

sermon - John 8:12 - I am the Light of the World

Illustration- Watching a sunrise. Why is it so beautiful? Maybe for colors, but I think there is something deeper. It's the light penetrating darkness. A new day dawning.

Through Scripture light is an incredible multifaceted symbol. God speaks and there is light. God shows up to Moses as a burning bush. God leads the people through wilderness in a pillar of fire. God is light, His presence is light, and in Him there is no darkness. Psalms "For it is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? God's Word is seen as light, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Light is a symbol for God's presence, His glory, His power, His righteousness, His people, the good news of the gospel, it's a symbol for hope, healing, forgiveness and eternal life.

This is the backdrop of light in Scripture, and into this environment that Jesus comes on the scene and boldly says,

12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

This morning I want you to consider the truth that in Jesus Christ, a bright light is shining. And whatever darkness you may be going through, the light of Christ is here, and it shines in your darkness.

Let's pray.

Context of Jesus' statement to understand what the light is

Jesus has been making these radical statements to the Pharisees, the religious folks, and comparing Himself to these OT allusions that took place as the Israelites were coming out of slavery in Egypt into the Promise Land, but in that process they were in the wilderness, where God would lead them and provide for them in miraculous ways. In Chapter 6 Jesus was comparing Himself to the manna that was given to the Israelites as their daily food, and so He calls Himself the Bread of Life. In chapter 7 the water that came from the rock in the desert, was compared to the Holy Spirit. In Chapter 8 Jesus reminds them how God led them through the wilderness with a pillar of fire, and to this Jesus compares Himself, saying, "I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

5 Responses to the Light. Our first response is worship

1. Worship The Light (Jesus)

This is emphatically NOT how the pharisees respond to Jesus. Instead, they basically get into a boxing match with Him over how He could make such a statement. Instead of falling on their faces they feel like Jesus is a threat to them, so they question Him (and I think it's safe to say these questions are not coming from a pure heart).

13 So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true."

The pharisees are trying to trap Him in his own words, he said something similar to this in chapter 5, but they didn't understand it and trying to twist his words. His point was not, if he speaks without another witness that makes Him a liar, His point was that "If I am independent of the Father, then I am a liar." Everything outside the framework of being One with the Father.

14 Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going."

He's saying you have no right to judge me, you don't a clue who I am. Jesus is highlight His unique origin and His unique destiny, which is the Father. Jesus comes from the Father and He will return to the Father. Jesus is saying that gives me the right to say whatever I want to say, and with authority.

Jesus goes on...

15 You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.

Stinging words to the Pharisees here. You are making your assessment about who I am according to your flesh, out of your hearts of darkness, spiritually devoid of life, in your carnal, fallen nature. From your worldly viewpoint you can't see that I am the eternal one. (Isn't this what people still do, maybe you this morning?)

And when Jesus says He judges no one, He's saying He does not judge on superficial standards. Jesus does judge the heart, that's clear from the rest of Scripture. This idea that Jesus never judges is ridiculous and not biblical.

16 Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. 17 In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. 18 I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me."

Jesus points here to the formal conditions of the Law, Deut. 17:6. The Jews still don't get it, they are still wrapped in human judgments.

At this point, Pharisees, give it up, worship Him, but they want to keep on.

19 They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" (They want Jesus to show them His father, they want the father identified, still in human terms) Jesus answered (with even more sting), "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also."

Their inability to recognize who Jesus is, is clear evidence that they do not know who God is. That's what He's telling them, you do not know God. If you knew God, you would recognize me. There is exclusivity of Christ here. Only one way to the Father.

20 These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

I just love that. He's going to get arrested when it's time.

Jesus is saying, you want to know who this feast is pointing to, you are looking at Him. This celebration is about me. That light in the wilderness, that was me.

Application: Can we too be celebrating religion and missing Jesus?

2 Cor 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2. Repent of Darkness

21 So he said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.”

Jesus give them another blow. You can't come to the Father, instead you will die in your sin.

22 So the Jews said, “Will he kill himself, since he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?”

This was a jab, will he commit suicide (in their minds one of the worst sins). They still aren't repenting or worshipping.

23 He said to them, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.” 25 So they said to him, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. 26 I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” 27 They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. 28 So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. 29 And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.” 30 As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

Jesus is God, and Jesus is here to deal with our sin problem. That the big issue here. When we speak of Jesus being the light, this has to do with God's perfection and His work of salvation in Christ, which is to deal with our central problem of sin.

The gospel is about BELIEVING in Jesus' work for us, that he died in our place to bring us to the Father.

It's no coincidence that when Jesus dies on the cross darkness covers the land.

We must believe, but then in believing, we must repent of our sins.

Romans 13:12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

3. Live in the Light with Others

1 John 1:7, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Coming into the light is not coming into the light alone, you are joining with others that are in the light. Press into community. Press into light.

4. Shine the Light into Darkness

Matthew 5:14, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Matthew 5:16, “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Acts 13:47, “For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

1 Peter 2:9, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

How are we living on mission. Simple. Ordinary Mission.

1. Anticipate the Light to Come

Revelation 21:22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.

This is where we are going church. A heavenly Jerusalem, no suffering, no pain, no sickness, no death, no sin. No darkness. There's no need for a sun or moon, for the glory of God is it's light, and it's lamp is the Lamb.

Are you looking forward to this day? Hattie is so excited for her 3rd birthday, she's giddy with excitement. It animates her. This is the way we need to be looking forward to that day, hope and glory and blessing in Jesus.

When we see Jesus as the Light of the World, let it draw us to worship, to repent of sin, to live in community, to live on mission, and to anticipate His glory.

Let's pray.