

Morning Service, Sunday 25th January – led by Pastor Peter Gooch



Good to have Peter back with us in this New Year. He'd brought his computer and PowerPoint slides, and he hoped that the Gremlins that had struck last time had been banished. At least one had remained hidden in his computer, but after a brief pause following the first slide, we got under way.

Children of God and the Light of Christ

"Who are God's children?" Peter asked and referred us to John's Gospel for the answer. All who received Christ and believed in His name would be given the power to become children of God. This was not something to be achieved by natural means or by being born of a human father, but rather it was God Himself who became their Father.

Jesus was described as the eternal and incarnate Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God." Everything had been created through Him, and in Him was life, which was the light of all humanity. The light shone in the darkness, and the darkness could not

overcome it. The divine nature and matchless greatness of Jesus Christ was declared by John, who highlighted His eternal existence, a distinct person from the Father yet being one with Him, and His role as Creator and source of all spiritual light and life.

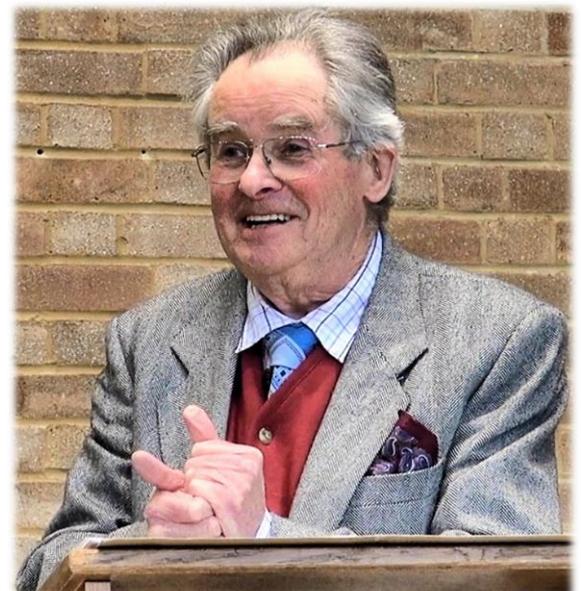
Jesus was the light and life for all people. All the spiritual life and understanding that humanity had ever known had come from Christ. Adam and Eve, before the fall, and all who had experienced deliverance from sin, had received their light and life from Him. Nonetheless, many throughout history had refused to know Him or even recognise their need for a Saviour. The light of Christ continued to shine in the darkness of human sin, though it is not always understood or accepted.

Peter reminded us of the gravity of sin and the desperate wickedness of a person's natural heart, as seen in the need for the eternal God Himself to take away the sin of the world. Sin had been shown to be far more abhorrent in God's sight than most realised, establishing the depth of humanity's need for salvation.

A Christian's hope was founded in Christ, Immanuel, God with us. In Him, believers found a strong and lasting foundation for their lives and future. Jesus Christ, being eternal God, was able to save all who came to God through Him, offering a relationship that extended into eternity.

John the Baptist, sent from God, had borne witness to this light so that all might believe, but Jesus had not been recognised by the world He'd created. Even His own people had not received Him. Despite being foretold in the Scriptures and expected by the Jews, He was rejected, despised, and ultimately crucified. Yet, not all had rejected Him. And those who did receive Him and believed in His name were given the right to become children of God.

Christ would always have followers, and He conferred upon them the privilege of being called God's children, adopting them into His family and granting them a dignity and love that surpassed all earthly status or suffering. Though they might be few and despised by the world, they were cherished by a loving Father, provided for in this life, and promised eternal glory. Believers needed to examine themselves to see if they bore the marks of new birth: a sense of sin, faith in Jesus, love for others, righteous living, and separation from the world.



Becoming a child of God required receiving Christ as Saviour and believing in Him wholeheartedly. The Bible made it clear that all were in need of God's grace: everyone deserved God's wrath because of human sin. Grace—God's Riches at Christ's Expense—brought forgiveness, salvation, adoption, eternal life, and a home in heaven, all made possible through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. This grace was a gift that had to be personally accepted; only those who did so become children of God. It was available to all, but only a few accepted and received it. Those who did were spiritually transformed, renewed, and sanctified. Paul's letter to Titus affirmed that the grace of God had appeared, offering salvation to all people, and each person had to personally accept this glorious truth.