

31. The Light of the world

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Since we are living in the area where we have the sun almost 500 days a years, we don't realize how much human bodies and minds require light.

Do you know that there is a illness that is known as Seasonal Affective Disorder – a.k.a. SAD – refers to depression that occurs every year during fall or winter. Symptoms improve in spring and summer because the patients get to see sunlight more often. Guess which States have more patients of SAD than any other States in America? Washington and Oregon States where they have the highest amount of rain throughout the year and they are also known as the Capital States of Suicide.

That is why some of the hard core prison inmates end up in their very tiny cells where there is not a single window. Sometimes, their guards even turn off their cell lights as a further punishment.

People cannot thrive or survive spiritually without Sonlight, S-O-N-Light.

So far Jesus claimed to be the Messiah in chapter 4; the Bread of Life in chapter 6; the Living Water in chapter 7; now we are going to see that Jesus claims that He is the Light of the world in chapter 8.

The other people around the world may not have understood what He meant, but these ancient Jews clearly understood and hated Him all the more. Let's step into the Women's Court where Jesus previously extended His mercy and forgiveness to the woman who was caught in adultery.

A. I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

Our Lord Jesus claimed that He is the Light of the world. Light and darkness are recurring themes in John's Gospel as well as his letter, 1 John.

John 1:5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

1 John 1:5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

God is light while satan is "the power of darkness". People love either the light or the darkness, and this love controls their actions and their eternal destinations.

John 3:19-21 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.

During the Feast of Tabernacles – a.k.a. Sukkot – there was a great ceremony called the "Illumination of the Temple," which involved the ritual lighting of four golden oil-fed lamps in the Court of Women. These lamps were huge menorahs/candelabras which were 75 feet high that is equivalent to 6 story high, lighted in the Temple at

night to remind the people of the pillar of fire that had guided Israel in their wilderness journey. All night long the light shone their brilliance, it is said, illuminating the entire city.

During this ceremony the priests and Levites would use their own worn out clothing for wicks. Some believed that the light represented God's Shekinah glory that once filled the temple when Solomon dedicated the first temple to the Lord.

In celebration and anticipation, the holiest of Israel's men danced and sang psalms of joy and praise, before the Lord. This festival was a reminder that God had promised to send the Light, to a sin-darkened world. God promised to send the Messiah to renew Israel's glory, release them from bondage, and restore their joy.

Imagine that you are in ancient Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles. Can you imagine seeing these massive menorahs giving a tremendous amount of light? Now imagine the impact of the words said by Jesus in the Temple courtyard when he announced, "I am the Light of the world," while the image of the lights from the gigantic menorahs were still vivid in the hearts of the Jewish people.

Just for a side note, in early 1970s, some of you may remember a very popular song, "You light up my life" by Debbie Boone. Radio stations' DJs across America could not play that song enough for the people because it was so popular. It was nothing more than a romantic love song, but some Christians insisted that it was a love song to God. No way, Jose. Do you remember the last portion of the lyrics? Here it is:

It can't be wrong
When it feels so right
'Cause You
You light up my life

We don't follow Jesus because it feels so right. That is how some Christians get messed up because they follow their feelings instead of the Word of God. We follow Him, because He is God and He is the Way; He is the Truth; and He is the Life. We don't walk by sight, nor how we feel, but we walk by faith. Amen? No extra charge for that side note.

To "follow" the Lord Jesus means to believe on Him, to trust Him; and the results are life and light for the believer. The unbelievers are walking in darkness because they love darkness.

But if we follow the Lord Jesus, He provides us protection and guidance with His illumination through His Word. Let's go back to Israel's journey in the wilderness. In Exodus 14, they were chased by the entire Egyptian army from the back and they were facing the Red Sea in the front. You talk about 'between the rock and hard place.' What happened? Let's go to the Scriptures there:

Exodus 14:19-20 And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. 20 So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all that night.

The same God who protected the Israelites from the harm's way of the Egyptian army will keep you, protect you, and bless you if you only obey Him and trust Him.

B. THE IMMEDIATE HOSTILITY

John 8:13-16 The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true." 14 Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. 15 You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. 16 And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.

Did you notice the Pharisees' immediate hostility to Jesus? Why such a hostility to Jesus? It seems that they were against Him for anything and everything – whatever He did, whatever He said, even all the miracles He did, none of them was good enough for them to reconsider their twisted opinion about Him.

It is because they clearly understood that Jesus claimed to be God. The word "Light", according to Jewish terminology and Scripture, was a title that was reserved for One Person alone – God. So when Jesus claimed to be the Light of the world, these Bible eggheads knew what He meant and hated Him all the more.

Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?

Isaiah 60:19 The sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But the Lord will be to you an everlasting light, And your God your glory.

Job 29:3 When His lamp shone upon my head, And when by His light I walked through darkness;

Micah 7:8 Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise; When I sit in darkness, The Lord will be a light to me.

You may remember this when we studied the Book of Luke a few years ago, there was an old godly man Simeon who met Mary and Joseph when they brought Baby Jesus to dedicate Him to the Lord. He took Him up in his arms and prophesied this:

Luke 2:30-32 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

In this v13, the Pharisees were quoting our Lord's own words from John 5:31. But He quickly refuted their argument. One of the key words in this section is 'witness'; it is used seven times. Jesus made it clear that their witness was not dependable because their judgment was faulty. They judged on the basis of externals, mere human judgment, but He judged on the basis of spiritual knowledge and truth. The way they judged the woman taken in adultery proved that they neither understood the Law and they had twisted sinful hearts.

The medical science has been improved and helped extend human lives much longer than the 19th Century, even the 20th Century. It is one thing to live longer, but it is a completely different thing to live better. Only Jesus can add life to human years. Just like a flower won't blossom without sunlight, our lives will never be what they ought to be without the light of Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, people without Jesus would follow anything to figure out their confused and disoriented lives.

How would you like to drive on I-19 blindfolded? Some of you are thinking, "Isn't that how they are driving now?" Without Jesus, people are driving their life blindfolded. Where do you think they are going to end up? Crash and burn, literally and spiritually.

C. WHO IS YOUR DADDY?

John 8:17-20 It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. 18 I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me." 19 Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also." 20 These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

When you debate, your opponents start to attack you as a person rather than the debate topic, you know that you won that debate. Here we find these religious and the OT law experts started to sling personal slurs against Jesus. They intended this as a deeply cutting insult to Jesus. They refer to His virgin birth, and to the rumors that it was not a miraculous conception, but an illicit one.

You would think that blind sinners would welcome the light, but such is not always the case. The coming of the true light brought conflict as the powers of darkness opposed it. They'd rather make fun of the Gospel and the truth of God in the Bible since they choose not to comprehend by their own choice.

How tragic that these experts in the Law did not even know their own Messiah as He stood before them! They claimed to know the Law of God, but they did not know the God of the Law. They did not have His Word abiding in their hearts, nor did they experience His love. They did not know the Father, and therefore did not know the Son.

Jesus never really answered their question, "Where is Your Father?" The word 'father' is used twenty-one times in this chapter, so Jesus did not avoid the issue but faced it straight ahead. He knew that their "father" was not God, but the devil. These men were religious, and yet they were the children of the devil.

Whenever Jesus taught a spiritual truth, His listeners interpreted it in a material or physical way. The light of God was unable to penetrate the darkness of their minds because they chose to hide inside of their spiritual dungeon so that they didn't have to hear the truth.

Right now some of you are hiding inside of your own spiritual dungeon so that you don't hear the truth of God. He wants to set you free from the bondage that satan has upon you. You don't have to live in darkness. You can step out of darkness into the Light of the world.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) People love either the Light (Jesus) or the darkness (satan), and this love controls their actions and their eternal destinations.

2) To "follow" the Lord Jesus means to believe on Him, to trust Him; and the results are life and light for the believer. The unbelievers are walking in darkness because they love darkness.