



10 January, 2021

“As in water face reflects face,
So the heart of man reflects man.”

Proverbs 27:19

Continuing the theme of “light” we celebrated over Christmas

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a Great Light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has Light shined.*

Isaiah 9:2

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WHEN FINISHED USE THE BACK BUTTON TO RETURN HERE**

Welcome to worship on the cold and frosty Sunday morning! There is nothing cold and frosty about our God whom we worship, and His Jesus our Christ in whom we delight and offer our praise! Our Father God warmly welcomes you to join in worship, *“on earth, exactly as it is in Heaven”!*

Let's begin with PRAYER

Eternal God! Creator of Life! You delight in everything You have created, and You delight in us, the pinnacle of Your creation! You made us in Your image, but we not not measure up to Your image, loving Father. Who are we that you should be mindful of us, but that you see us through the righteousness of Your Son, Jesus our Christ, who cleanses us when we ask forgiveness, who gives us strength when repent. We bow in awe of You our Merciful Master, who has prepared a place for each of us at Your eternal table.

People all over the world wake up to different emotions this morning: those grieving the loss of loved ones in a plane crash in Indonesia, those who lost a treasured family member or friend through disease, sickness, war and civil unrest, those who struggle with jobs, income and broken relationships, and those who celebrate the birth of child, the bonding of a relationship through marriage, the celebration of success, and many more emotions in between.

Father, comfort those who call on you in the Name of Jesus, grant Your joy to those who celebrate and let The Holy Spirit minister to each one who is looking for You and finds it difficult to leave familiar ways and walk a new path with You. **AMEN.**

HYMN Lord, the Light of Your Love is Shining

READING

Gospel of John, 1:1-18

(J.B. Philips Translation)

“At the beginning God expressed Himself. That personal expression, that Word, was with God, and was God, and He existed with God from the beginning. All creation took place through Him, and none took place without Him. In Him appeared life and this life was the light of mankind. The light still shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never (cannot ever) put it out.

The gospel’s beginning on earth

A man called John was sent by God as a witness to the light, so that any man who heard his testimony might believe in The Light. This man was not himself The Light: he was sent simply as a personal witness to that Light.

That was the True Light which shines upon every man as he comes into the world. He came into the world—the world he had created—and the world failed to recognise him. He came into his own creation, and his own people would not accept him. Yet wherever men did accept him he gave them the power to become sons of God. These were the men who truly believed in him, and their birth depended not on the course of nature nor on any impulse or plan of man, but on God.

So the word of God became a human being and lived among us. We saw his splendour (the splendour as of a father’s only son), full of grace and truth. And it was about him that John stood up and testified, exclaiming: *“Here is the one I was speaking about when I said that although he would come after me he would always be in front of me; for he existed before I was born!”*

Indeed, every one of us has shared in his riches—there is a grace in our lives because of his grace. For while the Law was given by Moses, love and truth came through Jesus Christ. It is true that no one has ever seen God at any time. Yet the divine and only Son, who lives in the closest intimacy with the Father, has made him known.”

HYMN I Stand Amazed in the Presence, of Jesus the Nazarene

PRAYER of CONFESSION and RESTITUTION

Lord our God. We are privileged to thank and praise You this morning. Our lives are comfortable, perhaps not as comfortable as those we envy, but You are faithful in looking after us and providing for us. Forgive us Loving Father for not being satisfied with what we have received from You.

We dedicate to you the work of our hands, the thoughts of our mind, and the feelings and emotions of our hearts. Cleanse all that is not of You and not honouring to You, and fill our every desire to rejoice in the glory of Your kingdom, which you have given to Your Son Jesus our Christ.

Caring and Compassionate Lord! In our city and across our land, there are many for whom the new year is not as happy as we carelessly wish them. Many are fearful for their jobs, of looming money problems, of strained relationships which show no sign of restoration; many are also fearful of their health and that of loved ones.

Lord of Wisdom and Love! The future is unknown to us, but known to you in perfect detail. Give us the humility to detach ourselves from our own plans and schemes, and place our trust in you, to have faith in the direction in which You lead us. Remind us, every moment of every day, Lord, You always keep your promises and remind us too, that You deliver on Your promise, in your perfect time, not ours.

Loving Father, we bring before you the ones we love and care for, those who depend on us, including our faithfulness to prayer, and we name them now

Teach us this year, how our words and actions will constantly point to You, that others see Your love shine through us. In all that we do this year Father, may we never lose sight of You and never ever be outside of Your love, we ask in the Name most Holy, the Name of Jesus our Christ. **AMEN.**

HYMN How Great Thou Art

Lauren Daigle - Hillsong UNITED

MESSAGE:

The Book of Proverbs is a delightful collection of “wisdom-truths”. There are 31 chapters in this book, one for every day of the month (Alright! So one day in a year you will have to read 4 chapters and a few times a year, 2 chapters in a day). Should you decide to start this habit of reading a chapter of Proverbs a day, the wisdom-truths may seem overwhelming at first, but reading through the book 12 times a year, and repeating it over the years, the Holy Spirit will focus your eyes, heart, mind and soul on wisdom and truths that are significant to you, at that time! That’s the beauty and the awesomeness of the Word of God.

In its original poetic form, Proverbs 27:19 reads, *“As in water face reflects face, So the heart of man reflects man”*. If you feel excluded by the male expression, this might help better understand the verse, *“Just as water mirrors your face, so your face mirrors your heart.”* (*The Message*)

Over the years, I have had the delightful experience of watching an infant see their face in a mirror for the first time (including both our children, which seems like an eon ago!). Some are frightened and start crying, many are amused and bemused, some want to make contact with their image, other use baby-babble to converse with their mirror-other; only once have I seen an infant laugh at their own reflection in the mirror.

Infants display a sublime innocence in not realising the mirror-image as being a reflection of themselves! Try that as an adult, and you run the risk of being sectioned! This verse in Proverbs raises these questions: *What do you see when you see your image in the mirror? Does it reflect what is in your heart? Do others see what you see?* The only person who can answer honestly, is yourself.

Each one of us is created in the image of God our creator and life-giver. The first man and woman reflected their Maker’s image as they enjoyed His creation as much as he did, until that image of God in them was marred by sin, the act

of disobedience by which the glory of God in them was cloaked over. When all they could see was the glory of God in each other, now they saw each other's nakedness, something to be covered up. The human heart allowed deception to take root and it has remained in the human heart.

The prophet Jeremiah lamented, *"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?"*¹ This condition of the human heart is reflected through the human face. Jeremiah continues to provide a solution. *I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives.*²

This truth is borne out in the life of the man who became the Apostle Paul. His heart was full of murderous thoughts, but an unplanned encounter with the Son of God whose followers he was persecuting to death, turned his life around. Did others see the change in his heart? Probably not, because it took all of Barnabas' persuasive powers to convince the Church in Jerusalem that Paul had a genuine change of heart. It took Barnabas to tell the believers in Jerusalem, *Paul's heart has changed! See him and you will discern for yourselves!*³

Paul later admitted to the Church at Corinth, *Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now, is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.*⁴

While waiting for that day, the root of deception that is firmly embedded our hearts, continues to mask the reflection of the glory of God in our lives. The only way out is to accept the new life Christ offers. His defeat of death is the root-killer which breathes new life into our hearts. Jesus said, *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*⁵. Imagine, if your heart is filled with the abundant presence of God, what abundance of the Glory of God will you speak! **AMEN.**

¹ Jeremiah 17:9

² Jeremiah 17:10

³ Acts 9:26-30

⁴ 1 Corinthians 13:12

⁵ Matthew 12:34; Luke 6:45

PRAYER

Thank You Father for sending Jesus as the Light of the world, to enlighten us about You through His teaching, and light the way into a new relationship with You in eternity, for Eternity.

I pray Father, that His Light can be the abundance of my heart, and my mouth and my life will speak praise of Him and Him to whom my life belongs.

Thank you Father for this great gift! In the name of Him who made it possible, I pray. **AMEN.**

HYMN Make me a Channel of Your Peace

BLESSING

Walk the path that Christ walks to bring love and justice to those who sit in darkness and those who live in bondage. Journey with hope filled hearts, as the image Christ grows within you. Let The Holy Spirit speak to you and open your hearts to follow Him, Who has called you to His home. **AMEN**

HYMN Let my Light Shine for Jesus

Be blessed and be a blessing, in the Name of Christ, for the Glory of God!

Have a great week!