

The following devotional was written by Rhett Hardy, a woman who loves God and His Word and has undergone treatment for conjunctival melanoma in her eye. Today she is cancer free with a new appreciation and understanding of Jesus statement, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life”* (John 8:12).

JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

According to Scripture, the first thing God spoke into existence was light. Genesis 1:3 says darkness was over the surface of the deep and God said, *“Let there be light.”* In John 8:12 Jesus says: *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”* He made this statement during the Feast of the Tabernacles when God’s people were remembering how God led them through the wilderness with a pillar of fire. As Jesus spoke these words He was likely standing in the area of the temple where the offerings were made and where candles burned to symbolize the pillar of fire and God’s presence with them during their wilderness wandering.

John’s gospel records that shortly before Jesus declares Himself to be the Light of the World, the scribes and Pharisees had brought in the woman guilty of adultery and Jesus had exposed their sin. Because they were just as guilty as she, they had to flee. Light exposes sin.

This account reminds me of when I was a little girl growing up in the low country of South Carolina. If you ever got up during the night and turned on the kitchen light, you would wait for the roaches to scatter and hide before you would proceed into the room. YUCK. In John’s account, it was as if Jesus turned on the lights and all the rats and roaches crawled away.

My eye problem has given me a new appreciation for Jesus, the Light of the World. When you can’t see, you fumble and bump around and get irritable. The greatest difference between two things is the difference between darkness and light. Close your eyes and there is nothing but darkness. You can’t do one thing. Darkness, the pitch black, is scary. Darkness and dark places depress me. I turn on lights and go outside into the sunlight. My favorite room is our back porch where I love to do my Bible study in God’s light.

We equate death with darkness and life with light. Darkness equals evil and secret, while light speaks of goodness, openness and honesty.

Everyone has likely experienced how problems and fears tend to multiply at night; how failings become exaggerated and challenges seem insurmountable. The sense of being overwhelmed often vanishes once morning comes. With the morning light, things don’t seem so bad and hope returns. God gives you a new day and a new perspective on your problems. Our hope comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth (Psalm 146:6).

When we follow Jesus, the True Light, we can avoid walking blindly and falling into sin. Jesus lights the path ahead of us so we can see how to live. He removes the darkness of sin from our lives. God tells us to *put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light* (Romans 13:12).

One of the things I learned and really loved from a study of Revelation was that there will be no darkness in the New Jerusalem. There will be no night. God's glory will be our light and the Lamb the lamp (Revelation 21:23). Until that day Jesus says His disciples are to be His light in the world: *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it in its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven"* (Matthew 5: 14-16).

God charges us to be light bearers, bringing about His kingdom on earth. We are to be His hands, to express His heart and to reproduce His character. As Christians we are to reflect Christ's light. This is the purpose for which you and I were created.