

One of the great gifts most of us have is the gift of sight. Sight happens when light hits the retina, and cells known as photoreceptors turn the light into electrical signals. The electrical signals then travel from the retina through the optic nerve to the brain. And the brain turns the signals into images.

The light, then, is essential to sight. Without it, no photoreceptors can create electrical signals.

Light is also important to guide us. When we take early morning walks, we carry a flashlight. Lighthouses guide boats safely to shore.

Light also is vital to the growth of plants. Plants require sunlight for photosynthesis, which is a process that creates energy. Plants require energy to grow.

Light also is important for human health. Sunlight, for example, can regulate the immune system and boost our mood. The absence of sunlight leads to depression in many people who suffer from an ailment we call seasonal affective disorder.

No wonder the Word created light first before separating the sea from the land and creating plants, animals, and people. By the Word, I mean God's self-revelation and God's utterance. And, no wonder when the Word (or God's self-revelation) lived among us, he was the Light of the World. Because Jesus, the Word, brought into the world clear-sightedness. Jesus also provided a guide for how to live and hope for a better future.

The 1st-century world that Jesus came into was filled with leaders who were often corrupt and looked out for their own interests. It was filled with people who suffered and struggled with diseases and difficulties. The world in Jesus's time was filled with many who had lost their way. They'd lived so long in a flawed society that they'd become flawed themselves. Indeed, society was turned upside down from God's ideal world. That world needed guidance, hope, life, and joy that Jesus brought into it. The world needed to remember once again how creation was ordered. It needed to remember that the Creator still had the power to re-create the world.

The world today also is filled with people who suffer and those who have lost their way. We also need guidance, hope, life, and joy. We must remember that the Creator still has the power to re-create the world to make it more filled with love and true justice.

We also must remember that we – the created – have within us the essence of our Creator. We received life because God breathed his own breath into us. After the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, we were left with the Holy Spirit within us and around us to guide and comfort us. That Holy Spirit is God's light within us.

As disciples who walk in the light, we have a responsibility to re-create the world. We have a role in trying to alleviate the sufferings of others, guiding others toward the Light, and spreading the message of hope. Despite how dark the world appears sometimes,

the Light is always present. Darkness can't win as long as the Light is present. And the Light of Christ within us shines in the darkness. Sight consists of the Light of God emanating through human eyes. We can help make this world more like what God originally created – more like the plenty and beauty of the Garden of Eden. We can do that by reflecting the Light of Christ.

We also know that human nature being what it is, we probably can't totally re-create the world of love and justice that God intended. We do our best to reflect the Light, but we remember that we spend only a short time in this world relative to the rest of eternity we will spend with God in a perfect world.

Because the Word was made flesh, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. And it's not an oncoming train. It's the Light of the World, which is brighter than any darkness.