

Speaking to the soul



Light of the world

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have

to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.” John 8:12

Jesus spoke these words during the Festival of Tabernacles, which was a seven-day holiday at the end of the harvest. It was one of three pilgrimage festivals, so Jerusalem would have been heaving with people. On the first evening, there was a ceremony called The Illumination of the Temple. Four great candelabra were placed in the centre of the Court of the Women and, when darkness came, they were lit. It is said that the light from them was so great that every courtyard in the city was illuminated by their brilliance! This was a powerful backdrop to Jesus’ claim that he himself was the light of the world. In the Old Testament, God is repeatedly identified as light, so there is no doubt that in this bold statement, Jesus was claiming to be the Son of God.

The great candelabra were impressive, but however amazing a candle might be, there comes a time when it runs out. Jesus offers himself as the light that will never go out. Whatever difficulties and challenges we face, he will continue to shine. All we need to do is follow him and keep our eyes fixed upon him because the darkness is never far away. At any moment if we head out into the dark we are likely to stumble and fall.

When I lived in a village in India, I often experienced deep darkness. It was dark by about 6pm, and the Indian family with whom I lived rarely ventured out after that time. They knew it was too dangerous. However, I sometimes needed to go out after dark, and I remember running across our compound fearful of the snakes and huge rats that were lurking all around. It was all so very different in the daylight

when I could walk with confidence. That's exactly what Jesus offers to us. We don't need to fear the darkness when we allow his light to shine in our lives.

QUESTION

In what specific ways are you conscious of the need for Jesus' light in your life?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, light of the world, help me to follow you more and more closely each day. Amen

Photograph - Keukenhof gardens blooming spring flowers by the pond. Colourful tulips and blue Muscari flowers. Beautiful ornamental garden landscape at Lisse, Netherlands.

