

John Chapter 8 v 12 - 30

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[0 : 00] Well, we're going to read together now from our Bibles, and if you have got one to hand, then turn with you to John's Gospel in chapter 8, and we're going to read from verse 12 through to verse 30.

From verse 12 through to verse 30. So let's hear God's Word. Let's hear what the Lord would say to us.

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

The Pharisees challenged him. Here you are, appearing as your own witness. Your testimony is not valid. Jesus answered, Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I'm going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards. I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father who has sent me. In your own law, it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. I am one who testifies for myself. My other witness is the Father who sent me.

Then they asked him, Where is your Father? You do not know me or my Father, Jesus replied. If you knew me, you would know my Father also. He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area, near the place where the offerings were put.

[1 : 52] Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come. Once more, Jesus said to them, I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sins.

Where I go, you cannot come. This made the Jews ask, Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, Where I go, you cannot come? But he continued, You are from below.

I am from above. You are of this world. I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be.

You will indeed die in your sins. Who are you? They asked. Just what I have been claiming all along, Jesus replied. I have much to say in judgment of you.

But he who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world. They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. So Jesus said, When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be, and that I do nothing on my own, but speak just what the Father has taught me.

[3 : 00] The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him. Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him.

If the Sunday school and the crash and the children like to go out now, please. If you have a Bible, then please turn with me to John and chapter 8, and those verses 12.

And following, just as a sort of a mini-series over the summer, we've been looking at the I Am sayings of Jesus. We've only looked at one, and that was a fortnight ago, where Jesus spoke about being the bread of life.

And there are going to be today, and then five others as well, seven in all of these I Am sayings is there, where Jesus declares something about himself, and about his very mission, and ministry, and character.

Some years ago, myself and my family, we went to visit Wookiee Hole Caves in Somerset, and a long time ago now, probably 12 or 13 years ago, I imagine.

[4 : 15] And these caves were formed by the River Axe, and they run for several hundred meters deep under the ground. Well, after we'd gone into the caves, after about several minutes of walking through, we came to a large cave, a large cavern, and when we were in there, the guide said to us, right, just, I'm going to turn the lights off now.

Now, I don't know about you, but I've always been scared of the dark. And a little bit scared even then, and even now. But, anyway, if you've never been in a cave, or a mine, where there's been no light at all, you can't really appreciate just how dark darkness is.

It's complete. With the lights out, the blackness is so complete, you can hold your hand up to your eye, and just can't see anything. Even when your eyes begin to adjust to darkness, as they do, you know, and your pupils get bigger, you just can't see a thing.

It's a felt darkness, an impenetrable darkness. And it's something which is quite unlike any other darkness that you have, even at night time, and so on.

Now, Jesus speaks about darkness here at the beginning of verse 12. And the darkness he's talking about is indeed just like that darkness that I've been trying to illustrate.

[5 : 33] It is impenetrable. It's thick darkness. It's a felt darkness. It's a complete darkness. And all the way through the Gospel of John, there is this ongoing contrast between light and darkness, spiritual light and spiritual darkness.

Right back in chapter 1, within just a few verses of John's introduction, he speaks about the light that shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

Later on in chapter 3, Jesus says this, this is the verdict, light has come into the world, but men love darkness instead of light, because their deeds are evil.

And in several other places too, even later on in chapter 12, verse 46, a very similar verse to the one we're looking at, when Jesus says, I've come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

What is this darkness that Jesus is talking about? What is this darkness that runs all the way through the Gospel of John, in fact, all the way through the Bible? Well, it's a darkness that covers all of humanity.

[6 : 40] Here's Isaiah, hundreds of years before Jesus, and says this, look, darkness covers the earth, thick darkness is over the peoples. There's a darkness that covers all people, a darkness in which all people walk and live, as Jesus makes mention here.

But the wonderful truth is this, and the wonderful glory and hope of Jesus Christ, and of the Gospel of John and the Bible as a whole, the wonderful truth is that when we trust Christ as our Savior, as the light of the world, he brings us out of darkness, and he brings us into light.

Here's Paul writing to the Christians. He says this in Colossians chapter 1, For he, that's God, has rescued us from the dominion of darkness, and has brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.

Now, we can understand this phrase darkness, because we still use often that phrase being kept in the dark, when somebody has not told us the full story, or kept back from us something we don't understand.

It's a darkness of ignorance. It's a darkness of understanding. It's a darkness that relates to our thinking and comprehension. And this darkness that we're thinking about is particularly seen in the lives and the conversations of the people with whom Jesus is talking to here.

[8 : 04] The Pharisees, they're called, verse 13. The Pharisees challenged him. And there's this ongoing debate throughout the passage, where Jesus is declaring himself the light of the world, and the darkness is being manifest and seen in the words and the attitudes and the understanding of these Pharisees, these religious leaders of Jesus' day.

And what we see as we go through, and as we understand through the Gospel of John, is that this darkness is not some sort of harmless thing. It's not a neutral thing, this darkness.

It is a very powerful evil. A darkness that produces in the lives of those who are under its spell, if I can put it that way, wickedness.

Those who are within its grip. Later on in Ephesians chapter 5, Paul speaks of the deeds of darkness. And in Romans 13, about the works of darkness. And the reality is, as we see and understand, that this darkness is ultimately the dominion, the kingdom where the devil holds sway. He is behind this darkness. It's his work. It's his delight, in fact. It's his joy to keep men and women in the dark. Here's how Paul explains it.

[9 : 21] He calls him the god of this world, but this is the title that the devil has. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light.

So it's a darkness which keeps people in the dark, blinds people to the light, and oppresses them, and leads them into acts and deeds of wickedness.

But the wonderful truth is this. As we come to the words of Jesus, we see that he has come specifically into the world to get rid of this darkness, to overcome this darkness by being the light of the world.

I am the light of the world. And he has come to drive out the darkness. So as we go through, as we go into just briefly now, this conversation, this debate between Jesus and the Pharisees, the light against the dark, the contrast, hopefully we will see not only the wonder of what the light has done, but we shall see just what darkness is like.

We shall see just how it is if we do not know Christ. We shall see just what state we're in and the world is in if we have not known the light of Christ shining in our lives.

[10:33] So how does darkness manifest itself? How can we see darkness, if I can put it that way? Well, because we see three things. That darkness hides from our view. We see it, first of all, in the Pharisees that they have this inability to recognize Jesus.

A darkness which causes them to be unable to see Jesus for who he really is. So much so that they reject his words. Jesus says, I am the light of the world.

They say, your testimony is not valid, verse 13. In other words, you're a liar. That's what they're saying. You're a liar. You're not speaking the truth. They don't see and recognize him for who he is and therefore they don't recognize his words.

Their rejection of Jesus as the Son of God and the Messiah is the battleground, as it were, that's being fought over here. Jesus is declaring who he is, the reality of who he is. God come from heaven.

God come into the world. God come to save sinners. And all the way there, battling against him and saying, no, no, no, no. So we see there in verse 24, sorry, verse 25.

[11:45] Who are you? Jesus has been explaining. Perhaps you're in that position yourself this morning. You just don't see Jesus for who he is. You can see him as a good man.

You can see him as a great teacher. You can see him as a nice guy. You can see him as all sorts of things, but you won't recognize him and you won't accept him for who he really is, the Son of God. See, this immediately confirms to us that the darkness we're talking about is a darkness which is not neutral. It's lopsided. It's a darkness which is slanted against the light, against the things of God. You see, it's not that sort of darkness that we might innocently fail to recognize somebody. I'm sure you've had the experience. You're walking along the road or the street and it's not particularly well lit.

It's nighttime. And there's somebody on the other side of the road. And you don't recognize, you know them. They're perhaps your neighbor or a friend. But you just don't recognize them in the dark. And so you don't say, hello, how are you?

[12:44] Or acknowledge them. Now that's innocent darkness, isn't it? Innocent ignorance. This isn't innocent. This isn't just a vagueness. This is something much more than that.

They knew exactly who Jesus was calling himself to be, claiming himself to be. You have on two occasions where Jesus speaks about that here. The NIV translates it with that phrase which has sort of like almost not quite brackets about it.

There's a special word for it and I don't know what it is. The one I claim to be. That simply is, I am he. This is actually the literal translation. I'm he. The one. But the one I claim to be.

And all the way through, as you know, if you've read any of the Gospel of John and the life of Jesus, you'll know again and again by the things that he's done, turning water into wine, raising, sorry, raising up the lame man at the pool, feeding the 5,000.

And the teachings he's given that he's made it very plain. That he's not just some ordinary man or just some ordinary prophet, but he truly is God. He's shown them that he is the bread of life who's come down from heaven and spoke to them about it.

[13:52] But they won't accept his testimony. They won't accept the truth of who he is. They continue to throw up red herrings, as it were. They continue to say, well, we don't have to believe you because you haven't got two witnesses, so therefore, your word isn't trustworthy.

And so when Jesus begins to talk to them about his father who bears witness with him, they still stand against him and deny him. To be fair, that's the majority of people today in our country.

It may even be you as well. People who know what Jesus claimed to be. They know something of the gospel. They know everything about him, but they know that he claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God. They know that he is somebody uniquely special.

They know what Christians declare about him and what they speak about him as him being the only way to be right with God, the only way to know God and to have eternal life and forgiveness. In fact, there's many people, of course, even today, in our population who would say they're Christians. Probably still 50%, 60% would say, I'm a Christian. Perhaps you even this morning, you might say, well, I'm a Christian.

[14 : 59] But you've never recognized and acknowledged and seen that Jesus is the Son of God and that he is the one who is alone, your Savior. It's always been just partial.

It's always just been, well, yeah, I can see that. But I like these Pharisees, I can throw up my arguments. I can say, well, you know, why should I believe in Jesus when Christians do that? Why should I believe in Jesus when there's all this suffering in the world? Why should I believe when so many of my friends, so many of my colleagues don't believe? When science has proven this or proven that?

We can throw up all sorts of arguments, all sorts of red herring questions. But in the end, the reality is that we are in darkness and that darkness has blinded us to see Jesus for who he is.

See what Jesus says here, there in verse 15, you judge by human standards. That's the problem, isn't it? You judge by human standards.

[15 : 59] We don't judge by God's standards. We judge by human standards. Human judgment will always get it wrong. Surely history has taught us something. It's taught us that, that human judgment, human wisdom will always get it wrong about God, about life.

Why is it that we have the wars and all the corruption and all the things that are going on around about us? Don't they show to us that humanity, left to his own devices, is always going to get it wrong?

Jesus recognized that. He was brave enough to say it. Unfortunately, the politicians and the kingmakers of our day won't accept that. We've got the answers. We know what's right.

No, you don't because ultimately this is God's word and God's judgment is the ultimate judgment, the truthful judgment, the right judgment. If you do not have the light of God's word and the light of Christ, then your judgments will be skewed and they will be dark and they will be wrong.

But this is the wonderful thing. What did Jesus say? I've, the light of the world whoever follows me will not, never walk in darkness. Here's the wonderful truth. Here's the wonderful thing that Jesus has come to do for those who put their faith and trust in him.

[17 : 13] He lifts us out of darkness and he makes the, he makes light to come on. He makes us to see. He makes us to see him for who he is. He makes us to see him as the savior who died on the cross for our sins.

You see him as the light of life, the one by whom we can follow, the one that we can trust who will direct us. That's what happened to Paul, wasn't it? Paul, as he was previously known, saw on the road to Damascus.

He was darkened. Religious, but he was darkened, wasn't he? He thought he was doing what God wanted, but he was darkened in his mind and his thinking. Off to kill Christians, off to arrest Christians, off to put them in prison.

But something happened. What happened to him? As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him, fell to the ground, heard a voice say to him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?

Who are you? Saul asked. I am Jesus. Now, that doesn't have to happen as dramatically as we fall off our horse, but it has to happen that the light of Christ, the light of who he is, bang, comes into our lives.

[18 : 24] And that's what happened. If you're a Christian this morning, you may say, well, I don't know everything about Jesus and I don't understand the Bible completely and I've still got much to learn, but the light has come on. There's a light there.

It says, I see that I was once in darkness. I see Jesus as someone wonderful, marvelous, and whom I must and will put my trust in faith.

But that spiritual blindness of these Pharisees didn't just blind them to Jesus, the Savior, the Son of God, but it blinded them so they were ignorant of God himself, the very person of God.

And that's a great tragedy, isn't it? Verse 19, where's your Father? He's talking about Father God, the God in heaven. Verse 27, Jesus says to them, or rather, we have this comment, they did not understand.

He was telling them about his Father. Now what's so tragic is that these were the religious brains and intelligence and intelligence of their day. These were the men who spent all their time studying the Old Testament, studying the Bible.

[19 : 26] It was their life's work. They were the scholars, the theologians. If anybody knew about God, surely it should be them. But they didn't. They didn't understand.

They were meant to be teaching about God and teaching their nation about God and the people who came to them about God. They hadn't the first clue about God. Why was that? Well, it's because, of course, they didn't recognize Jesus.

Because they didn't recognize Jesus, it was impossible for them to recognize God. I don't know, I haven't seen it lately, but there used to be like a sticker that used to go on people's car windows which was something like this.

No God, sorry, no Jesus, no God. N-O, Jesus, N-O, God. No Jesus, K-N-O-W, no God. Okay, no Jesus, no God.

No Jesus, to know him, no God. It's as simple as that, isn't it? It's a pretty simple, simplistic sort of way of putting it, but that's exactly what it is. Jesus is the revelation of God.

[20 : 27] He came that we might know the reality that God is here and we might know what God is like. He's the only light by which God makes himself known to this world. Writing to the Hebrews, the writer says this about the sun, Jesus the sun.

The sun is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. Elsewhere, we're told that the fullness of God dwelt in Jesus and Jesus makes that plain later on in the gospel.

He talks to his disciples and he says to them, chapter 12, when anyone looks at me, he sees the one who sent me, the Father. Chapter 14, verse 9, anyone who's seen me has seen the Father.

God is revealed, God is manifest, God is shown to us in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was not God hidden in a man, but Jesus Christ is God revealed to us in a man.

See, just like me in that cave, here's the Pharisees, here's Jesus right before them, here's God right before their eyes, not just in the person of Jesus, but in what they read about God in the Old Testament.

[21 : 35] He's right before their eyes, but like me in the cave, they just couldn't see a thing. The darkness had blinded them so fully because all the way through, as we've already seen just briefly in Isaiah 60, but all the way through, that Jesus is revealed, God is revealed in the Bible.

And yet people can read the Bible and say it's boring, it's disinterested, it has no relevance, but others can read it and say, wow, here's God, what a wonderful God he is, here he is. We can see him and we can understand him.

We live in a world of people who are seeking and searching. Some of them are seeking and searching after God and would acknowledge that. Others are seeking and searching.

Yeah, I should have got these teeth put in the dentist. Searching and seeking after God. But they're looking in all the wrong places. They hope that they will find fulfillment, happiness, contentment, satisfaction in so many other things, relationships and experiences and pleasures.

But ultimately, within their hearts, there is this seeking after God. God has put eternity into our hearts, says the Bible. There's something within us, we can't help it, that ever seeks after God.

[22 : 45] That's why when you go around the world, in every culture, in every nation, you will find people who have created their own God. Because within them is that spiritual element which says, there must be a God and I must seek to know him.

But there is only one true God and there is only one way of knowing that God, that is through God himself in the person of Jesus Christ. People are looking for God but they are looking in all the wrong places and they will not come to Jesus who alone is able to reveal to us God.

But the wonderful thing again for the Christian is this, that though we once were cut off from God and alienated from God and ignorant of God, when Jesus Christ came into our lives and we not only came to know him but we came to know God as our heavenly Father, we came to know the wonderful love of God.

We came to realize that God is the one who indeed is for us, not against us, that God is the one whose love for us is ever perfect.

Jesus prays later on in his wonderful prayer in John 17 and verse 26, he prays this, I have made you known to them and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.

[24 : 04] The very work of Jesus in coming was to make God known to us. To say, look, here I am, the God who made this world, the God who exists. People do not know God, people are ignorant of God, why?

Because they're in darkness, because they will not come to Christ. One of the joys of being a Christian is ever deepening knowledge of God, ever deepening relationship with God, ever finding out more about his love and care.

See, God is no, there's no limits with God. This is the sadness, this is the great, the sadness and the lie that we're deceived with. We think that if we chase after this pleasure or that experience, somehow that will satisfy.

But all those pleasures and all those experiences are limited, limited either by the amount of money we've got to spend on them or the amount of time they give us or what we can do. So people are going to more extreme lengths of throwing themselves off towers with bungee ropes or throwing themselves out of planes with parachutes or whatever they might do.

You see, with God, there is no limit. He is infinite. We can never get to the end of enjoying the delights of God. We can never exhaust the resources of God's riches and treasures and the joy of experiencing Him.

[25 : 16] We shall never come to the end. That's why heaven is so wonderful. It's not sitting on a cloud with a harp. It's not going through eternity bored out of your skull. It's forever enjoying and delighting in and making the best of all that God is.

And we're never going to get to the end of finding out about Him. We're never going to find out everything there is about Him but we're going to spend this adventure of eternity in the presence of God.

So Jesus makes it clear that darkness is something that He has come to dispel. The darkness about Himself, the darkness about God. There's something here which is, if I can put it one way, more sinister.

Something which is even more serious, even more terrible. And that's when Jesus shows us that darkness in the Pharisees means a darkness to the danger that they were in and the only way of rescue.

They were in the dark about the danger they were in. Notice how Jesus on two occasions tells them, first of all, verse 21, I'm going away and you will look for me and you will die in your sin.

[26 : 26] Where I go you cannot come. Then later on again, verse 24, I told you that you would die in your sins. If you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.

They were in such great danger but they couldn't see it. I don't know if you've ever done any climbing or fell walking or gone across the moors in any serious way but if you have, then one of the things that's uppermost in the mind of someone who's walking on the moors or climbing is that they have to get to a place of safety before nightfall.

One of those dangerous things you can possibly do is travel across the moors or climb at night. The terrain is so dangerous that the risk of death and harm is multitude infinitely at night time.

You've got to get to safety while there's light. Many people have lost their lives on the moors or on the cliffs or on the mountains because they have still been travelling in the dark or when darkness fell and the sheer drops, the cliff edges have not been seen to them, the bogs and all sorts of things and they have fallen to their death.

See, spiritual darkness, ignorance of Jesus Christ and of God which envelops the minds and the thinking of men and women means that they have no idea just what danger they're really in.

[27 : 55] They haven't an inkling of just how precarious their position is that they are standing on the precipice over which they take one further step and they will be in eternal hell.

Twice over, three times over, Jesus here warns them of this terrible parable, you're going to die in your sin. But instead of grasping hold of that and saying can you explain that, please tell us how can we not die in our sin, all they continue to do is to debate Jesus and his fate not theirs.

Look at verse 21, I'm going away, you will look for me and you will die in your sin, where I'm going you cannot come. What do they say? They ask, will he kill himself?

Is that why he says, where I go you cannot go? They missed it, missed it completely, all they're concerned about is this sort of mentality they've got to sort of put Jesus down and to reject him and so they think he's going to commit suicide which would put him in one sense away from God.

Doesn't it prove again, doesn't it show again that this darkness is not neutral, that behind this darkness, the darkness that clouds the minds of men and women today is indeed Satan, the devil, he's real, he's not that fluffy toy that people stick in the car windows.

[29 : 13] He has an utter hatred of all human beings because all human beings are made in the image of God. We bear his beauty even though it's tainted and corrupted and so Satan works hard to keep men and women in the dark about their sin and about the eternal consequences of that sin which is everlasting hell and punishment.

That's why when you talk to people today, they'll talk about heaven but they won't talk about hell, they'll talk about when somebody dies and going to a better place. They'll talk about even the possibility of course that it's just annihilation and you die and that's the end but the thought of hell and of punishment of judgment for our sins is something which is completely taken off the radar. What is so terrible. What is so awful is that even churches, even Christians so-called are telling people that just be good, just be nice and you get to heaven, don't worry about Jesus Christ, don't worry about hell, it's a par se concept, it's something from the Victorian period and it belongs to the ignorant people.

And so what do they do? They intensify the darkness that people are in. What a tragedy, what a sadness, what a grief, how awful. What sort of person would you be who walking with a friend who is blind at a cliff edge wouldn't warn them that they were about to fall in?

What sort of friend would you be? What sort of person would you be? What sort of human being would you be? Never to warn somebody that they're at the point of losing their lives but say don't worry just carry on and you'll be fine.

[30 : 54] Thank God that Jesus Christ is honest, enough with us to tell us not just the good news but how to get out of the bad news. It's because of blindness to the peril that's awaiting them that these people can't see the way of salvation.

Look how Jesus makes it clear. I told you that if you would die in your sins if you do not believe that I'm he, that I'm the one I claim to be. Faith in Jesus, the son of God, faith in Jesus, the one who came from heaven to be the light of the world, faith in Jesus, the saviour of sinners, the one who provides forgiveness through his death upon the cross.

That's what you need. That's the way of escape. And again, what sort of person would we be? That we were in a house which has caught fire and we didn't point people to the fire exit.

We said, no, the fire exit, we know it's over there, but let's point them over this way, towards the fire. The fire exit, the way out, the way to life, the way to forgiveness, the way to eternal joy with God is in Jesus alone.

And so Jesus says later on, verse 28, when you have lifted up the son of man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be. He's talking about the cross. We know that because elsewhere we're told that the lifting up of Jesus on the cross is that picture.

[32 : 13] As he died on the cross, he took our sin. As he died on the cross, he took the punishment that we deserve in hell, and he suffered hell itself in those hours when he was treated as a sinner by us.

He's the way of salvation. He's the way of life. He's the way of forgiveness. He's the way. But these men won't see it. Have you seen it? Do you really, really think that you can just go through life living as you want to live and you will not be called to account by God?

Do you really think that God doesn't see your heart and mine and the things that we do and the way we behave? See, the thing about darkness is this, is that it stupefies us, if I'm going to that way.

It paralyzes us. I remember when I was in that cave in Wilkie Hole when the lights went off, that was it. I didn't move. Because you know, you don't go anywhere and think, well if I move I'm going to bump into somebody, or worse I'm going to bang my head on a rock, or even worse than that I'm going to fall down a hole.

You just can't move, can you? Darkness has that paralyzing effect so that people are frozen on the spot. They're incapable of coming to Christ as their saviour until Jesus lights the path.

[33 : 30] and draws us to himself. What is so tragic here in this situation with Jesus and these men who are in darkness is that they, it's too late.

If I put it that way, it's too late. Notice what Jesus says to them, where I go you cannot come. They'd already gone too far down the path of darkness, they'd already gone so far in being blinded to their prejudices and blinded to their ignorance and blinded to their beliefs, if I can put it that way, that

there was no way that they were ever going to follow Jesus.

And even though the light of the world stood before them, even though the light of the world showed himself who he was before them, they were going to continue in their sin and die in their sin and spend eternity in their sin.

Let me say to you, dear friends, again this morning, Jesus Christ stands before you as the light of the world. He stands before you in the pages he, he stands before you in the Christians that you know, he stands before you.

And let me ask you, is it too late for you? You say, well, I'll think about it when I'm older, I'll think about it when I'm old and grey and crotchety and when I'm nearly going to die, that's when I'll think about it.

[34 : 48] No, you can't afford to do that and no, you mustn't do that. You're not guaranteed tomorrow or any day. And how dare you think that God is actually going to forgive you then?

Why should he? You may be down the road, you may be down the road like this, if you continue in the darkness that you're going, if you continue to harden your mind and your thoughts against the Lord Jesus Christ, if you continue to reject him, though he stands before you, then the darkness can only get greater and deeper.

You see, the wonderful thing is this, that Jesus says, I am the light of the world. The reason he very came was to set you free from that darkness and to bring you into that light and there's two things that happen, two wonderful things that happen to us when we know Jesus Christ as our Saviour, when the light is shone, as we read it, sang in that very first time, when the dungeon doors are burst open and that ray of light comes in, two things happen to us.

The first is this, that he opens our eyes to see our own sin. Back in 2 Corinthians 4 we saw about how the God of this age has blinded the eyes of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel, the glory of God.

But here's what God says, for God who said let light shine out of darkness, made his light shine in our hearts. He shows us what our hearts are like.

[36 : 11] It's not very nice, is it, when you look into your heart, when the light shines in your heart, you see all those selfish things, you see all that pride, you see all that greed, you see all that arrogance, that sort of, all the nasty things that you just really don't like and they come out in the way you speak and the way you behave towards others.

But that's the first thing that God has to do, God has to shine the light of Jesus into our hearts to see what we're like. The Apostle Peter, when he was a fisherman, before he became a follower of Jesus, the first thing that happened to him when he saw the light of Jesus who he was, he said, get away from me, Lord, I'm a sinful man.

You read about it in Luke. That's the vital effect. We've got to have God do that work in our hearts first of all. We've got to have the light turned on inside so we can see that we are sinners or we shall never ever know the need for a savior of sinners.

Have you honestly looked into your heart? Have you asked God to show you what your heart's like? Perhaps you already know and you don't like it and you think, well, actually, I don't want him to show me what my heart's like.

I'd rather bury my head in the sand. I'd rather pretend that I'm an okay, nice person. I'm not only as bad as those people I see on the telly, those people I read about. Yes, you are just as bad.

[37 : 30] So am I. The Bible has declared, all have sinned and fallen short of God's standards, his glory. All of us. And unless Jesus shows that light into our hearts, we'll continue to be in the darkness and the ignorance and we'll continue to deny the reality of who we are.

But he's done that. If you're a Christian, he's done that. And then the wonderful thing he does as well is this, not only shows us our sin, and that may seem to be negative, but he shows us positively the glorious grace of God in Jesus.

Here's the same verse in 2 Corinthians 4. For God who said, let light shine out of darkness, made his light shine in our hearts. What? To give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

We begin to see Jesus for all that he is and all of his beauty. We begin to see him as truly God who came into our world. We see him in his humility that he took on human life for us and lived amongst us in this world, suffered and struggled, new sorrow and pain.

We see the wonderful grace and mercy of God that in love Jesus went to the cross for me and died even for me. We see him as the king of heaven and of earth, the one who we must follow and put

our trust in, the one who's triumphed over death and lives forevermore.

[38 : 49] To see Jesus, that's salvation. To see Jesus, that's life. The light of life. Jesus calls himself.

So let me close, dear friends, by asking you again. Has Jesus' light shone in your life? Has Jesus' light shown you for who you are?

Has he chased the darkness away? Has he removed the clouds that covered you? Then if you have trusted in him, keep following him. Keep following him as the light that is your path.

Keep following him and you'll never walk in darkness again. He'll keep guiding and directing you and showing you and bringing you to that place of eternal light and eternal joy.

As Hebrews tells us, keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. If you've never known that light shine in your hearts and even now there's that sense in which everything I've said has just gone over your head or rather gone in one ear and out the other, let me challenge you to this.

[40 : 01] Will you ask Jesus to shine the light into your heart? Will you pray, Lord Jesus, if I'm in darkness, please show me. Please show me the way out. Please show me the way to yourself.

Let me assure you, you pray that prayer sincerely and Jesus will answer it. Will you? Dare you? It's a big thing to do. But he's faithful.

He's the light of the world. Who in their right mind wants to stay in the dark when they can have the light of life? Let's sing our final hymn together. It's really a prayer as well as a song of thankfulness.

It's in the big book, 579. 579. I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and live and rest.

Then the second verse says, heard the voice of Jesus say, behold, I freely give. And then the last verse, I heard the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark world's light. Let's stand and sing.

[41 : 03] as long as he opened and bellies.

To hear the voice of Jesus say, Come on to me and rest.

Hail the weary, Hail the help of the rest.

I came to Jesus as I was, Hail the hope of the rest.

I came to Jesus as I was, And He has made me glad.

[42 : 09] I heard the voice of Jesus say, In all my freely name, The living water, Bless me now, Till death hath drank and lived.

I came to Jesus, And I drank, For that my healing stream.

Thy grace was stretched, My soul revived, And now I believe in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, Thy help is now through time.

Welcome to me, Thy heart shall rise, And all thy day delight.

[43 : 17] My love to Jesus, And I come, In Him I sow my soul.

And in that light, My love to Jesus, And I come, Till heavenly days of time.

Heavenly Father, make the light of your Son, The Lord Jesus, Ever to rise upon us, Ever to guide us, And lead us, And give to us lives, And hearts, That we might live in the light of Him, And walk with Him, All the days, Until you call us, And draw us into heaven, That place where there is never any darkness.

For we ask these things, As we give you our praise and thanks, For Jesus, The light of the world.

Amen.