

Greetings, everyone. In the time that's given to us here, I'd like to share with you a poetic reflection on Jesus revealing himself to us as the light of the world and letting us know that anyone who follows him will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. I'd like to poetically explore this light and the seeing of this light. And I'd like to begin with a meditation practice because we really see the light in interior meditative states of awareness, so I like to begin in a prayerful, meditative way. The practice is, if we'd all close our eyes right now, and with our eyes closed we'd be interiorly awakened so that when we opened our eyes we'd see through our own awakened eyes where Jesus saw in all that He saw. What would we see? We'd see God because Jesus saw God in all that he saw.

And what's striking about it, when we sit with the gospels in a careful prayerful manner is it didn't really matter whether Jesus saw his own mother or a prostitute. It didn't matter whether he saw the joy of those gathered at a wedding or the sorrow of those gathered at the burial of a loved one. It didn't matter whether he saw his own disciples or his executioners or a flower or a bird. Jesus saw God in all that he saw. And Jesus tells us in the chapter of gospel according to Mark, you have eyes to see and you do not see. That is there is your God-given capacity to see the God-given godly nature as persons created by God in the image and likeness of God and you don't see it. If we think of God as generosity, echoing Meister Eckhart, you don't realize that if we think of God as generosity, don't realize that you are the generosity of God, that you are the song that God sings.

This blindness, this not seeing of this light that alone is ultimately real, this is the source of all your fear. This is the source of all your confusion. This is the source of all the traumatizing things that you do to yourself and to each other and to the earth. In which case then hearing Jesus speak to us in this way, our prayer is, Lord, that I might see. That is that I might learn to join you and seeing in myself and in everyone and everything that exists, everything, the passage of time, the smell of flowers, the darkness of the night, that I might see you always. This seeing that we're speaking of now poetically is really experiential salvation. And we see it repeated over and over again in the healing stories of the gospels. In a way each one is unique, but in a way they are a variation of the same pattern. That Jesus spent whole nights in prayer and he came out in the morning and walked the earth looking to set people free from suffering.

And when the word got out, the suffering came to him. I can't walk. I can't see. I have leprosy. My daughter died, our friend Lazarus died. I become a tax collector going over to the Roman powers over us and I'm rejected by the community this way. And Jesus sees their suffering and he responds to it in a striking miraculous way. The blind see, the lame walk, and so on and so on. But then he says, "I did this miraculous healing in order that you might believe the true miracle." And I think the true miracle is seeing this light that we're poetically exploring here now together in this way. And I want to say this true miracle, I want to say this poetically because this is very interior. This is very intimate to us, that Jesus is standing before this person who's coming to be delivered from their suffering. And Jesus sees that the foundations of their suffering isn't that they have leprosy, or that they're a prostitute, or that their daughter died, or whatever it is.

Jesus saw that the foundation of their suffering is they thought they were what was wrong with them. That as they thought the condition in which they were living had the authority to determine who they are. There was closing off experiential access to God's infinite love for them that alone is sovereign and revealing to them who they are. And so this is the message of experiential salvation, the seeing of the light. And so I want to say this poetically, so the person seeking healing is standing there before Jesus. Jesus responds with the miraculous healing that they see of whatever their burden was that they carried. And this is between the two of them. Jesus says, "I know you from all of eternity. God, the Father contemplated you in me before the origins of the universe." And this is the you that's unborn because God has never, never, never not known who you eternally are in me before God said let it be.

And you who are unborn will never die for God will never, never not know who you eternally are in me, that you're eternal as the beloved this way. And in that moment, Jesus says this to them interiorly from his heart to their heart. They see reflected in his eyes their true face. And this is experiential salvation. Or as to see spiritually is to see that we're infinitely seen. And we're infinitely seen as the beloved in the midst of our frailty and a sovereignty of love that permeates and transcends the frailty itself. This is experiential salvation. This is really the God-given gift of dying to the fragilities that block our view from experientially seeing the deathless beauty of ourself as God's beloved. Soren Kierkegaard, the Christian theologian, author of Christian Existentialism, he talks about the leap of faith. And he says that you take this leap and coming to the edge of your own resources and in the free fall you're caught by Christ.

And reflected in his eyes you see your true face. There is no fear there this way. And so this then is what I think this light is and is the seeing of this light. Jesus said, "Fear not. I'm with you always." He didn't say, "Don't be afraid because I'll personally see to it that nothing unfair happens to you, nothing cruel happens to you, nothing traumatizing." Look what happened to him. He was crucified. All the disciples except for John were martyred. They all were executed. They all died a violent death. That God is a presence that protects us from nothing, even as God unexplainably sustains us in all things. And the salvation is experientially dropping down into the intimate realization of that this way. And so we might look at it this way. See, I am the light of the world and those who follow me will not walk in darkness.

And I'd like to end with this insight. We live on and on and on in the ongoing fragilities and brokennesses of ourself this way. It's all about us, but we don't walk in the darkness that surrounds us within ourself about ourselves. Rather we live in the light that transcends, permeates, and unexplainably shines through that darkness and we walk in that light. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness grasp it not. Although the darkness cannot grasp it, the darkness can realize it's being unexplainably illumined by a light that it cannot explain this way. And so likewise, sometimes that's why we can get heartened about ourself, like the thorn in the flesh, the thing that we can't get past this way. But really to understand the issue isn't can I get past this thing that's hurtful to myself or others? We need to do our best to do that.

But rather, can I place my faith in the love that's infinitely in love with me and my inability to get past the stumbling place? As a matter of fact, like the thorn in the flesh may be the

stumbling place is my teacher where I depending on the mercy of God that's oceanic and endless in all directions. Likewise, sometimes when we look at the world and turn on the evening news we can get disheartened by the outcome of the world because the intensity and density closes off experiential access to this love that utterly transcends and unexplainably permeates the very suffering of the world itself. Unexplainably forever this way. And so this then is our walk, I think. This is our walk. How can I learn to be healed from what hinders me from being ever more habitually established in this divine light that shines, that transcends, utterly permeates the broken edges of my life?

So the very ragged edges of my heart are the configurations of the light that shines through the broken places as mercy and as amazement and as gratitude. And to me then, this is a way that gives us guidelines and having faith in these moments, that my heart has not deceived me. That in these moments I did glimpse and know within myself not as something more in these moments, but a curtain open in every moment is that. And although I can't experience it all the time, I know the importance of the daily rendezvous with God, the quiet space in which I become ever more receptively vulnerable to being instilled by this light that permeates and guides me through my days. And so this poetic expression then will hopefully be a way of helping you to sit with this and to be present to this light, the shining into your own life in the midst of the unresolved matters of your heart.