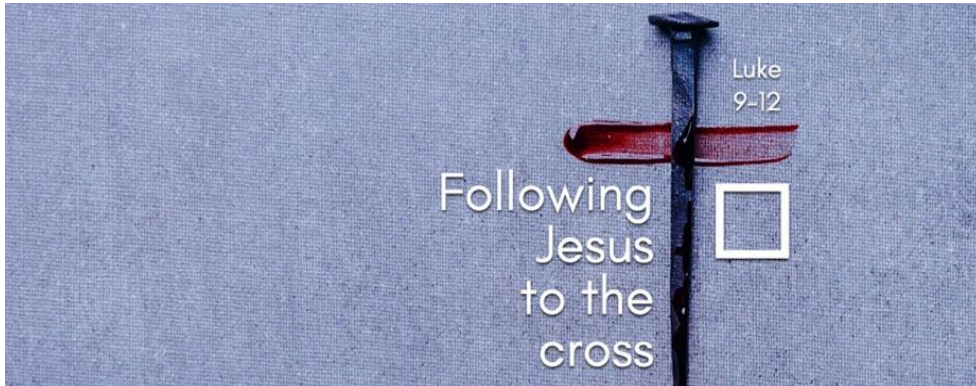




This Sunday we continued our series from Luke 9-12 in which we are following Jesus to the cross. We know from Psalm 119v105 (and other places) that the Bible is a light. But it is not just a light in the sense that it is good and bright and points us to Jesus who is the light. It is also a light in the sense that it is intended to light our path and guide us as we live our lives.

However, we can often slip into feeling that the Bible is a somewhat inadequate light for the questions and struggles we face.

In this passage Jesus uses the metaphor of light to teach about who he is and what his teaching is, and how we can and should respond to him.

1 – See that the light of Jesus shines (v33)

This verse follows immediately on from Jesus' warning that his audience should be quick to respond to his teaching and repent because in him "something greater" than Jonah and Solomon is here. Although the link is not immediately obvious, it seems that Jesus is describing himself as the light: God has given us the light of Jesus; he has not hidden that light. Both the person and the teaching of Jesus are plain and clear to see. Though he was born into and grew up in humility (so that he could fulfil his mission and die for us), and though there is much in our Bibles that we will spend our whole lives grappling to understand, believe and practice, there is also a wonderful simplicity and clarity to what Jesus taught. If we have been given the Spirit, we can understand the Bible. Little children can understand it! The problem is not lack of light, but whether we will see the light.

2 – Take in Jesus' light... (v34-35)

Jesus changes the metaphor here. The lamp now seems to be us and our receptivity of Jesus' teaching. When we take in Jesus' teaching, our whole bodies – our whole selves – are filled with light and health. This is a great teaching, but is also a hard one, as it denies the popular idea that there is an 'inner light' within each of us (cf. some of our pop songs!). Jesus is clear that we need light from outside; light that only he can provide (see his command in v35). We must be wary of going to shiny things that may glitter and glimmer but that won't light up our ways like Jesus' words can. Making the most of the morsel (digging deep, by the Spirit's power, into seemingly 'little' truths), and finding the principle in practice (a story that teaches the issue) can be helpful things to do.

3 – ...that you might be filled with light (v36)

Though the passage contains a warning, it ends on a wonderful promise. If we see Jesus is the light and take in his light and live by it, we will be filled with light. We will be entirely light and every part of us will be light. The light of Jesus will utterly transform us and our lives, and we will be radiant – we will be the light shining before others (Matthew 5v14) as we point people not to ourselves and to our greatness, but to the light of the world (John 8v12).

Here are a few optional questions you might want to use with your group...

1. What do you make of this cryptic little passage? How do you think it fits with what comes before and after? Are you convinced by the close link with v14-16 and v29-32?
2. In what ways are you tempted to think that the light of Jesus' teaching doesn't shine very brightly – for you? for the church as a whole? in wider society?
3. To what (glittering and glimmering shiny) things do you tend to turn to find truth and guidance before/instead of turning to Jesus' words?
4. How can we learn to go to God's word first with our struggles? What practical steps can we take?
5. What do you think v36 means, and why is it such a wonderful promise?