

# I Am the Light of the World

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Preacher: Mike Salvati

[ 0 : 00 ] Amen. You may be seated. Kiddos, you are excused to your King's Kids class. Yes. I'm going to be preaching out of John chapter 8, page 1062, starting in verse 12.

I'm not preaching 8 or 753 through 812. I sent out an email about that to the church this past week. It's just not this account, though historical, maybe historical, this woman caught in adultery, it wasn't original to the Gospel of John.

So I can't preach it as thus says the Lord. So moving on to chapter 8, verses 12 through 30. You know, in seventh grade, I had a biology teacher who introduced me to trees, and ever since, I have been in love with trees.

He assigned an assignment to us in which the whole class had to go find different leaves of trees, and then you had to collect them, and then you had to label them.

So I found red oak, white oak, various kinds of maples, ash, the catalpa. Now that's a tree. And I learned that leaves are essentially organic solar panels to a tree.

[ 1 : 29 ] That a tree leaf, there's a process happening within it. A life-producing process called, anyone? Photosynthesis.

And in God's good design, a tree leaf, sunlight comes in, and it is converted to the energy of life for a tree.

Light shines on a leaf, and that light is converted to life. Light, life. Side note, isn't God's good design of his creation amazing?

Love it. This morning, we see Jesus make an absolutely audacious claim in John 8, 12. And audacious means sound, so it's probably not the best word.

It's more like Jesus makes an absolutely brilliant claim in John 8, 12. I am the light of the world. His claim is a sort of kind of photosynthesis to the soul.

[ 2 : 32 ] A light that turns to life. But what Jesus is talking about is not a physical process, but a spiritual reality that is how salvation happens.

I like to call it Christosynthesis. The light of Christ shining into a darkened, dead soul. And when met by faith, life.

Eternal life. Sinners getting lit up and having their lives transformed by Jesus. So, Jesus is speaking these words in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles.

And last week, we heard Jesus make this claim on those who are experiencing a soul-parchedness, a soul drought. He says, come to me, anyone who's thirsty, and drink.

And you will be satisfied. And that was in the midst of these kind of water-pouring ritual rites during the Feast of Tabernacles.

[ 3 : 37 ] Well, interestingly enough, at the Feast of Tabernacles, there were these four huge kind of like massive burning fires happening in the court of women around the temple.

Happening throughout the week, most likely. And historians say that these fires would light up the temple in Jerusalem at night.

It's with that backdrop that Jesus says this. Would you read along with me John 8, 12-13. 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. So the Pharisee said to him, you are bearing witness about yourself. Your testimony is not true. Jesus answered, even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true.

For I know where I come from and where I am going. But you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge according to the flesh. I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true.

[ 4 : 45 ] For it is not I alone who judge, but I am the Father who sent me. And your law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. I am the one who bears witness about myself.

And the Father who sent me bears witness about me. They said to him, therefore, where is your father? Jesus answered, you know neither me nor my father. If you knew me, you would know my father also.

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. So he came to them again. He said to them again, I am going away and you will seek me and you will die in your sin.

Where I'm going, you cannot come. So the Jews said, will he kill himself? Since he says where I'm going, you cannot come. He said to them, you are from below. I am from above.

You are of this world. I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins. For unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. So they said to him, who are you?

[ 5 : 47 ] Jesus said to them, just what I've been telling you from the beginning. 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.

And they did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. 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. 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.

As he was saying these things, many believed in him. May God bless the reading of his word. So what we have here is a big, brilliant, God-sized claim by Jesus, I am the light of the world, followed by a series of objections by the Pharisees who heard him say this.

So what we're going to do is make our way, claim, and then hit his objections. So his claim, I am the light of the world. Now, if you are thinking like, okay, the world is like a dark room, and Jesus comes and flip the switch on the room, lights on, you're getting at it.

[ 7 : 05 ] That's getting at what Jesus is saying here. But Jesus is actually claiming something that's far more profound than that. Far more comprehensive in terms of its scope.

If you would turn back in your Bible to the beginning of John, John chapter 1, I'm just going to read the first few verses. It's on page 1053 of your pew Bible.

And you'll notice where we start in the gospel of John is with creation. In the beginning was the word. Who's the word? Jesus is the word.

In the beginning was the word, Jesus, the second person of the Trinity. And the word was with God, separate from God. And the word was God. He, the second person of the Trinity, is fully God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, the word, Jesus. And without him was not anything made that was made. In him, the word, Jesus, was life.

[ 8 : 08 ] And the life was the light of men. Now we're asking the question, are we still in creation? Five, the light shines in the darkness.

And the darkness has not overcome it. Look at verse 9. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him.

So somewhere along here, we go from talking about the creation of all things that was created by the second person of the Trinity, to now this other kind of light and life appearing in a dark world.

So in 8:12, Jesus is not claiming to be the light and life of creation. In 8:12, when he says, I am the light of the world, he's claiming to be the light of the new creation.

A new dawning in the darkness of the world. A new dawning that brings new life with a new, thus saith the Lord, God incarnate.

[ 9 : 09 ] Now, what Jesus came to do is not just to bring light of salvation to our individual souls.

He did that. He has come to recreate the new heavens into the new heavens and the new earth, to change it all. So when he says, I am the light of the world, what he's talking about is, I have come to reestablish some things.

The word world, according to John, is more often than not used to talk about the people living on the planet. I've been defining the world as sinful humanity in organized rebellion against God.

So you put that into John 3:16. For God so loved sinful humanity in organized rebellion against God, that he gave his one-of-a-kind son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

This is the world, this is the world in its darkness that Jesus came to, that he was born into, that he lived in. When his light shines into the darkness of humankind, some will respond in repentance and faith.

[10:36] Others will not. Some will respond and be radically changed. Others will not. Some will experience the light of Christ shining upon them and experience a Christosynthesis within their soul, a conversion.

It's like an old dead leaf that's disconnected from a tree. And what Jesus does is he shines upon that old dead leaf and brings that leaf back to light and reconnects it to Jesus, to himself.

A new living thing. So Christ's saving life, saving light, results in a transformed life.

Life. So when we read in verse 12, Jesus spoke to them saying, I am the light of the world, whoever follows me. You could say whoever believes in me.

But this is one of the rare times in John where he uses follows. It's believing that results in a radical changed life. And then we read it.

[11:47] Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. The light of Christ transforms selfish sinners.

Because that's what the world is trying to convince us of. That all of life is about you. Get what you want. But what Jesus' light does, his grace and his mercy and his power, is it radically changes us. It gives us new life so we no longer live for ourselves, but for him who for our sake died and was raised. So this claim of Jesus, where he says, I am the light of the world.

It is big. It is brilliant. It is God-sized. And it has the scope of all the universe to bring about a new creation. Starting with you and me.

This is the second I am statement of the book of John. The first was, I am the bread of life. This is the, I am the light of the world.

[12:57] There are five others. Stay tuned. This Thursday, Amy Cooks has written a word of encouragement that's going to unpack all seven of them. But this, this one here, this big, brilliant, God-sized claim is a claim of salvation.

That the light of life comes from no one else. And then is the first objection. In verse 13, the Pharisees said to him, you are bearing witness about yourself.

Your testimony is not true. Jesus says, I am the light of life. And the Pharisees say, the Pharisees, by the way, are these religious professionals who knew their Bibles inside and out.

They said, that's wrong. It's not true. You're not the light of life. In fact, you can't say that. Because it's just you saying that.

They say why it's not true. You are bearing witness about yourself. Here's what's behind that. In Deuteronomy 19, we read this part of the law that says this.

[14:16] This is 1915. A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses shall a charge be established.

And so what the Pharisees are saying is, you are making a claim with only one witness yourself. Not valid. Look what Jesus says in verse 14, how he responds to their objection.

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. You know what Jesus is saying?

And regardless of what you're saying, Pharisees, I know what I am saying about myself, that I am the light of the world.

I know that's true. By my self-witness, by my self-testimony. It's like he's saying, you know what? Hey, I don't need a second or third witness because my testimony stands.

[15:25] I know where I've come from. I know where I'm going. I know I'm from heaven, that I created all things from just words. I know where I'm going to back to heaven, where I will sit and wait for that day I come back and judge the world.

I know where I come from and where I'm going. I know who I am, the great I am. I know why I came. To seek and save the lost. Jesus is responding like, I know who I am, you guys don't.

It's another way of him saying, you're living in darkness. He goes on to say to them, you judge according to the flesh.

They're making a judgment about Jesus based upon their flesh. It's a hallmark of the world. Let me read you this from 1 John 2.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Remember, the world is being defined. This is the same writer of the Gospel of John as sinful humanity and organized rebellion against God.

[16:40] For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

So what Jesus is saying is, hey, you judge according to the sinful desires. You don't see me for who I am. And then he says, I judge no one. Better yet, better understood is, I judge no one according to the flesh.

I see things as they are. And then he goes on to say, 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.

So Jesus makes the claim, I am the light of the world. The Pharisees object. No, you can't say that. It's not true. Jesus says, well, I am saying it. And because I know who I am, it is true.

And second of all, I do have a second witness. For it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me.

[17:49] In your law, Deuteronomy 19.15, it is written that the testimony of two people is true. I am the one who bears witness about myself. And the Father who sent me, who you don't know, bears witness about me.

So what Jesus is saying here, hey, not only do I bear witness about myself and as my witness is true, my Father also bears witness. The one who sent me, he bears witness to me.

And if you're wondering, well, how does he do that? Romans 1.4 says, one of the greatest witnesses of the Father to the Son is raising him from the dead. By the way, there is a third witness. Later, Jesus will speak of the Holy Spirit. John 16, come, convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and he will glorify me. He will bear witness to me.

The whole three persons of the Godhead bear witness to Jesus. But there's more. For those of us who've been radically changed by the grace of God, who the light of Christ has come and shined upon our hearts and given us new life, we bear witness to Jesus too.

[19:04] So this first objection is, who says? Each member of the Trinity says that Jesus is the light of the world, and we say Jesus is the light of the world.

Because he is central to God's plan for the fullness of time. Objection number two. Who's your daddy? Look at verse 19.

They said to him, therefore, where is your father? And Jesus answered, you know neither me nor my father. If you knew me, you would know my father.

One commentator thinks that these Pharisees are actually baiting Jesus. I believe it. Back in chapter 5, Jesus heals a guy on the Sabbath, which is a big no-no.

And then he claims to be the son of God. And at that point, the Pharisees and the rulers of Jerusalem, they wanted to kill him because they heard him making a claim of being God.

[20:11] And so here, they're just baiting him again. And where is your father? Who's your daddy? Now, the word father shows up in this passage multiple times.

But Jesus is going to come back to this father talk at the end of John 8. We're going to hit it in two weeks. The title of the sermon right now is Paternity Test.

And so we're just going to put a pin on this right now and just say, we're going to come back to this, this whole father talk of whose father is whose.

But what Jesus is going to do later in chapter 8 is he's going to say, my father is the God of all, but your father, Mr. and Mrs. Mr. Pharisee, is the devil himself.

Jesus is just brutal. He totally turns the table on them. But what we see going on here is that the objection is, now where is your father? What is your pedigree?

[21:16] Are you claiming to be God? And Jesus answers, you don't know me, nor do you know God. If you knew me, you'd know God. One thing more before I move on to the next objection.

In John 1, 18, if you want to turn there, this is just beautiful. We read that no one has ever seen God. No one has ever seen the ancient of days.

No one has ever seen God the Father. But the only God, the word become flesh, who dwelt among us, who sits at the Father's side, he has made him known.

And so when Jesus says, if you have known me, you would have known my father, what he's saying is, I am God. Just as my father is God. Objection three.

Jesus has said, I am the light of the world. Now we move to objection three in verses 21 through 24. Jesus says in 21, I'm going away and you will seek me and you will die in your sin.

[ 22 : 23 ] Where I am going, you cannot come. So Jesus has resumed a conversation with the Pharisees after making, responding to some objections earlier.

They tried to arrest him in verse 20. But his time had not come because God is sovereign over all things. Christ is going to do what he needs to do when he has to do it.

And so he says, I'm going away. He knows where he came from. He knows where he is going. He knows who he is and why he has come.

And so what he's about to do is expose their darkness a little bit more. He knows he's going back to his father in heaven.

And he knows when he does, these Pharisees will seek him. But he says to them, where I am going, you cannot come. He's going to be in the very presence of God the Father.

[ 23 : 22 ] Do you know who can go with him? Are all those who believe in him. For all of those who've experienced this crystal synthesis of the light of Christ shining, met by faith and given new life, those are the ones who will go with him.

But not these Pharisees because they don't believe. They're living in darkness. And that's why Jesus says to them, and you will die in your sin. And you will die in your sin.

Verse 22, the Pharisees don't seem to understand what Jesus is saying. Because they're in darkness. They say, will he kill himself since he says, where I'm going, you cannot come?

Now, suicide was seen as something that was very shameful, self-murder, and unheard of.

And so for a Pharisee's mind, if you commit suicide, you are going to be left to die in your sins. You would have to face God and all of God's wrath on your own.

[ 24 : 36 ] So how do they, why are they thinking that Jesus is saying that he is going to commit suicide? Here's what I think is going on.

One of the things that sin in us does is it distorts our view of ourselves. We don't see ourselves accurately.

We don't see ourselves for the sinners we actually are. We think of ourselves more highly than we should. And so these Pharisees could not fathom that they themselves would die in their sins.

So they assume Jesus is talking about himself. They think he's talking about taking his own life. To die in your sins means that when you die, your sins are unforgiven.

Which means you must face God's full wrath for all of your sins on your own. And so these Pharisees are thinking, surely, I'm not going to die in my sins.

[ 25 : 46 ] I'm a Pharisee. I obey God's law. I never murdered anybody. I'm always at synagogue or the temple on Sabbath.

I've eaten the right foods all of my life. How could I die in my sins? What this is is the classic condition of people who are self-deceived in the world.

Our sin has a way of clouding our judgment. We don't see ourselves as God sees us. We want to see ourselves as we want to see us.

And that will result in thinking that somehow what we have done is acceptable in God's sight. In verse 23, Jesus reminds them to kind of like snap them out of it.

You are from below. I am from above. You are of this world. I am not of this world. He reminds them of their origins. You're not from heaven.

[ 26 : 54 ] I'm from heaven. You're from the earth. You're born in sin. And then he says, you're of the world. You're part of sinful humanity in organized rebellion against God.

You are dead in your sins and part of the network. I am not of this world. I am the light of the world to light up the place. Jesus is being very clear here who he is.

He's throwing them a lifeline. He's throwing them a lifeline. Jesus is starting to insinuate that they're in terrible danger. That it's not Jesus who's going to die in their sins, but they're going to die in their sins.

Look at verse 24. I told you that you would die in your sins. Now that's the second time he has said that to them. For unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.

Now the third time he's told them that. You're going to die in your sins. You're going to die in your sins. You're going to die in your sins. You're living in darkness. You're under God's wrath. And then in the midst of all that, there is this little gospel hope.

[ 28 : 08 ] This little Jesus putting his foot in the door. And he says, unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. That sounds strange to your ears.

Unless you believe that I am he. The language underneath that is the Greek ego eimi. I am. I am. I am. And it's not connected to another statement. I am the light of the world. It's just I am. Could he just be coming back and saying, hey, I've already said I am the light of the world.

Unless you believe that I am he, the light of the world, you will die in your sins. Well, that is true. But I think he's saying more than that.

I think he's claiming to be the I am. Unless you believe that I am the I am who alone has the light of salvation that can change you radically, you will die in your sins.

[ 29 : 19 ] He's both. He is the light of the world because he is the great I am incarnate. Is he going to kill himself?

That's the objection. The real question is, who is going to die in their sins? And Jesus is saying, it's not going to be me.

I'm from heaven. I'm not of the world. I've come to be the light of the world. Ironically, these Pharisees were actually on to something about Jesus' willingly dying.

But Jesus wasn't going to willingly take his own life. Because he was in despair. Jesus was going to willingly give his life as the light of the world in order to rescue sinners and give them new life.

Are you afraid to look at yourself for the sinner you really are? Are you afraid to kind of like descend into the dark caverns of your heart to see what that actually says of you?

[ 30 : 34 ] Are you afraid that when you see yourself for who you truly are, that it's going to show that you have out-sinned God's ability to rescue you?

Are you afraid of that? That's the very reason why Jesus came. You cannot out-sin his grace and mercy. He's a life giver.

He raises people from the dead. This objection. Is he going to kill himself?

It's actually the question. Who is going to die in their sins? And apart from Christ, all of us will die in our sins. Which brings us to the fourth objection.

Jesus says, I'm the light of the world. We've seen who says. We've seen who's your daddy. Is he going to kill himself? Now, objection number four. We see it in verse 25.

[ 31 : 40 ] Who are you? Who are you to say something crazy like that to me?

Have you ever had a conversation with someone you love about Jesus? Jesus, and you get to the issue of sin, and they're kind of like, who are you to say that to me? You're in good company.

Jesus has just said, you're going to die in your sins. Unless you believe in me, you're going to die in your sins. And they're like, who are you? Could you imagine?

Think of people who are not followers of Jesus in your life. People that you love dearly. Think about this. Could you imagine Jesus saying verse 24 to them?

Someone you love in your family. Jesus says to them, I told you that you would die in your sins. For unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. Could you imagine that? Someone in your family.

[ 32 : 43 ] Someone at your workplace. Someone at the gym you go exercise at. You're hanging out with other parents. You're hanging out with other parents at your kid's soccer game. And Jesus walks up and says to this parent next to you.

He says to them, I told you that you would die in your sins. For unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. That's gutsy. That's straight up.

Now imagine Jesus saying those very words to you today. Mike, I told you that you would die in your sins.

For unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. Can you imagine him saying that to you today? What would you say in response?

Who are you? Who are you to tell me something like that? That is extremely narrow-minded, Mr. Sandals guy. Jesus' response is in verses 25 and forward.

[ 33 : 47 ] He begins by saying, who am I? Just what I've been telling you from the beginning. I've been consistent in telling you who I am.

Is your soul thirsty? Come and drink. Satisfy your soul. Are you soul hungry? I am the new and better manna.

Come eat. I'm the one who gives living water. I'm the one who gives the new birth. If you ask my relative, John the Baptist.

I was born after John the Baptist. But you know what John the Baptist said about me? He who comes after me is greater than me because he was before me. He's been consistent all along. Jesus is the word become flesh. The glory of God on display. Full of grace and truth. Full of steadfast love and faithfulness.

[ 34 : 49 ] He is the seen God making known the unseen God. God. I've been telling you all along who I am. And in verse 26 he says, I've got more to say.

Got more to judge. But he who sent me is true. And I declare to the world what I have heard from him.

If you flip back to 7-7. Jesus said, the world cannot hate you. But it hates me. Because I testify about it that its works are evil.

You're going to die in your sins. And Jesus doesn't only stop. He doesn't stop at saying the evil of the world.

And that apart from him we're going to die in our sins. He says, I am the savior of the world. I am your light of life. Come, receive the sunlight and live.

[ 35 : 55 ] They didn't understand that he was speaking about his father. This goes back to this whole kind of father talk. Which we're going to hit at on a couple weeks from now. But in verse 28.

Jesus continues to respond to this idea of who are you. And he goes third person. He says, when you have lifted up the son of man. It's a title.

It's a title of a person who would appear before the ancient of days in Daniel chapter 7. And the ancient of days would give the son of man a kingdom of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

And this kingdom would be an everlasting kingdom. This kingdom would never pass away. This kingdom could not be destroyed. It was indestructible. It was unstoppable.

It was forever. This is a way of talking. Jesus is talking about himself as the Messiah. The Christ. The king who has come. And he says something really surprising.

[ 37 : 00 ] He says, when you have lifted up the son of man. He's not talking about being lifted up on a throne. He's talking about being lifted up on the cross.

It's the hour of his glory in the gospel of John. And he's saying that when you lift me up on the cross, then you will know that I am he.

Ego eimi. That I am God incarnate. You see, one of the wonders of Christianity is that it's the cross of Jesus Christ.

That it's one of the greatest revelations of who Jesus is. God in the flesh. Dying on behalf of sinners. So that sinners could be made alive.

It's Christosynthesis. It's light shining. And those who believe being brought to life. And by the way. It all happened on a tree. The cross.

[ 37 : 58 ] This Christosynthesis. And for those who believe, it radically changes you. From being self-centered to being Christ-centered.

This is all about God's plan of salvation for the fullness of time. Who are you? Son of man, the great I am incarnate.

Light of the world. The one who's come to die in order to give sinners life. So here we have this big, brilliant, God-sized claim of Jesus.

I am the light of the world. He is claiming to be our salvation. Who says? Who's your daddy? Is he going to kill himself?

Who are you? Who do you believe Jesus is? Jesus has made it very clear who he is. He's the great incarnate I am sent by his father to be the light of the world and bring about eternal life.

[ 39 : 09 ] If he didn't say that, if it's not true, don't waste your time with Jesus. It's just that simple. But if he is who he claimed to be, how do you respond?

Three ways. Believe. You take him at his word. You realize that he is the light of the world.

That he is the light of the new creation dawning on the dark world that we live in. You take him at his word. You believe.

Not only what he says about him, but about you. That you're not as good as you think you are. That you're worse than you think you are.

That your sins bear witness against you. That you deserve God's wrath forever. And that unless you believe that Jesus is God who died for you, you will die in your sins.

[ 40 : 13 ] You got to take him at his word. You got to, if you're not a Christian and you're hearing this for the first time, you're like, yes, I want that.

That makes complete sense. Here's what you do. You just say to Jesus, Jesus, I believe that you are the light of the world. Would you give me the eternal life that only you can give and I will follow you.

You pray that. So you believe. And the second piece is you follow. In this passage in H12, Jesus uses the words follow.

Whoever follows me. Whoever believes in me. And that belief, it forms, takes the form of obedience. There's no such thing as a Christian who believes in Jesus but doesn't follow him.

There's no such thing. All Christians are those who believe in Jesus and follow him. Imperfectly, yes. But these are the people who have experienced this Christosynthesis.

[ 41 : 19 ] This light of Christ that is transformative into eternal life and it changes the way that you live. The last piece, way to respond, is that we tell people.

We tell people where to find life. We tell people that Jesus is their only hope because he is. We tell people that their sins stand against them and that if they don't believe in Jesus, they're going to die in their sins.

But boy, for those who believe, life eternal. Have you believed that Jesus is the light of salvation shining in your dark world?

That he knows you? That he came for you? That in love he died for you? Do you believe that? Then live your life for him.

Walk in the light as he is in the light. Jesus said, I am the light of the world. Let's pray. God, thank you, Lord Jesus, for reminding us that you are the light of the world.

[ 42 : 45 ] Light up our darkness, God. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.