

Progress - A Long Walk Into The Dark?

What is progress for humanity? Technological advancement? Medical advances? Social liberalisation? Equality of education and opportunity? All of those seem good and suggest freedom at their root. To live longer, better, with greater personal autonomy and greater respect for the autonomy of others.



When Jesus walked the Earth, he talked about the freedom of the human heart. He didn't mention any of those other things. Freedom, he said, was found in obedience to God, submitting to God's wisdom, humility before God and before each other.

Jesus' definition of freedom might sound like the opposite to the modern ear.

The moment we stepped outside of Eden, leaving God behind, we set about trying to occupy his place in life - as wielders of power (technology and medicine), as arbiters of righteousness (social liberalisation and equality). As the breakers of chains, setting people free. All of these things, well-meaning and in many ways good. But progress without God is not progress. The only progress that matters is to return to Eden, through Jesus. Anything else is just a long walk into the dark. There is no human achievement that can finally resolve the conflicts of the heart, or finally end conflicts between people. We can improve the comfort and longevity of life, even content ourselves that we are free (except from death, internal struggle and conflict with each other), but nothing in our grasp, now or ever, can bring the kind of freedom which Jesus offers us. And the more we try to do it all without God, the more we congratulate ourselves on our progress towards successful self-reliance and universal autonomy, the more we fool ourselves that we do not need God. The brighter our light, the further into the dark it leads us.

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