

**First of Series on Jesus Christ's great "I am ...." Statements**

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021: Jesus said "I am the light of the world"**



**Banners in Church Stretton: photograph taken by Elaine Rodgers**

Throughout March and April, we'll be thinking of eight of these "I am statements".

Over and over again using stories or parables, or in direct conversation, Jesus taught who he was and what he had been sent to do and these statements formed part of that explanation. For example:

"I am the bread of life; I am the good shepherd; I am the way, the truth and the life; I am the resurrection and the life".

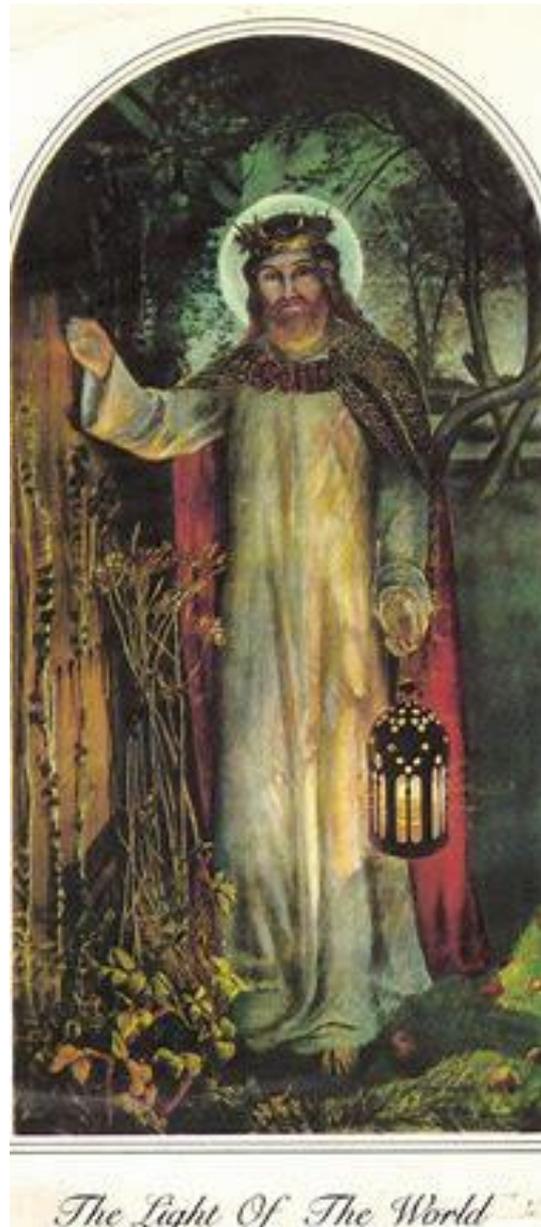
Today, we are focussing on

**Jesus said "I am the Light of the World" (John 8: 12)**

And later we'll be asking ourselves, as His 21<sup>st</sup> century followers, through this period of Lent.....

**How do we receive the light of Jesus into our lives?**

**How does this light within us, help to light the way for others to follow Jesus?**



The Light of the World (1851–1853) is described as an allegorical painting. It is by the English Pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt (1827–1910). It represents the figure of Jesus preparing to knock on an overgrown and long-unopened door, illustrating Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come into them, and will sup with them, and they with Me".

However, as with the parables which Jesus used to tell, while this is the more obvious meaning, it being described as an **allegorical painting**, suggests there is a more hidden **meaning**, waiting to be discovered by the viewer.

**Jesus has no door handle to turn. The person on the other side of the door has to choose to open the door and invite Jesus in, not just literally, but also spiritually, through opening up their life to have a relationship with Him.**

**In so doing, Jesus brings in the light of his life to the darkness of whatever is behind the door and will also guide the way forward for the one who chooses to continue to follow light Jesus, himself carries.**

**This darkness can be explained to mean the context of the world and the world's lack of understanding. It is also the sin which is our 'falling short' of the holy and loving God, both because of our deliberate sin or our negligence; our mistakes and self-preoccupation or our confusion and doubt.**

**This allegorical painting's meaning, requires us to both look deeply into it and to ourselves.**

### **A few moments of quiet**

**We say together an Opening Prayer For True Light:**

**All powerful and ever-living God,  
splendour of true light, and never ending day,  
let the radiance of your coming  
banish from our minds  
the darkness of sin.**

**We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.**

**Amen.**

## TIM HUGHES: Light Of The World Lyrics

Light of the world  
You stepped down into darkness  
Opened my eyes, let me see  
Beauty that made this heart adore You  
Hope of a life spent with You

**So here I am to worship  
Here I am to bow down  
Here I am to say that You're my God  
You're altogether lovely  
altogether worthy, altogether wonderful to me**

King of all days  
Oh so highly exalted  
Glorious in Heaven above  
Humbly You came to the earth You created  
All for love's sake became poor

**So here I am to worship  
Here I am to bow down  
Here I am to say that You're my God  
You're altogether lovely  
altogether worthy, altogether wonderful to me**

And I'll never know how much it cost  
To see my sin upon that cross  
I'll never know how much it cost  
To see my sin upon that cross

**So here I am to worship  
Here I am to bow down  
Here I am to say that You're my God  
You're altogether lovely  
altogether worthy, altogether wonderful to me**

Source: <https://www.elyrics.net/read/t/tim-hughes-lyrics/light-of-the-world-lyrics.html>>click here</a>

## **John chapter 8, verses 1 – 12 from ‘The Passion’ Translation**

**Jesus walked up the Mount of Olives near the city, where he spent the night. Then at dawn Jesus appeared in the temple courts again, and soon all the people gathered around to listen to his words, so he sat down and taught them. Then in the middle of his teaching, the religious scholars and the Pharisees broke through the crowd and brought a woman who had been caught in the act of committing adultery and made her stand in the middle of everyone.**

**Then they said to Jesus, “Teacher, we caught this woman in the very act of adultery. Doesn’t Moses’ law command us to stone to death a woman like this? Tell us, what do you say we should do with her?” They were only testing Jesus, because they hoped to trap him with his own words and accuse him of breaking the laws of Moses.**

**But Jesus didn’t answer them. Instead, he simply bent down and wrote in the dust with his finger. Angry, they kept insisting that he answer their question, so Jesus stood up and looked at them and said, “Let’s have the man who has never had a sinful desire throw the first stone at her.”**

**And then he bent over again and wrote some more words in the dust.**

**Upon hearing that, her accusers slowly left the crowd, one at a time, beginning with the oldest to the youngest, with a convicted conscience. Until finally, Jesus was left alone, with the woman still standing there in front of him.**

**So he stood back up and said to her, “Dear woman, where are your accusers? Is there no one here to condemn you?”**

**Looking around, she replied, “I see no one, Lord.”**

**Jesus said, “Then I certainly don’t condemn you either. Go, and from now on, be free from a life of sin.”**

**Then Jesus said, “I am light to the world and those who embrace me will experience life-giving light, and they will never walk in darkness.”**

Let's look more closely at this passage and find out what's hidden for us to learn about Jesus as 'The light of the World'.

Jesus walked up the Mount of Olives near the city, where he spent the night. **Then at dawn Jesus appeared** in the temple courts again, and soon **all the people gathered** around to listen to his words, so he sat down and taught them.

Jesus appeared with the dawn light, part of His Father's creation. John chapter 1 says: **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning...in Him was life and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it"**.

There Jesus was there in amongst the people. For anyone there to hear and to see, the 'focus'/ the 'light' was turned on Jesus. But only some would receive the light of understanding of the words which he, 'The Word' had for them. Only some of them would really want to hear and see the importance of his teaching. The others would choose not to believe and not to follow him.

**Then in the middle of his teaching, the religious scholars and the Pharisees broke through the crowd and brought a woman who had been caught in the act of committing adultery and made her stand in the middle of everyone.**

Here was a woman who spent most of her life in the darkness maybe literally of squalor and, with maybe her clandestine meetings. But here she was, brought out into the light, into the middle of the gathering. The spotlight of Jesus's love, forgiveness and restoration was about to shine on her with him there.

**Then they said to Jesus, "Teacher, we caught this woman in the very act of adultery. Doesn't Moses' law command us to stone to death a woman like this? Tell us, what do you say we should do with her?" They were only testing Jesus, because they hoped to trap him with his own words and accuse him of breaking the laws of Moses.**

It may have been true that there had been breaking of the law, a sin which had been committed. But Jesus was about to shine the light of his perspective on to this situation.

**Jesus didn't answer them. Instead, he simply bent down and wrote in the dust with his finger. Angry, they kept insisting that he answer their question, so Jesus stood up and looked at them and said, "Let's have the man who has never had a sinful desire throw the first stone at her." And then he bent over again and wrote some more words in the dust.**

The religious scholars were going by the letter of the Law, but Jesus was shining his light on the essence of the law. The Apostle Paul would later write in his letter to the Romans, following his own conversion to faith, in chapter 3: 23: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". When the scholars left, it was the woman who was in the light. They disappeared into the darkness of the limits they were putting on their understanding. They chose not to want to hear and see what Jesus was teaching them.

**Upon hearing that, her accusers slowly left the crowd, one at a time, beginning with the oldest to the youngest, with a convicted conscience. Until finally, Jesus was left alone, with the woman still standing there in front of him.**

**So he stood back up and said to her, "Dear woman, where are your accusers? Is there no one here to condemn you?"**

**Looking around, she replied, "I see no one, Lord."**

**Jesus said, "Then I certainly don't condemn you either. Go, and from now on, be free from a life of sin."**

Imagine this woman, waiting in fear and dread for the stoning which would kill her..... then she opened her eyes and the light of true understanding of what had happened came in. She was forgiven and she was free.

**Then Jesus said, "I am light to the world and those who embrace me will experience life-giving light, and they will never walk in darkness."**

**In this reading we are led to consider:**

**the light of knowledge from God's perspective;**

**the light of understanding from God's compassion;**

**the light of seeing with eyes of faith;**

**and to receive the light of God's gracious, redeeming, restoring love.**

**15 minute Break out rooms to consider:**

**How do we receive the light of Jesus into our lives?**

**How does this light within us, help light the way for others to follow Jesus?**

**God longs for us to see people the way he does. He longs for us to follow his teaching and to want to see the hidden meaning of his ways. It requires us to open up 'the door' and invite him into our lives, receiving his perspective on life, through his teaching and our understanding.....**

**..... not just for ourselves, but so Jesus's light can shine on others and lead them to Him too.**

***Pause***

**Let us pray:**

**All powerful and ever-living God, splendour of true light, and never ending day, let the radiance of your coming banish from our minds the darkness of sin. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.**

***Pause***

**We say together:**

**God our Saviour,  
help us to follow the light  
and live the truth.**

**In you, we have been born again,  
as sons and daughters of light.**

**May we be your witnesses before all the world.  
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.**

**Amen.**

Open our eyes, Lord,  
we want to see Jesus,  
to reach out and touch him,  
and say that we love him.

Open our ears, Lord,  
and help us to listen.

Open our eyes, Lord,  
we want to see Jesus.

Source: [Sing the Faith #2086](#)

Father God, **with you there is no darkness. Your character has no shadows, and you are pure and good. Yet in our broken world, we see so much darkness around us. Pain, sickness, and disease are in our communities, in many of our homes and surrounding those without homes.**

**Bring your light and restoring presence to the dark places in our lives. Give us faith to say with the psalmist, “Lord, you light my lamp; my God illuminates my darkness.”**

### *Pause*

Open our eyes, Lord,  
we want to see Jesus,  
to reach out and touch him,  
and say that we love him.

Open our ears, Lord,  
and help us to listen.

Open our eyes, Lord,  
we want to see Jesus.

**We pray in silence for those concerns on our hearts today, for our world, our communities, our families and friends and ourselves.**

Heavenly Father, in the busyness of today, help us to take a moment to be still and sit with you. To slow down, breathe deeply, and release our burdens to your strong hand. You are trustworthy, good, and true, and we thank you for caring for us so deeply and beautifully. Please give us your light and open our eyes to see you at work today.

Open our eyes, Lord,  
we want to see Jesus,  
to reach out and touch him,  
and say that we love him.

Open our ears, Lord,  
and help us to listen.

Open our eyes, Lord,  
we want to see Jesus.

### **Final Prayer of Blessing to be Filled With Holy Light**

Lord,  
as daylight fills the sky,  
fill us with your holy light.  
May our lives mirror our love for you  
whose wisdom has brought us into being,  
and whose care guides us on our way.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

**Shine, Jesus, Shine (Lord, the Light of Your Love) by Graham Kendrick**

Lord, the light of Your love is shining  
In the midst of the darkness, shining  
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us  
Set us free by the truth You now bring us  
Shine on me, shine on me

Shine, Jesus, shine  
Fill this land with the Father's glory  
Blaze, Spirit, blaze  
Set our hearts on fire  
Flow, river, flow  
Flood the nations with grace and mercy  
Send forth Your word  
Lord, and let there be light

Lord, I come to Your awesome presence  
From the shadows into Your radiance;  
By the blood I may enter Your brightness  
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness  
Shine on me, shine on me

As we gaze on Your kingly brightness  
So our faces display Your likeness  
Ever changing from glory to glory  
Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story  
Shine on me, shine on me

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2kDsqGeoLU>

**Notices and Coffee!**