

## SERMON

Luke 9:28-36

The Light of Christ

Nunawading and Waverley, 27-2-22

Dear friends in Christ,

In these days, we have seen darkness, the darkness of aggression, war, invasion and lust for power. You and I who are in Christ, live in him who is the light. We may ask, where is God in all of this when the darkness of evil emerging from the East is spreading to the West?

We must understand that there are two epochs: there is the epoch of man and the epoch of the new man, the one **chosen** by God. Two epochs. You know the first only too well. It is darkness, violence, the abuse of the innocent, exploitation of the environment, identity politics, quarrelling, endless division and disunity, terrorism, and the slaughter of the innocent. This first epoch is the era of the strong, the law of the jungle and the survival of the fittest, the place of the dictator but also of the weak, the ones who say they are leaders but are scared, helpless and confused. That is the epoch of darkness.

There is the epoch of light. It dawned when Jesus Christ was born. His teachers in the temple were amazed at him when he was only 12. Rather than push himself forward as the hero for the time, he retreated to the wilderness and suffered there, deprived of food and water for 40 days. Through suffering he discovered the will of his Father that it would not be by might, or by armies, by empire, or by money or by politics that the world could be changed but by his love, his sacrifice on the cross and his victory from an empty tomb that would create a new time for all. His only weapons, then, were sacrifice, love and forgiveness.

His light shone in the country areas through to the laneways of Jerusalem. A person was blind and begging in the streets; we even know his name: **Bartimaeus**. Jesus made him see. A leper, completely untouchable, came to him and begged for help. Jesus did not turn his back on him but we read in the eye-witness accounts that **he reached out and touched him!** Of course, he was healed. Those who did things that brought them shame, who stole money or

used their bodies in the wrong way, he called them to himself and forgave all their wrongs. Light began to shine. He proclaimed that children and even babies belong in his kingdom and the women should not be second class people. He spent time teaching them, honouring them and lifting them up. Wherever he was, whatever he said, taught or did, light broke through the darkness.

This is the new era that has dawned in the world that you and I who trust him and have given ourselves to him, now belong to. This new era was revealed when Jesus went with Peter, James and John into the mountains. Though the Son of God, Jesus looked like anyone else but while he was praying **the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightening**. His light and glory began to shine. In the old epoch of darkness, when people exert themselves for money, for status, for the best the world can offer, they never shine. In fact, our faces change as worry and stress and ill health affect them. In the new epoch of light, Jesus strained towards his Father. His focus was on prayer, doing his Father's will, on holiness, sacrifice, love and goodness, and when he did this, he shone. Putin can certainly not shine like this but if we are honest with ourselves, nor can we. There just isn't the closeness to God or the purity and goodness within us to come out as light.

What we can do is live in Jesus' light. It will mean first of all **listening to him** as you are doing now. He is God's Son and our link to the new epoch, the kingdom of love, justice and brotherhood and sisterhood. How can the world be one, united in peace without fear or jealousy? Only when we step into the light of Jesus, listen to him and trust him.

It also means that we avoid trying to create our own kingdoms, our own special time for ourselves. Peter wanted Jesus to stay on the mountain with **Moses and Elijah**. This place is going to be the centre of the world, he thought. We should do our best on this earth, try to live as children of the light but also realise that no human being other than Christ, can establish a proper kingdom. Whenever human beings try to do so, slavery and bloodshed are the result. We can do little things to point people to Jesus and to do good, to act kindly and love justice. These things belong to the light and will last forever.