

JAAL – Jesus, Light of the World

Joh 9:1-11 Psa 27 2Co 4:1-6

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+ A couple of years ago, in my last parish, I got to know a man who is blind, and I came to appreciate the difficulties associated with living that way...

- Having to memorise phone numbers
- Not being able to make a shopping list
- Needing help to go shopping, and being unable to see the goods on the supermarket shelves
- Not being able to find things that you have put down

You can survive when you are blind  
You can find enjoyment in life  
But there is a whole dimension missing

In John's Gospel we have the story of a man who was born blind. To some extent he didn't even know what he was missing. He knew nothing of colour and contrast, people's faces, the scenery and things of beauty. There was a whole world, right in front of him, that he simply could not see!

Jesus sends him off to wash in the Pool of Siloam, and he goes home, able to see. Such is the transformation that some people are not sure whether it is the same person.

In this story though, we see much more than physical blindness. We see a blindness that is potentially much worse – spiritual blindness.

And it's the Pharisees – the religious leaders who display this blindness.

They get involved because Jesus broke their laws by healing the man on the Sabbath Day. Such was their blindness that they had lost sight of what was really important.

They were more concerned about the rules and regulations than they were about a man gaining his sight for the first time.

Jesus' word to them was to accuse them of being blind...

- Blind to what was important
- Blind to the real truth about God
- Blind to who Jesus really is
- Blind to their own blindness and need.

They were living in darkness, and they didn't know it. And such was the darkness, that they could not recognise Jesus, the light of the World.

**NOTHING HAS CHANGED.**

Paul in his letter to the Corinthian Church, says this...

*<sup>4</sup>The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Cor 4:4)*

**Who is this “God of this age”?**

You might want to label him, “The Devil” or “Satan” though, in fact, a god is anyone or *anything* that we hold most important in our lives. Whatever occupies most of our time and thinking...

In Noah's Day we read that *<sup>5</sup>The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. (Genesis 6)*

There we have a whole world blinded by it's own evil, which had become ingrained in their way of life. A darkness so great that only one man stands out as light – and that man was Noah.

(It's worth noting that in the NT – Peter seems to be saying that Jesus spoke through Noah in those days, suggesting that Jesus, as the light of the world, was at work *before* he was born on earth. 1 Pet 3:18-22)

Much later when the people of Israel settled in the land of Canaan, we read on a couple of occasions that they “Did what was right in their own eyes” (Judges) which led them to worship all kinds of gods. They lived in darkness, and they reaped the consequences over and over again. They had many gods, but their primary god was themselves – They did what was right in their own eyes

TODAY WE SEE A SIMILAR PICTURE, because people are still people. We have more science and technology, but human nature remains the same.

Like Noah's day there are people today who are imprisoned by choices and ways of life that have led to addictions. Evils which have taken over and blinded them to any hope of a reasonable future.

But they are not the majority...

“Doing what is right in your own eyes” is probably the most pervasive blindness. Our media is saturated with three little words...

Me, (Remember Windows ME)

My (My Account, My NRMA and so on)

and more recently, *i* (think *iphone*, *ipod* and I've noticed that *i* turning up in other business names and products.

I'm not saying these things are evil. What I am saying is that we have learned to think of ourselves as our own masters, doing our own thing,

in the way that **I** think is best. No one will ever tell **me** what to do and think!!

If you add to this the relative wealth and comfort in which we live you can see that a huge number of people are today, blind to the darkness in which they live, and blind to their needs.

Like my blind friend

They can survive

They can enjoy life

But there's a whole dimension missing

And they don't even realise it!!

And yet there are some misgivings in society today...

The people who have put together the **Jesus All About Life ads**, came up with the following after tapping into what people are thinking about...

The TV advert asks...

How come the more we have, the more we want

There are more friends, but less friendships

(notice my cousin's daughter has over 300 friends on Facebook)

There is more hope but more uncertainty

More convenience but less patience

A healthy body is still not good enough (body image)

The best things always have to end

There is some recognition then, that all is not well.

Somewhere we have lost our way.

The things we put value on, don't come up with the goods

They don't satisfy

We are wandering around in the dark without direction.

I don't know whether you've stood in a cave when the lights went out, when you literally can't see your hand in front of your face.

It can be a very frightening experience, especially if you are on your own.

I remember talking to two missionaries who had been over in northern Kenya. The people there are afraid to go out at night. Even their bishop showed fear of the night – and not without reason, for there is danger associated with the darkness.

But listen now to the first chapter of John's Gospel as he writes about the Jesus he knew so well.

*<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

There seem to be an increasing number of strident atheists out there, raising all the usual questions about God allowing evil in the world, and claiming that Christianity is actually a dangerous thing.

However, none of these people is offering a solution to the deepest needs of society, which is to find some sort of meaning and fulfilment in life.

This is why the one who was with God,  
and was God,  
in the beginning,  
when everything was created  
and for whom everything was created...  
actually sheds light on all these questions!

For when you think carefully, Jesus has the answer to just about every significant question you can ask – including the one about suffering in the world.

The Bible has important and wise things to say about body image, and meaningful relationships, and wanting more and more, and patience and things coming to an end.

In fact the questions that concern people the most are central themes of both the Bible in general, and Jesus' teaching in particular.

Not only can Jesus shed light on your **questions**, he can also shed light in your **heart**...

Paul wrote to the Corinthians (2Co 4)

*<sup>6</sup>For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

The Pharisees of Jesus' day chose not to see the evidence that Jesus is God's Son.

They chose not to see their own deep-seated need to be changed. They chose eventually to crucify the life and light of the world.

But the darkness could not overcome the light of the world.

Jesus' death became the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world and God raised him from the dead.

You have a choice today.

Do you want God's light to shine in you?

Do you want to see things the way they really are?

Do you want the dimension that's missing from your life?

Are you ready to put your trust in the one who said...

<sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ?