

I found Pip's story very moving – it's wonderful how God works across oceans and here true for Rob and Ayesha too. We've been thinking of Jo Redhead quite a bit lately – trying to make a difference in Kolkata while her father is grappling with the implications of a brain tumour. Jo works with Pip in that city and she's gone back because of the people who made a difference in her life – including her parents I'm picking.

The theme for this week is Shine! While the verse to focus on is from Psalm 34:5, I found there were two New Testament extensions and applications of the principle of shining in our worlds.

So on this different Sunday, I'd like to highlight three passages from the Bible about shining and let the Holy Spirit apply them to your days.

The verse that's been chosen for this week by Tranzsend is Psalm 34:5. They've used the Contemporary English Version and I've set the translation we use here alongside it.

<p>Psalm 34:5 (CEV) 5 Keep your eyes on the Lord! You will shine like the sun</p>	<p>Psalm 34:5 (NIV-UK) 5 Those who look to him are radiant;</p>
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What does the mean to keep your eyes on the Lord, to look to the Lord?

Focus on the Father and his Son Jesus this includes:

- Worship - singing for me is one of the ways I enjoy worshipping prayer,
- Reading the Bible,
- Being with other Christians and
- Serving the Lord

This doesn't just happen. Keep in touch with him. Keep short accounts with him. Let the Spirit of Jesus lead you daily.

The result of this – you will shine like the sun, you will be radiant.

But what am I to conclude when I look out at you as we gather in Jesus' name Sunday by Sunday? I'm not sure the words that immediately spring to mind are shining and radiance – of course the radiance may be coming from a small screen if you get my meaning. However as I look out on you today I'm pleasantly surprised at how many of you are shining! I'm not sure we should go around wearing a sickly sweet smile – that might be just as off-putting. But I do remember the song we sang years ago – I can see in you the glory of my king – I think it's something like that – so keep your eyes on the Lord, look to him.

A bit like the hymn, **'I came to Jesus and I found in him my star, my sun'**

So while that may be a slightly negative comment, the positive is that I see many of you doing what the verse says – it's perhaps seen better at other times in your lives and in your day.

What I'm getting to is that if our relationship with Jesus doesn't show, then I'm struggling to see how we're taking on board the promise inherent in this verse – you will shine, you are radiant.

The second verse today helps apply the principle of Psalm 34

Philippians 2:14-15 (CEV) 14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing. 15 Then you will be the pure and innocent children of God. You live among people who are crooked and evil, but you must not do anything that they can say is wrong. Try to shine as lights among the people of this world....	Philippians 2:14-16 (NIV-UK) 14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.' Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you hold firmly to the word of life.
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DO EVERYTHING. Oh no, I'm not going to take that seriously. I want to grumble, to criticise and to win the argument, because I'm always right and the way I see the world is the way it is! Maybe you're not like me.

One translation says if you '**Do everything without grumbling or arguing,**' you'll be pure and innocent children of God; the other suggests this is a work in progress '**so that you may become blameless and pure**'

And to take the theme of shining further:

**Try to shine as lights among the people of this world
You will shine among them like stars in the sky**

You will and yet you must also seek to, try to

This text is a wonderful picture of what we are to be and to live.

2 Corinthians 3:18 CEV So our faces are not covered. They show the bright glory of the Lord, as the Lord's Spirit makes us more and more like our glorious Lord.	2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV-UK) And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
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Then to the Corinthian church Paul gave this wonderful illustration of what the Spirit longs to do and works to do in us.

**The Spirit makes us more and more like our glorious Lord
We... are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory**

Wonderful truths, powerful truths, truths to build a life on

I feel the Lord has two things to say to us today

Be what we are
Grown into what he longs for us to be

To conclude, some homework – you've been given a postcard to send to someone who was part of your story in becoming a Jesus' follower. Who shone for you? Who would you like to say thank you to. I realise for some that person, those people are no longer around. So if that's the case for you think of someone younger who may be encouraged by receiving a letter from you?