

17. WALKING IN THE DARK.

The future sometimes seems to be gloomy and threatening. Life is being endured rather than enjoyed. Is there anywhere we can turn to be safe in the darkness of uncertainty?

Early most mornings I walk across the Shambat bridge towards Omdurman and then back to my home in Bahri. I pray as I walk. This morning it was totally dark. There were no lights working at all on the bridge. There were no visible stars and the thin, crescent moon was hidden behind thick clouds. It was very hard to see where I was walking.

I chose to keep to the south side path going from home, and the north side on my return. I have walked them so often I know where the paving slabs stop and start. I know where drain gullies are. I know where inspection covers are missing, leaving a potentially 'leg-breaking' hole! Familiarity with the routes helps me to walk confidently.

Of course there are variable factors. Where is the 'spare' section of fencing left lying today? Where are traffic cones displaced from the centre of the road by night-time vehicles (or vandals)? Where are the small piles of bricks left by people who have had to change a punctured tyre? Is the long electric cable from one missing lamp-post rolled up and tied to the fence today, or uncoiled and splayed across the path like a trap for an unsuspecting animal? Being aware of the possible dangers does make me walk carefully!

As we face into the dark future of our lives we can take three lessons from my morning walks. First, be confident based on past experience. Use the lessons we've learned before, to help us now. Second, be careful. Expect the unexpected. Be prepared to change course to keep safe. Adapting to changing circumstances is part of life's excitement.

And third, enjoy even the little light we have. Use it to maximum benefit. Remember that Jesus is the "Light of the world". He offers to be present with those who keep in step with him. With God's presence as our guide, there is nothing, and no-one, we need to fear.