

2025-08-28 ... 6.30pm Evensong Sermon ... Mrs Jane Rylands

John 8 31-38, 48 to end (Nehemiah 2)

The verses from John that we heard come in the context of Jesus saying, ***'I am the light of the world'***. The light shows up the truth, the truth about God, and understanding God sets us free, free from fear, free from hopelessness, free from sin – it's quite a claim, I think perhaps the reality is that the path to those is lit up

I was listening to a contemporary American Abstract Artist called Gabriele Evretz who is a colour painter in the same sort of way that the British Bridget Riley is a colour painter.

Evertz quoted the French philosopher Simone Weil who said that to love in fullness and to witness the light we have to allow ourselves to see the darkness.

I wonder, can we only see holy light if we also see unholy darkness?

Evertz said that she doesn't paint with light, she paints with colour and the colour creates the light.

Do we create holy light, or perhaps enable holy light to be seen, by holy behaviour?

In a painting the place your eye is drawn to first is the place where contrast is highest – the darkest against the lightest.

Is it a concern that we need the dark to show up the light?

In a none art example, there has been much talk about vaccinations recently, and a concern that the take up isn't as good as it was. There was already much contrary so-called 'information' about even before Mr Trump added his half dollar. What modern society, in this country at least, lacks, and thankfully so, is much memory of how devastating the damage caused by childhood diseases can be. Without the dark the light isn't seen.

Can we tell the difference between slave and free? Jesus was talking to his new followers and they couldn't see what Jesus was talking about. They thought their birthright as descendants of Abraham automatically made them free. Jesus asked them to look at their behaviour.

Picasso, talking about his experimental art, said that tradition isn't wearing your father's hat, tradition is having a baby.

If you have ever looked at colour theory, you will know that colours change from the viewer's point of view depending on the colour they're next to.

Do we change, from the viewer's point of view, depending on who we stand next to?

Paintings come alive when you see them in person rather than on a screen. The experience of them in real life is so much richer than seeing a picture in a book.

We each need to find a way of seeing Jesus for real and get beyond looking at him through someone else's eyes. The more we look at Jesus, the more we will see of him and the truer the picture that we hold of him will be. By that truth we will be set free, and we will, hopefully, reflect God's glory so that others will start to look too.