



Luke 11:33–36

33 'No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. 34 Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are healthy, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are unhealthy, your body also is full of darkness. 35 See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. 36 Therefore, if your whole body is

full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be just as full of light as when a lamp shines its light on you.'

Reflection

(Today's reflection is given by Craig Tubman)

Either side of this teaching from Jesus you have darkness.

Right before is a condemnation of the current generation for not responding to Jesus as the Son of God. Right after we have Jesus giving one of his strongest condemnations on the religious leaders of his day, calling them hypocrites full of greed and wickedness.

Here in chapter 11 we have the darkness that comes from rejecting Jesus and the darkness that is cast by manipulative and selfish leaders. But in between both we have this ray of light. This picture of what responding to Jesus properly can look like and it all revolves around this metaphor of light.

Light is fantastic. It reveals, it guides, it illuminates, it makes sense of things, it allows for sight. Especially in the context of the ancient world, there was no electricity, there were no street lights or downlights or glow from the screen of your iPhone. Everyone knew that once the sun set, the world was a dark place until the sun rose again. Only a fool would light a lamp and put it under a bowl, you're denying the whole purpose of the lamp to reveal, to

guide, to illuminate, and to makes sense of things, to allow for sight.

This is easy enough to understand. But then Jesus goes on a very wordy description of our own eyes being the lamp of our bodies and challenging us as to whether we are full of light or full of darkness. This is all very confusing. I think one reason it's confusing is that perhaps we are expecting Jesus to be referring to us as the 'light of the world' as he does to his disciples in Matthew 5. So it's all very confusing when we come expecting this to then have Jesus words flip to refer to our eyes and our bodies and everything else.

The key to understanding Jesus' teaching here in Luke 11 is to realise that the light which must shine and not be covered is a

reference to Jesus, not to ourselves. He is the light that reveals, guides, illuminates and makes sense of things. He must continue to shine, even though some in his generation do not recognise the light and others lead people away from the light.

When Jesus says,

‘Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are healthy, your whole body also is full of light.’

He is giving a cryptic challenge for us to see Jesus for who he really is. If we see Jesus as the light of the world and respond appropriately then our whole lives will be transformed. For,

‘When your eyes are healthy (that is,

when you are seeing things as they really are), your whole body also is full of light.’

Of course, the opposite is also true, when your eyes are not seeing things as they really are it has holistic implications: ‘But when they are unhealthy, your body also is full of darkness’, no doubt this being a reference to the unbelieving generation and the hypocritical religious leaders that surround this passage.

Jesus’ final word of encouragement is to be a man or woman who is full of light. How do I achieve such illumination? By setting my eyes on Jesus, recognising him as he truly is – the light of the world. And this brings us to the heart of Christian faith. The purpose of light is to allow

for sight. It is in doing this that it reveals, guides and it makes sense of things. Thus to see Jesus as he really is also involves responding and following him as God's saviour, peacemaker and king. This not only sheds light on our own darkness that requires change but also allows us to be a blessing to others as we are shaped more into the likeness of Jesus.

Think & Pray

So I wonder, as we reflect upon these words, where it is that you cast your gaze? What are your eyes focussing on and how is this impacting your life? Are you in the light or the darkness? This of course is all metaphorical but the outworkings are deeply practical. If Jesus is the trustworthy king of God's kingdom then we can trust

him to speak into our lives and challenge our greed, our self-obsession, our anger, our lust and our envy. We can trust his word that to love God and others is the way to life. And we can trust that through him we really are children of God looking ahead to our eternal inheritance.

I wonder how such a reality can shape your own words, thoughts and actions this day? And how through casting your gaze on Jesus you may be a light in a dark place.

Why not take some time to pray to God and bring your thoughts before him?