

## Henley-in-Arden Baptist Church

“Staying Connected” 6 – Sunday 26th April 2020

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*Staying connected to God and each other while not meeting as church in the normal way*

“...My help comes from the Lord...” (Psalm 121)

I hope you are finding blessings amidst the difficulties of these times.

We are on the second of our series on the “I am” sayings of Jesus:

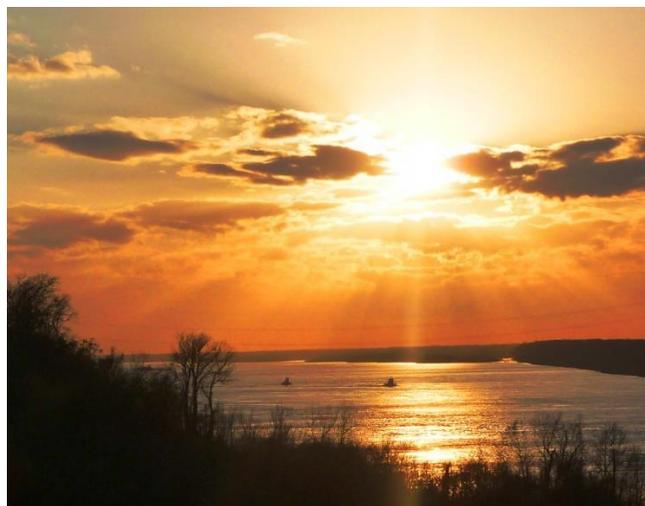
This week, “I am the light of the world”

<sup>12</sup> 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.’ (John 8:12)

The immediate setting is one of the great Jewish feasts (Tabernacles), part of which would have had light imagery, where there would be ceremony involving the lighting of candles and torches. And Jesus speaks directly into this. People need light to avoid stumbling in the darkness; and He is that light. As in so many other places, Jesus is showing that the peoples’ hopes and promises are fulfilled in Him.

This also precedes a chapter where Jesus heals a man born blind; and there is an illustration and contrast between physical blindness and spiritual blindness. (John 9:5,35-41)

The point is clear, that Jesus is the source of true light for us. In John 1:9 – right at the start of John’s gospel – we read, “The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.”



Our response, as we receive this light from Him, is primarily an attitude of gratitude; and then - and this is extraordinary - Jesus says to all who would be His followers: “You are the light of the world..... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16)!

Even at these times, in lockdown, we can find ways to ‘let our light shine’ – the light that we have received, from Him, the light of the world.

Lord Jesus, we worship You, the light of the world. We need Your light and Your help in these days; and so we pray for our world.

We pray for those experiencing hardship in many ways. For those who are unable to be with loved ones in this time of crisis. For those in hospital with Covid 19, or otherwise in need of medical care; for those who are mourning the loss of a loved one. For those struggling financially; for those living in fear amidst the uncertainty. Father, we place all these into Your tender care. Where there is a sense of darkness, bring Your light.

Lord, You are the source of all wisdom. We pray for our government; the scientists and advisors, and those working on solutions to the pandemic and its effects. Give them wisdom, we pray; and may we too ultimately look to You for the help we need. In Your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for the NHS staff, carers, and others in front-line roles. For protection, for courage and the extra strength they need. Be close to each one, we pray.

And for ourselves. Lord God, our heavenly Father, we thank You for all Your good gifts to us. Forgive us when we take You for granted. Forgive our failing and our faults. Cleanse and heal us and renew our lives again in Your service. Lord, by Your Spirit, give us the patience we need to endure the difficulties of this time. Speak comfort and peace to our hearts.. Thank You for your light and hope – in Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Amen

Do continue to tend to yourself and others – brighten up someone's day with a 'phone call perhaps.

I wonder if you are spending any time reading the Psalms.. They are rich with such variety of emotion and expression. A kind of hymn book, poetry book, and prayer book all in one. Psalm 121 encourages trust in the Lord where we might be fearful; reminding us of His ongoing care for us.

For those not online, the following may be of interest:

Services on Radio and TV this Sunday include:

- Radio 4 8:10am Sunday Worship
- BBC1 10:45am Sunday Worship

And finally, please do get in touch with me at any time

May God bless you with His peace.

Mike

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2 Corinthians 4:6

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.

*Answer to last week's quiz question: The feeding of the 5000*