they had always done. But for thousands those celebrations were cut short, for over 200,000 their life would be snuffed out the very next day. Who would have expected a mighty wall of water to come crashing down on their house to drown them and their family in an instant? Will it happen again? When will death strike your home?

This is not a very pleasant message for a day like today you say. But you cannot deny that these things are true – thousands testify from the grave. But there is more. The message we find here in Scripture, even the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, are like light in the darkness. If a Tsunami hits tomorrow as it did 12 months ago you need not be afraid if you are a child of the light, a child of God. If you know that Jesus was born into this world to die for you, to die bearing your sin, then you can be sure that nothing in this world, not even death can separate you from his amazing love.

The Light has come.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light

Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death

Upon them a light has shined...

For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given (Isaiah 9)

The prophet Isaiah spoke these words about Jesus over 700 years before the birth of Jesus.

Zechariah prophesied of Jesus at the birth of his son John the Baptist saying he will *give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace* (Luke 1:79). John who was the last of the prophets also spoke of this light coming into the world. He actually witnessed this Light. He saw Jesus and recognized him as the true Light of the world through whom men would be saved.

Jesus said *I am the light of the world* as he came across a man who was blind from birth. Jesus touched his eyes and opened them. As light flooded in through his eyes the man saw a whole new world. It was the world that most of us take for granted, but for him it was a whole new world. As wonderful as this experience was for this man he still found a world even more wonderful.

People were asking who had healed him. Who indeed he asked himself! Jesus in his grace found this man he had healed and said *do you believe in the Son of God (9:35)*. *Lord I believe* he said and he worshipped Jesus. The wonder of seeing this world for the first time was surpassed by the

wonder of having the eyes of his heart opened to the truth that Jesus is the light of the world. He would walk in darkness no longer.

Light Is Going

As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world said Jesus (9:5). In the passage before us Jesus was in Jerusalem for Passover – his final Passover. He knew that he was going to die – his hour had come. As the grain of wheat must die if it is to produce fruit so he must die. His soul was troubled but he was strengthened by prayer and the voice from heaven. His attention turned to those around him. They had seen his mighty works and heard his majestic words but were still in the dark as to who Jesus was.

These people were like many around us today – some even sitting in churches. They keep seeing but never see, they keep hearing but never hear. They sing carols about the birth of a Saviour and give cards with ‘joy to the world’ written on them – but they are in the dark as to who the Saviour is, and where to find this joy.

A little while longer the light is with you said Jesus. Soon they would no longer see the mighty works of healing, of casting out demons or of raising the dead. They would hear the words of truth no longer. The darkness of death would come upon this city. Jesus the Son of God would be lifted up on a cross to die. Now is the judgment of the world said Jesus. Within just forty years Titus, a Roman General, would come marching into Jerusalem destroying all before him.

A little while longer! This was both a plea and a warning from Jesus. The time is short. Now is the time to act, now is the time to turn to the light. Are we not in the same situation today? How much longer do you have on this earth? This is the only life you will get. This is the only time you have to decide your eternal destiny. Now is the day of salvation.

For all the wonderful advancements in medical science you still cannot avoid death. Death has the final say; death has the victory – you cannot deny that! Yet in Jesus Christ we see the One who conquered death. He rose from the dead. And in Jesus Christ you also can conquer death. *Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Cor 5:57). Do you know that victory? You will if you come to the light and believe in Jesus Christ.

Believe In The Light

Jesus called upon those gathered around him there in Jerusalem 2000 years ago to believe in the light while they have the light. This was the same Jesus who said *I am the light of the world*. He called upon men and women to believe in him. *Most assuredly I say to you he who hears my words and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life and shall not come into judgment but has passed from death to life* (5:24).

There it is – it is all of grace through faith. Jesus did not demand an offering of money or anything else, for there is nothing in all the world that you can give to the one who made and owns the whole world. He did not demand you become a good person before you come to him,

for he knows that because of a sinful nature you cannot be good. That is why he went to the Cross. He went to die in your place bearing your sin. This is love; this is grace.

How tragic that this beautiful message of the Cross gets so twisted at this time of the year. Parents tell their children that Santa will not bring them any gifts if they are not good. Do they deserve the gifts or not? As ignorance increases you will even hear people say 'if you are not good, Jesus will not send Santa'. We must pray for children growing up in this darkness.

Children Of Light

By believing in Jesus you come into the light, or rather the light comes into you, and you become a child of the light. The darkness is dispelled and you can see clearly the pathway to heavenly glory. No longer do you have to grope about in the dark trying to find a way out of the meaninglessness and/or misery of life. I read that every 17 minutes, people take their own life in the USA. Darkness drives many to death.

Some would describe their life as like being in a never-ending tunnel. They stumble along in the darkness, and fear what might be up ahead. They keep hoping for a light to appear at the end of the tunnel. The great news that Jesus tells us is that he is the light, the light has come and that dark tunnel can be flooded with glorious light of Jesus Christ. You can walk in the light seeing clearly all that is ahead. You can see to the very end and even beyond into the glory of heaven. This is such a brilliant life that you can see beyond death and into eternity.

A brilliant young Jew, a man who was zealous for the law, was going down the road one day. He was not unlike the suicide bombers we read about, or any other zealot – people with a zeal for money, for power, for property, for pleasure. He was going down the road of darkness.

But as he was going, suddenly a light from heaven shone around him and he fell to the ground. He heard the Lord Jesus speaking to him. Astonished and trembling he said *Lord what do you want me to do* (Acts 9). Jesus told him what to do. He became Paul the missionary who brought the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, to you and to me.

His message is the same as that of Jesus:

Awake you who sleep

Arise from the dead

And Christ will give you light (Eph 5:14)

Come out of the darkness and into the wonderful light of Jesus Christ. Do so today. Do so by confessing your sin and believing in Jesus.

Rev. Dr. Dennis K. Muldoon