

# Seven Sayings of Jesus: I Am...The Light of the World

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[ 0 : 00 ] Welcome here for this Sunday, May 14th. My name is Kent Dixon. It's my joy to be the pastor here. Back in our sermon series, The Seven Sayings of Jesus I Am.

So these statements are important because they define who Jesus is, right? But then they also give us a guide for how we can grow in our understanding of him.

Grow in our relationship with him. These I Am statements give us context for that. And so the second I Am statement we're going to consider together is found in John 8, 12, where Jesus declares to a crowd, I am the light of the world.

We had a church leadership meeting earlier in the week, this week. And this concept of light came up in a prayer, in a devotion, in a few things.

And I said, oh, hang on. I said, God clearly has a theme in mind for this week. Just wait till Sunday. But Jesus said more than just, I am the light of the world.

[ 1 : 09 ] He said, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. So when I was little, here's the bearing my soul part of the sermon.

When I was little, I was afraid of the dark. So actually, afraid that this picture of this child in here is also a ginger.

I'm not as gingery now, but I was like that. But afraid of the dark was an understatement. Because, well, honestly, to some extent, I blame my middle brother.

I am the youngest. There's a shock for many of you, I'm sure. But he loved getting into my head. He loved not literally torturing me, but certainly psychologically torturing me.

And even the older one joined in at times. So there was a lot of two-on-one experiences in my childhood. But our middle brother convinced me, and I warned him.

[ 2 : 11 ] I was preaching about this this Sunday. He had me convinced that there was something living inside the big old octopus-style furnace in our basement. So if you, I was thinking about this this morning.

If you've seen the movie Home Alone, and Kevin, the kid who's left alone, goes into his basement, a voice comes out of the same kind of furnace and says, Kevin, and he goes, shut up.

I never managed to get to the shut up point. I was terrified. Terrified. So I dreaded being asked to get something from the basement. We had a storage room in the basement where a lot of our pantry stuff was.

My mom would say, go and get me such and such. And I'd go, gulp. So I would run down the stairs, get what it was, and run back up as fast as I could for fear of the dreaded furnace monster.

But as I got older, I came to recognize that I wasn't so much afraid of the dark itself. I was afraid of what might be in the dark. So I'm now grateful.

[ 3 : 13 ] I have excellent night vision, which is fun. So actually, I enjoy being in the dark, especially when someone else comes along. So there's just a heads up.

But it's interesting to me, as I was reflecting on this entire idea this week, that that darkness, that sense of fear, can be such a hardwired point of anxiety for us, can't it?

Even from a, especially from a young age, we tend to be afraid of or concerned about or anxious about the dark. And light always comes as the cure to the darkness.

You probably recognize that as well. We sleep with nightlights. We have motion sensor lights on our houses, our garages, because we don't like what goes on in the dark.

And especially during the fall and winter, we crave, maybe you're like this, I certainly am, we crave light for comfort. And even for our physical and mental health.

[ 4 : 16 ] People get blue in the wintertime because the darkness is so pervasive for us. And so by its very nature, the presence of light means the absence of what?

Thank you. Darkness. The presence of light means, by its nature, the absence of darkness. And I also believe that whether consciously or subconsciously, light can represent other concepts to us as human beings.

And I haven't done this in a while, but it's audience participation time. So what things does the concept of light represent to you? Just don't be afraid to shout them out.

The idea of light, what does it represent to you? Sunshine? Happiness? Happiness? Comfort? Easy load?

Oh, that's interesting. So an easy load. Perhaps lightness. Literally lightness in your life. So what about healing? Hope?

[ 5 : 19 ] The future? Maybe even a new beginning or a fresh start. Does light and brightness represent those things to you? We heard happiness.

We heard happiness. How about positivity or joy? Light represents those things as well. I believe inspiration and clarity and perhaps even a sense of forward motion or momentum.

Energy, right? Light represents energy to us. Light. And I think we can also recognize that light generally doesn't draw attention to itself. Can you recognize that?

Light actually draws attention to or brings clarity to everything around it. Light. And this morning I want to focus in on three main themes that I think we'll all agree light can literally or metaphorically, by an example, represent.

So first, I believe light can represent illumination or knowledge. So we might even take it a step further. We might consider the idea of light may go beyond basic knowledge and actually lean more towards truth.

[ 6 : 31 ] So when we learn or discover something new, even if we remember something suddenly, when that's usually illustrated graphically for us, it's the concept of a light bulb, right?

We talk about that kind of experience as, oh, the light just went on for me. Or an aha moment, right? There's a moment of instant illumination, recognition, remembrance, those kinds of things.

So light can represent illumination or knowledge and even at times truth. Second, I believe light can represent perspective.

So there may be a sense that we've become more aware of something that we didn't previously realize or recognize. The idea of light can also become connected to identifying something.

So we talk about something being brought to light. We talk about wanting to shed light on an issue or a topic or a situation.

[ 7 : 36 ] So I believe light can represent perspective for us. Third, I believe light can represent clarity of direction. So perhaps this might make you think of a beacon or a lighthouse or a sign, perhaps like an exit sign or a fire escape sign or a flashlight.

Light can illuminate our path. It can also indicate the correct or safe direction for us to go. Can you recognize that? Light can represent clarity of direction.

So this theme of light and its contrast with darkness is one that pervades all of scripture. It's one that we could easily explore together for a year or more.

Easily. And so the story of God, can you recognize this? The story of God is ultimately the story of light from creation to the end of time.

Let's see how this is framed in scripture. Genesis 1 verse 3. Is that the beginning? Easy to find. In Genesis 1 verse 3, we see, and God said, let there be light.

[ 8 : 56 ] And there was light. God saw the light was good. And he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness he called night.

And there was evening and morning. The first day. The very beginning of creation. The very beginning of God's story is about light.

Light takes the center stage at the very beginning of the story. And our story as well. So the importance of the balance of light versus darkness.

Good versus evil. Righteousness versus sin. These things are all central balances to God's story. But how does it end? Well, turn to the end of the book. Revelation 22 verses 3 to 5.

[ 9 : 56 ] Revelation 22, 3 to 5. Right? Almost at the very end. Where we read. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city.

And his servants will serve him. They will see his face. And his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night.

They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun. For the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever.

Jesus declares, I am the light of the world. So what's our context for this statement that Jesus makes? Why is it important?

Well, this theme of light. And light in contrast with darkness. Are particularly prominent themes in the book of John. Jesus heals a blind man.

[10:58] Jesus declares himself as the light of the world. And there's many more examples in the book of John. And as I said, even in the book of John itself, there's a lot to unpack.

In relation to the idea of light and darkness. Both literally and figuratively. But let's rewind a little bit. That's appropriate because we were rewound at the beginning of the sermon.

Let's rewind a bit and go back to what John says in John chapter 1, verses 1 to 5. Right at the very beginning. John 1, 1 to 5.

And this will be familiar to lots of you. In the beginning was the word. And the word was with God. And the word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things were made. Without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was light. And that light, life was, sorry.

[11:56] In him was life. And that life was the light of men, John says. The light shines in the darkness. But the darkness has not, some translations say, overcome.

Has not overcome it. Other translations say understood it. And that's kind of a good way, good contrast there. Because it's not about the light overpowering the darkness.

Although that's part of it. It's that God sent the light. The light came. And people didn't completely get it. So John is making it very clear to us.

The light that he talks about was there from the beginning. The light is the word. The light is the son of man.

The light is Jesus Christ. So recognizing that, let's reflect on those three themes that we looked at this morning.

[12:58] The things that we recognize about light. Let's consider how they relate to Jesus. So light is illumination or knowledge that points us to truth.

Jesus is the light that shows God's truth through his words, through the example of Jesus recorded in scripture.

And he remains our source of that true light today. Light that brings perspective. Jesus made it possible to find forgiveness in the darkness of our sin and suffering.

Light that brings clarity of direction. Jesus is the light that can help us find our way again when we've wandered off.

Who's a wanderer? I love the saying that says, not all who wander are lost. So we recognize in John 1 verse 5 that Jesus is ultimately the culmination.

[14:03] He's the dawn, if you will, of the light of God and all that that means for humanity. Jesus declaring himself to be the light of the world means that he's not only your light and my light.

But he's also the light that shines for all the world to see as we sing sometimes. The light that can change everything. Jesus came to bring light that would banish the darkness of sin and death in our lives.

He also brought the promise, that same promise of the banishment of death and sin to all who would believe in him. All who would declare him and submit to him as the Lord of their lives.

My friends, if Jesus is your Lord, his light can shine into your life and banish the darkness of your guilt, your shame, your insecurities.

Let go of those things and lay them at his feet. Jesus' light brings joy and freedom. And it can also shine through you to draw others to him.

[15:29] I want you to sing a short little song with me this morning. You know it really well. I'm betting. We're just going to sing the chorus. Let the chorus.

Let it shine. We could go on, and I'm tempted. My brothers and sisters, let your light shine.

Share that light with others. Pray that the light of Jesus Christ will ignite revival. Not only in our own hearts and in our lives.

Not only in his church around the world. But in all creation. Amen? Amen.