

Light in the Lord

by Linda Rex

March 19, 2023, 4th Sunday in Preparation for Easter or Lent—Last Friday, like many others here in middle Tennessee, I found nighttime approaching and was unable to turn any lights on. With the power out for several hours, I had given up on trying to use the laptop and phone, wanting to save my limited battery power for emergencies. I began to bring out my old candles, and after lighting several of them, their warm glow filled the rooms in my home. It was good to be able to see, to chase away the darkness with a small bit of light.

The apostle John has a lot to say about light and darkness in his gospel and epistle. In the gospel story for this Sunday, John 9:1-41, a man who was born blind encountered Jesus. Jesus told this man, who had spent much of his life as a beggar and dependent upon others, to go to the pool of Siloam and to wash off the clay Jesus had spit on and placed upon his eyes. And he did.

On his way back from the pool, the man who had been blind encountered people who were shocked by the realization that the blind beggar they had seen every day in the temple was now able to see. This was an impossibility!

The people brought him to the Pharisees, who focused on Jesus' "sin", that he was a sinner in their eyes, rather than on the miracle of how Jesus had brought light into the blind man's darkness, changing his life forever. To them, what was more shocking than the blind man's healing was that Jesus had done something considered sinful—made clay with spit and dirt—on the Sabbath day, and even so, this man was healed.

Thankfully, the man who was born blind was not blinded by the same prejudice or pride which dominated these leaders. He was able to see what the religious leaders were unwilling to see—that Jesus was the Son of Man, the Son of God, the One who was his Lord and Savior. He believed, and his life was never the same again. The light which entered his eyes was eclipsed by the divine Light which entered his being and brought him to his knees in worship of Jesus.

The apostle Paul, in Ephesians 5:8-14, tells us we are "Light in the Lord" and because that is true, we are to "walk as children of Light." There is a difference between a life walked in Light and a life walked in darkness—the difference has to do with who we fellowship with and what we participate in. We may fellowship with the evil one or fellowship with Jesus Christ. We can participate in the things which are "deeds of darkness", like the people in John's story, who chose unbelief, dishonesty, arrogance and pride. Or we can participate in what Jesus is doing, through humility, repentance and faith, thereby bringing healing, reconciliation, and renewal to a broken and sinful world by allowing the Light to live in us and through us by the Holy Spirit.

It all begins with a person—the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who is the Light of the world. In Jesus and by the Spirit, we have been given fellowship with the Maker and Sustainer of the cosmos and all that is in it. We can participate in what Father, Son, and Spirit are doing in this cosmos, or we can participate in what the darkness—the evil one—is doing. Who we fellowship with and what we participate in is evidenced in how we live our lives day by day, and whether the result is life-giving or ends in death.

Today, this day, where are your steps taking you? Are you tired of wandering about in the darkness? Do you realize that no matter where you are or what you are doing, the Light of God shines on you, in you, and through you because of Jesus and the Holy Spirit? Do you hear Jesus' call to be washed anew in his rivers of living water, to be bathed in his wonderful light, and to turn again back into face-to-face relationship with Father, Son, and Spirit?

Lord, you are the Light of the world. I don't want to walk in darkness, but in your marvelous light, now and forever. Wash me anew in your living streams, that I may ever reflect your glory and goodness, in your name, Jesus. Amen.

"... for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says, 'Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.' " Ephesians 5:8–14 NASB