

Luke Chapter 11 v 33 - 36

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Date: 18 August 2019

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Welcome. A particular welcome to you if you're visiting us this morning. And we trust that you're enjoying your time in Whitby and the surrounding area.

Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth. Sing to the Lord. Praise his name. Proclaim his salvation day after day.

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples. For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise.

I don't know if you've got a particular hymn that you find to be one of your favourites. Well, this is one of my favourite hymns. 509, And Can It Be? It's a wonderful testimony of the saving power of God in the life of the believer.

509, let's stand and sing to the glory and praise of our God. As his word has commanded us, let's be obedient. Well, after such an amazing hymn, you can't, I hope, feel dejected this morning.

[1 : 13] Whatever has happened in your week, whatever you've been going through, then surely that lifts our souls, lifts our spirits again to remember all that Christ has done for us and all that God for us has done for us.

So let's come to him in prayer with thankfulness and with joy. Oh Lord, we are amazed. Oh Lord, we are amazed. We stand astonished. And with Charles Wesley of all we say, and can it be?

Is it possible? Is it conceivable? Lord, it seems to me it's too wonderful for words that the very Son of God should have come into this world and died for me.

Sinner as I am. Fool as I am. Oh Lord, we thank you that it is true. That it's not a fairy story. That it's not a myth. It's not make-believe. It's not something which is too good to be true.

It is true and it is so very good. And oh Lord, we thank you that this morning as we come to you, our God and Father, we come as those who rejoice in the reality of your salvation.

[2 : 17] Not just the reality of it historically. We know that Jesus lived and died and rose again. That's true. But Lord, we thank you for the power of his life and death and resurrection in our lives daily.

And this day, we thank you again that we are forgiven sinners. That we are loved sinners. That we are sinners headed for heaven. But more than that, we thank you that we are children of the living God.

Adopted into your family. Brought near who once were far. Brought into the embrace of your loving kindness. And you will never let us go. And you'll never give up on us.

And you'll never stop being faithful to us. And oh Lord, we bless you. And we thank you that oh Lord, we know that whatever we've been through in this past week and whatever is yet to come.

You are the unchanging God. And oh Lord, we know that you will never leave us nor forsake us. Grant us afresh this morning that sense of awe and wonder.

[3 : 18] Lord, at your grace to us. Help us to afresh, oh Lord. To take hold of the promises that you've given us in your word. Help us afresh, oh Lord. To be filled with your Holy Spirit.

That he may overflow in our lives with thanks and praise to you. But more than that. Lives of obedience. Lives of love. Lives of faithfulness too. Thank you that you are changing us.

And transforming us. And we long, Lord, that we might be putty in your hands. Thanks, Lord, that we might be clay molded and shaped for your praise and glory.

Hear us then. Bless us then. And meet with us now. For we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Let's turn together in God's word. And we are going to be looking at Luke 11 when I come to the sermon.

But it's only a short passage. So I'm actually going to read from the Gospel of John. It's the Gospel of John and Chapter 9. If you would like to turn there with me in your Bibles.

[4 : 22] John Chapter 9. And that's page 1075. If you have one of the red church Bibles. Page 1075.

And we're going to read the first 25 verses of John and Chapter 9. As he went along. That's Jesus, of course. He saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him. Rabbi, who sinned? This man or his parents that he was born blind?

Neither this man nor his parents sinned, said Jesus. But this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world. After saying this, he spat on the ground.

[5 : 19] Made some mud with the saliva. Put it on the man's eyes. Go, he told him. Wash in the pool of Siloam. This word means sent. So the man went.

Washed. Came home seeing. His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked. Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg? Some claimed that he was.

Others said, no. He only looks like him. But he himself insisted. I am the man. How then were your eyes open? They asked. He replied, the man they called Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes.

He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed. And then I could see. Where is this man? They asked him. I don't know, he said. They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind.

Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He put mud on my eyes, the man replied.

[6 : 20] And I washed. And now I see. Some of the Pharisees said, this man is not from God. For he does not keep the Sabbath. But others asked, how can a sinner perform such signs?

So they were divided. Then they turned again to the blind man. What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened. The man replied, he is a prophet.

They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. Is this your son? They asked. Is this the one you say was born blind?

How is it that now he can see? We know he is our son, the parents answered. And we know he was born blind. But how he can see now? Or who opened his eyes?

We don't know. Ask him. He is of age. He will speak for himself. His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue.

[7 : 19] That was why his parents said, he is of age. Ask him. A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. Give glory to God by telling the truth. They said, we know this man is a sinner.

He replied, whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know, I was blind, but now I see. So we will pick that theme up in a moment or two.

So we are in Luke and chapter 11. If you would like to turn there, it is page 1043. If you have the church Bible. Last fortnight we have been in, we have returned back to Luke 11.

And as we go through this wonderful gospel, this record, this biography of the life of the Lord Jesus. And last week, verses 29 to 32, we looked at the sign of Jonah and what that was.

We recognized that what Jesus was getting at was his preaching. That God had given us the sign, the evidence, the thing that we are to pay attention to, and that is the preaching of Jesus.

[8 : 33] And just as the people of Jonah's day in Nineveh listened to and obeyed God because they heard the preaching of God through Jonah. So the men of this day and age, and us included, must hear and believe God's word in Christ.

So we are going to pick up from verse 33. No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden or under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand so that those who come in may see the light.

Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are healthy, your whole body is full of light. But when they are unhealthy, your body also is full of darkness.

See to it then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light and no part of it dark, it will be just as full of light as when a lamp shines its light on you.

We've all got five senses, part of the way that we explore and experience the world around about us.

[9 : 49] But which of those senses is the most valuable? Or put it another way, which of those senses would you most hate to lose? Now, we have touch and taste and smell, and they certainly help us enjoy and experience the world around about us.

That wonderful fragrance that you smell, and things that we taste and touch and so on. But above, of course, these three, hearing and sight, are more essential.

To lose either our hearing or our sight would be very debilitating, as indeed it is to those who are deaf or blind. I think if we had to choose, if we were forced to a position where we had to choose to lose one of them, either hearing or sight, I think that we would most definitely want to keep our sight.

A silent world must be very difficult, but a black and dark world must be even more so. Our sight is especially valuable, and to live without sight is a very hard thing.

Now, here in verse 34, Jesus says and describes our eye as the lamp of your body. Your eye is the lamp of your body.

[11 : 12] In other words, through our eyes, we receive light for the rest of our body, for the whole of our lives. What you see directly influences what we think, directly influences our minds, directly influences what we say, directly influences what we do with the other parts of our body.

We respond and react to what we see. The eye gives light to direct everything else. Without our eyes, we're severely limited.

In our knowledge of what surrounds us, we're seriously disabled in our thinking, saying and doing. At this point, I was about to bring an illustration about walking around your bedroom when it's dark at night.

But, see, Joel has been here long enough now that, in fact, we are of one mind. So, you know the illustration. Walking around, even though it's a familiar room, you don't want to put the lights on because you don't want to wake the rest of the family.

You stumble about stubbing your toe and so forth. So, like a light that illuminates us or illuminates the darkness for us, our eyes illuminate us so that we can safely travel through life.

[12 : 33] Now, as you might expect, Jesus is using here, as he does in many of his parables, something very natural, something very everyday and normal to teach us something which is supernatural, above the normal.

Here is a very spiritual truth that we must grasp that he spoke there to those who were with him. It's a little parable about a lamp and it follows immediately on from what he said about his own preaching, remember, and being that sign from God.

The parable ultimately is this. We must have open eyes if we are to receive the light of God's word in Christ. We must have open eyes to receive the light of God's word in Christ.

Now, as you know, the majority of those people who are standing around Jesus could not see and would not see the light of God's word in Christ. They rejected Jesus' words because they rejected him as God's messenger.

We looked at this a couple of weeks ago, where back in verse 14, after Jesus had healed a mute man, they said that Jesus did his miracles by the power of Beelzebul, the devil.

[13 : 52] Others wrote him off or insisted that he had to authenticate his words by giving them a sign from heaven, some absolutely rock-solid proof, a miracle, that would show that he must be God's prophet.

So why? Why didn't they recognize God's light in Christ? Why didn't they see that his words were full of light? What was wrong with these people?

Well, it wasn't because Jesus was hiding his light from them. It wasn't because Jesus was failing to shine brightly. It wasn't because he was hiding his light under a bowl.

Well, when he stood trial, just some weeks later, they asked him and questioned him. And Jesus' response to them was this, I've spoken openly to the world.

I always taught in synagogues or at the temple where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. And he himself, in one sense, is verse 33, the lamp, the light giver.

[15 : 02] Because he is the one who was lifted up to publicly declare and to show the light of God. He didn't hide it away in secret in a small corner, but thousands could hear and thousands could receive.

Once again, this parable of Jesus, these words of Jesus, have a huge impact upon us today and those amongst whom we live. Like the people of Jesus' day, why is it that so many reject Jesus? Why is it so many in our day cannot see and will not see the light of God's truth in the words of Christ? It may be even that some of you here this morning are like that.

You've heard Jesus' word. You've seen something of that light in the life of other believers, but as yet, you do not see him as he truly is, the light of your world, the one who illuminates you.

But the very coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world was according to God's promise to bring light to those in darkness. We often turn back at Christmas time to Isaiah chapter 9, don't we?

[16:16] It says there, the people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned. And then it goes to tell us the source of that light.

Verse 6, for to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

We recognize that as Jesus, he came to be the light of the world. I'm sure many of us have had an eye test at some time, particularly perhaps as you're getting that little bit older.

You go to the optician and the optician will carry out various tests upon your eyes, shine lights into them and all sorts of things that they do. One of those tests, of course, is that you have to read a board with letters at the end of the room, several lines as the letters get smaller and smaller.

Perhaps this has happened to you, I don't know, but imagine that as you've had those tests and as you've read that board, the optician says to you, I'm afraid you've got a cataract over your eye or some other way in which your eyesight is deteriorating.

[17:33] Now, you wouldn't complain to the optician and say, well, it's nothing wrong with my eyes, it's just that your room is too dark, I couldn't see the letters and if you made the print bigger then I'd be able to recognize them.

Of course you wouldn't. But the trouble is, of course, the problem is not with Jesus' words, the problem is with our spiritual eyes.

The problem is with us. The problem is with us that we cannot see. Our eyes are unhealthy, that's what Jesus explains, doesn't he, here.

Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are healthy, verse 34, your whole body is full of light. But when they are unhealthy, in other words, when they're diseased, your body is also full of darkness.

That's the truth we readily accept in the natural world. And all the more, again, as I say, when we get that bit older and our eyesight deteriorates, we start to need glasses and bifocals, we might need to have an operation.

[18:37] Remember a dear lady in Honiton where we were before who had had cataracts for some time and she had them removed and she told me afterwards that the biggest shock that she had was when she looked in the mirror and saw that her hair was no longer blonde but white.

According to Jesus, we have unhealthy eyes, we have blurred vision, we have tunnel vision, we do not see God's light in Christ as we should do. We may think that we see the world clearly, we may think that we understand what's going on around about us, but the reality is, according to Jesus, we do not.

And it's a very serious problem, a dangerous problem, more dangerous than even losing our own physical sight. We fail to recognize that the inner light of our own understanding, that inner light which guides and directs us in our decision making, in our choices, as well as in our beliefs, is flawed.

In fact, it isn't light at all, it's darkness. Look at what Jesus said. Verse 35, See to it then that the light within you is not darkness, darkness.

One of the great travesties of human history is that men and women have thought that the inner light within them is correct and true, and so they have been led by it, but in fact, as Jesus says here, it's darkness, not light.

[20:17] That's why we see, don't we, in our world around us, men and women who are absolutely convinced of what they're doing is right, and yet it's evil or wicked or stupid or foolish.

Jesus challenges us here this morning and whoever we are to give ourselves a spiritual eye test or sight test. Look at those words in verse 35, See to it then.

It's actually just one word and in the Greek it gives us the word scope from which we get telescope and microscope. It means to look carefully at something, to examine something, to really see to it.

It's a good translation there that the NIV's got. Look in. Is there really light or is it actually darkness? See to it then that the light within you is not darkness. That's the great problem in human history and in human experience.

[21 : 27] We think that the inner light guides us in the right way. But actually God's commentary upon the inner light of the human heart is very different. God's understanding of our hearts is devastatingly accurate but extremely painful.

Right at the start in Genesis chapter 8 God says every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. The Bible tells us that we aren't born innocent.

We're actually born with a sinful nature with an inclination within our hearts to do wrong. To disobey. If you're a parent or grandparent you know that that is true.

Later on Jeremiah the prophet God tells him in chapter 17 the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. What keeps the light from penetrating into the darkness of our innermost thoughts are our eyes.

They are blind to the light. They're so diseased that no light can pass through them. And that spiritual light sorry that spiritual darkness and blindness is compounded the Bible tells us by our enemy the devil.

[22 : 49] Paul talking about sharing and preaching and sharing the light of the gospel tells us this in 2 Corinthians 4 and if our gospel is veiled it is veiled to those who are perishing for the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ who is the image of God.

Jesus came to bring light to those in darkness but also more than that those who have inner darkness.

Jesus came to bring light to those in the work of the gospel the good news of Jesus Christ is the power of God's light that can not only heal us but dispel the darkness within and so Paul continues in 2 Corinthians 4 immediately after that to say for what we preach is not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus sake for God who said let light shine out of darkness made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

God wants to dispel the darkness within and give us sight to see the light of life.

Well how can that happen? How can that happen? How can we have that change and transformation? How can we pass as it were from darkness to light?

[24 : 45] How can we obtain as it were a healthy sight? Well the very first thing we've got to do surely dear friends is accept what Jesus said is God's word.

That's exactly what the people wouldn't do. It's exactly what the Ninevites did do in Jonah's day. We're told that when Jonah preached the people believed God not Jonah but God and they turned away we're told from their evil acts they repented and they turned to God and cried to him.

Remember this parable that we're looking at in verses 33 is Jesus' explanation of what he's just been talking about. His warnings against this wicked generation.

He's explaining why they are wicked. He's explaining why they won't listen to his word when they must and should. Accept that what Jesus says about you accept God's diagnosis of your inner sight as true.

But we hate admitting we're wrong don't we? We hate admitting we're wrong. And it's not just a male problem. Ladies you can be just as stubborn too.

[26 : 11] Just because men seem to bring about this stubborn unwillingness when they're driving and they're in unfamiliar territory and they are not on the wrong road and they are not lost they're just taking the scenic route.

Sometimes you ladies can be just as stubborn. We hate to admit we're wrong. However the reality is that none of us would say that we have always got it right.

None of us would ever claim that what we think and what we say and what we do is always right.

That every decision that we come to is the correct one. Of course we wouldn't do that.

Nobody would do that. So why won't we admit it to God? Why won't we admit to God that we have got it wrong? That actually the inner light within us is darkness and that we need his light to shine and to dispel that darkness?

going back to the illustration of the optician the optician told you that your sight is bad and your eyes require surgery you wouldn't necessarily like it I'm sure you'd accept what he told you was true

because he wants the best for you.

[27 : 29] Well God wants the best for you but he has to start one sense with the bad news before we will enjoy the good news and the bad news is that our hearts are sinful and desperately wicked.

the bad news is that inwardly there is no inner light. There's only darkness and anybody who's experienced not only the reality of their own hearts but of the world knows this is true.

Nobody sees your heart better than God. Nobody knows what's in you better than Jesus and this is what God says about those who are without Christ's light.

Writing to the Christians in Ephesus he reminds them of those who are without Christ. They are darkened in their understanding separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is due to the hardening of their hearts.

Now we would all recognize that wouldn't we as well in the circumstances or situation we find ourselves which is completely unknown to us we've had no experience of we wouldn't be able to make the right judgment or do the right thing.

[28 : 43] Imagine that you were in a situation where somebody collapses before you and you haven't got any medical training you've not been to badges or to one of the St.

John's ambulance training you just wouldn't know what to do. You might try to do something but you're ignorant. Dear friends we are ignorant of the goodness of God until the light of God is made known to us.

Now you might say to all these things well actually you don't know me Peter you don't know actually I'm a nice person I'm a good person I'm a person who seeks to do the right thing and the good thing I'm not denying that in any way it's not your sincerity that's being called into question here it's the reality that in your heart as in every human heart without the light of Christ there is darkness and that darkness has an effect it produces certain things for Jesus himself said this and here's where we can examine ourselves in one sense here we can say right let's put the scope as it were onto your heart and mine and Jesus says if any of these things pop up under the scope then you know that there is darkness within he says out of the heart come evil thoughts murder adultery sexual immorality theft false testimony slander don't have to do all those things we don't have to have to think all those things but are any of them there have ever thought hatefully towards somebody have we ever desired another woman's husband have we ever thought of cheating the tax man fiddling the books have ever said anything that was never fully and completely true have ever said anything unpleasant or nasty to anybody these things we know that they're there and that's what Jesus says comes out of your heart it comes out of your heart because in your heart there is darkness so it begins by accepting accepting where we are and what situation we're in accepting our blindness secondly then we can enjoy this light by receiving the healing power of the light we read that there didn't we remember back in 2 corinthians in chapter 4 what we preach is not ourselves it's the preaching of the gospel for God who said let light shine out of darkness made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ now Paul who wrote that knew the experience of that for himself first hand in Acts in Acts chapter 9 we're told about what happened to him as he was riding on his way to

Damascus he was a man whose heart was set against Jesus and against Christians and he was seeking to arrest and to murder them but something happened to him he tells us in 9 3 as he neared Damascus on his journey suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him he fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him Saul Saul why do you persecute me who are you Lord Saul asked I am Jesus now get up and go into this city and you'll be told what you must do for three days Saul who later became Paul was blind but then Jesus sent one of his disciples Ananias he went to the house and entered it placing his hands on Saul he said brother Saul the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here has sent me so that you may see again immediately something like scales fell from Saul's eyes the light of Christ first of all blinded Saul physically as a symbol as a sign of the reality of what was inside that he was blind and had been blind and in darkness and only as he accepted

Jesus words and obeyed what he said that those scales fall off and new light came within you see you can't heal yourself you can't restore your own sight one of the great tragedies in one sense in our generation and has been all the time I think if we were only better educated then we could get rid of the darkness if only young people and other people and whoever they are these people who act wickedly and selfishly and act with darkness if only we could educate them if only we could teach them how to change their hearts how to change their attitudes how to change themselves

then they would be so much better but it never works it never has worked never will work God alone is able to chase the darkness out of your heart only he can do that by his spirit so it must be to him that you go and ask for healing it must be to him that you come with faith believing that what he's promised he will do remember what Jesus said in John 8 verse 12

[34 : 18] I am the light of the world whoever follows me whoever comes to me and puts their faith in me makes me in one sense the lord of their lives will never walk in darkness but have the light of life when Jesus' light shines on you it's like the beginning of a new day as the light increases getting brighter and brighter and brighter in fact Jesus says something like that doesn't he in verse 36 therefore if your whole body is full of light and no part of it dark dark what happens when you become a Christian what happens when Jesus' light begins to break into your heart is that yes you have that light and you're instantly healed but then that light begins to spread through the heart and the life the bible calls it sanctification there's a change that takes place you don't stay the same those dark patches and corners in your life that have been there such a long time the light takes a little while to spread in there so that the darkness can be removed the more we bask in the light of

God's word the more we spend time in the brilliance and the brightness of his truth the more darkness retreats the more light increases I can't imagine what it's like to live near the north pole during the winter where they have three months of pitch darkness I'd like to think I can imagine how they feel when the first rays of the sun begin to peak over the horizon at the end of winter that's something like and near the joy the delight of seeing the light of Christ bursting into our lives therefore if your whole body is full of light and no part of it dark will be just as full of light as when a lamp shines its light on you

I'm going to close with reading from Ephesians in chapter 5 where the apostle Paul reminds the Christian believers of what God has done for them in Christ and how that affects their lives today he says this for you were once darkness but now you are the light of the world live as children of light for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness righteousness and truth and find out what pleases the Lord have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness but rather expose them it's shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret but everything exposed by the light becomes visible and everything that is illuminated becomes a light that is why it is said wake up sleeper rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you let's pray together thank you father that you gave your son the Lord

Jesus to be the light of the world to the world we thank you again that he came not with hidden and strange ways but he came with openness and clarity he came and proclaimed and declared your word which is truth and it is light in a dark world Lord we still live in a dark world but Lord we recognize too that in our hearts there is darkness as well it's not just those outside who are evil and wrong Lord it's us we're the problem and part of it and so we do pray please Lord Jesus shine your light into our hearts with increasing brightness and brilliance that oh Lord the darkness that is there may be chased away that every corner of our lives where darkness still has a hold may be removed where we hold on to that secret sin that secret attitude or thought

Lord we pray that your light and your truth may so shine in us that Lord your light may shine out of us also for you've said yourself we are the light of the world help us to be men and women of light in the dark world and may men and women boys and girls be drawn to your light and may they receive it for themselves too hear us then as we bring these prayers to you and we give you our thanks for not leaving us in the dark but bringing us into the light amen let's sing our final hymn together it's number 482 in our hymn books 482 thou whose almighty word chaos and darkness heard let there be light 482 this is the message we've heard from him and declare to you God is light in him there is no darkness at all if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his son cleanses us from all sin amen