

The story is told of Dr. Earl S. Taylor, a missionary who was in Calcutta during an eclipse of the sun. For days before that event he saw the city's streets crowded with pilgrims on their way to various sacred places. They hoped to worship and bathe in the Ganges during the time of the eclipse, expecting thereby to ward off evil.

When at last the fateful hour of darkness arrived hundreds of thousands of people thronged the sacred waters. Terrorized by the eclipse, there was a loud uproar as they feared a great power of evil in the form of a snake was about to swallow the sun-god.

As Dr. Taylor, witnessed this fear of the Hindu worshippers, he heard group of Christians singing in their meeting:

*'The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin;*

*The Light of the World is Jesus*

*Like sunshine at noonday, His glory shone in.*

*The Light of the world is Jesus!*

## Small Group Material

### Transforming Miracles 6 - Light in the darkness John 9.1-12

#### Welcome (10 mins)

Describe an adventure you had with mud when you were a child.

#### Worship (12 mins)

Philip Bliss was a prolific songwriter, composer and musician who collaborated with D.L. Moody and Ira D Sankey. He wrote 'The Light of the World is Jesus' in the summer of 1875, at his home in Chicago. It came to him all together, words and music, one morning while passing through the hall to his room, and he wrote it out at once!

We are going to listen to a beautifully simple rendition of this hymn. But, before we do, can you think of an occasion when the light of Jesus shone brightly into your heart? Share what happened?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8J98AoG57I>

#### Word (35 mins)

*This is the third healing miracle in John's gospel - the official's son in John 4, the man at the pool in John 5 and here a man **born blind**.*

**Discovery questions** (move through these quickly!)

- What idea was behind the disciple's question in vs 1& 2? (Curiosity, judgementalism, compassion, a trap?)
- Vs 3-5, what does Jesus' answer reveal about how he views the man's suffering?
- In this story, what does Jesus mean by the work of God, v3? The night that is coming, v4? The light of the world, v5?
- The man progressed in his understanding of Jesus - from 'a man', v11, to a 'prophet', v17, to one worthy of following, v27, to one from God, v33, to one who should be worshipped, v38. How has your view of Jesus and your commitment to him progressed over time?

#### For discussion and application

What physical or emotional misfortune in your life has been turned into an opportunity for God to demonstrate his power?

What does it mean to you that Jesus is 'the light of the world'?

Where do you need Jesus to be 'light' in your life now?

#### Witness (20 mins)

As a church we support Open Doors as one of our mission partners.

Here's an excellent little video from Open Doors USA:

<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/stories/the-10-most-dangerous-places-for-christians/>

Pray for the light of Christ to shine in some of the darkest places in the world. (Leader: choose one country and give a couple of prayer points from the 'World Watch' list:

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/world-watch-list/>)

Pray also for St Mary's preparations for Christmas. More info on:  
<https://www.stmaryscnorton.com/christmas.php>