

I Am the Light of the World

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[0 : 00] Well, as the Lord enables us, we will turn to the second passage of Scripture we read from John's Gospel, chapter 8.

And our text this morning is verse 12, John 8, 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. Well, as you know, there are seven I am sayings.

And this morning I'd like us to consider this. I am saying that again highlights much concerning the person, the work and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'd like us to consider the words of our text under two headings, the illuminating Christ and the universal Christ. The illuminating Christ, he is the light of the world.

[1 : 27] I am the light. Now, as you go through John's Gospel, as you consider the seven I am sayings, you will notice that Jesus always chooses his words deliberately.

And this I am saying is no exception. When Jesus says that he is the light of the world, he chooses his words deliberately.

This metaphor isn't just an abstract illustration. It carries an important context, as does all, as does the other I am sayings.

There always is a context, there is a framework. And here, Jesus is speaking against the backdrop of the celebration of the Feast of Booths or the Feast of Tabernacles.

And amongst other things, during the Feast of Tabernacles, there was a lamp lighting ritual.

[2 : 43] There were lights or lamps or candles, if you like, burned to symbolize the Old Testament pillar of fire that led the people of Israel through the wilderness.

So, in a word, Exodus is echoing in the background. The Israelites remembered the pillar that provided, amongst other things, light and guidance.

And these lights, full of symbolic significance, were lit and rejoiced over during the Feast of Booths. It was a time of reflection, but it was also a time of joyful celebration.

Each night, large lamps were lit in the temple courts. And these lamps would spread their glow into the darkness of the city of Jerusalem, so that almost everyone in Jerusalem could see these symbolic lights in the temple.

And it is in this context, within this historical framework of symbolic significance, that Jesus calls himself the light of the world.

[4 : 06] He is the light. And the emphasis is, of course, on the definite article. He is the light to which the pillar of fire, as a symbol, pointed.

Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. He fulfills God's presence, God's protection, God's guidance in his person, in his work, and in his ministry as Redeemer.

And how profound is all of this? Because Jesus fulfills all that this Jewish festival signifies concerning Israel's experience of and hope for the salvation of Yahweh.

He gives the true light, illuminating life-giving light. Think of this, when the festival is over.

When the feast of booths comes to an end. When the curtain falls. And these lamps are snuffed out. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, who became man.

[5 : 20] He who was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever. The light.

He will continue to shine with infinite, eternal, and unchangeable brightness. Unlike the festival lamps. That must be extinguished as the festival, as the feast draws to a close.

But unlike these lights, these lamps, he cannot be extinguished. He cannot be quenched. He cannot be put out. He cannot be snuffed out.

Because he is Jesus, the Son of God. As Paul puts it as he writes to the church at Colossae. Jesus, he who is before all things and in him, all things hold together.

And I want you to note something that is particularly significant here. Jesus is not speaking in comparative terms. He is not saying that he is like a light.

[6 : 33] He is saying that he is the light. He doesn't compare and contrast. Well, in a sense, he does. Because he stands out from these symbolic lamps that speak of the pillar of fire in the Old Testament.

He is the light. The definitive, authoritative, enduring, lasting light. He is the light in the fullest sense of the term.

In other words, the light designates what Jesus is in and of himself. This profound reality of eternal light applies to him.

And no one else but him. As John later states in such clear and definitive terms, God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.

Jesus reveals himself against the backdrop of the feast of tabernacles as this divine light.

[7 : 45] The visible, tangible image of the invisible God in whose face we see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

And the words of our text present us with a challenge this morning. As these words challenged those to whom Jesus spoke.

At the treasury. At the temple. You see, the people must respond to Jesus. In the same way as the Israelites responded to the cloud and to the pillar of fire.

You see, he is the illuminating Jesus. He challenges them to follow him as the light of life.

Just as the Israelites in the Old Testament era followed the pillar of fire in the wilderness. You see, this is the language of discipleship.

[8 : 53] Because to follow Jesus is to believe and trust in him and serve him. You see, Jesus is saying that the light revolves around him and knowing him and living for him and by him.

He is drawing the attention of the disciples and others to what lies at the very core of Christian discipleship. What is that? Jesus himself.

Remember on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter, Peter, James and John. When Moses and Elijah leave the scene.

You will recall how that cloud overshadowed them. And you will remember the voice that spoke from heaven.

This is my beloved son. Listen to him. You will remember how the disciples no longer saw Moses.

[10 : 02] They no longer saw Elijah. They no longer saw anyone with them. The gospel writers tell us. But Jesus only.

There was a lesson there for Peter, for James and John. And there is a lesson for you and I this morning. Christian discipleship is about taking up the cross and denying ourselves day after day after day.

And following the Son of God, Jesus Christ. You will note that light is the opposite of darkness.

The function of light is to shine. To penetrate into the darkness. To oppose it. To dispel it. And only Jesus, as the illuminating light, can remove the darkness and shadows of sin.

Its guilt, its power, and its misery from your life. As he did in the lives of those around him at this point. Look at verse 30. In chapter 8.

[11 : 10] As he was saying these things. Many believed in him. This Jesus, the light.

He is Malachi's son of righteousness. He who brings healing. And who brings cleansing. Do you know this Christ this morning?

Is he the light of your world? Do you follow him? Have you repented of your sins? Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Do you know this light? These questions are implied. As Jesus addresses those around him.

Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness. But will have the light of life. No less. Have you ever stood in a room?

[12 : 15] And the room appears. To be. Spotless. And clean. And yet. As the sun shines through.

A ray. Of sunshine breaks through that window. Suddenly. You begin to become conscious. Of dust particles. You see things in a different light.

Is that not why the psalmist says in Psalm 36. In your light. We see light. You will also notice that these words.

I am. Are uttered with strong and significant emphasis. You see what Jesus is really saying is this. I. And I alone. I and no other. I am the light. In short. He is saying. The light. Am I. There is something of the center of gravity.

[13:17] In the words of Jesus. Because everything. Is concentrated. On the person of Jesus Christ. He is. Himself. The light. He is the focal point.

To this. Materialistic. And skeptical. Jewish audience. He reveals himself. Through these words. As the Lord. As Yahweh incarnate.

The perfect expression of God. In human form. And we read that many. Believed. In him. The more discerning.

Jewish ear. Would have. Heard. A clear echo. Of the divine utterance. Of Exodus. 3.

14. I am. Who. I am. Words. That are. Unmistakable. That. Their minds.

[14:18] Would have been brought back. To the burning bush. Where God. Where Yahweh. By these very words. I am. Expressed. His covenant.

Faithfulness. His covenant. Faithfulness. To Moses. To the people of Israel. To the Israel of God. He is.

Jesus. The great. I am. Who claims. Equality. With God. As John puts it. The word.

With. God. Distinct. From the father. Yet. God. The son. In the fullest. Sense of the term. Of one. Substance. And equal.

With God. The father. He. Who is. God. And man. The word. Became. Flesh. And dwelt. Among us.

[15:13] And he speaks. In the temple. And he says. I am. The light. Of the world. Again. I want to ask.

This morning. Do you know. Him. Do you know. Jesus Christ. As your savior. Is he the light.

Of your world. Are you still living. Your life. In darkness. Or has the light. Of the knowledge. Of the glory. Of God.

Manifested. Itself. To you. Through Jesus Christ. Through his face. I am. The light. Secondly.

He is. The universal. Jesus. The illuminating. Christ. He is also. The universal.

[16:11] Christ. Again. There is something. Profound. About the words. Of Jesus. Because. In the context. Of the feast. Of tabernacles.

You will note. That Jesus. Is not. Only. Not merely. The light. Of Jerusalem. But he is.

The light. Of the world. This. Light. That is. Seen. In his. Person. In his. Work.

In his. Ministry. As redeemer. It reaches out. Far beyond. The narrow. Boundaries. Of the Jewish. World. Far beyond. The streets.

Of Jerusalem. This. I am. Saying. Takes on. If you like. A universal. Significance. He is.

[17:03] As we said. A moment ago. Malachi. Son. Of righteousness. He is. What the sun. Is. Literally. To the solar. System. The center.

Of light. And heat. And life. And growth. He is. The only begotten. Son. Of the father.

God. The father. Who so loved. The world. That he gave. Without holding back. His one. And only son. So that. Whosoever. Should believe. In him. Will not perish.

But have. Everlasting. Life. And time. And again. You can hear. The words. Of John. 3.16. Echoing. In the background. Because again.

This saying. Implies. Something. Profound. The extent. Of God's. Love. In sending.

[17:59] His son. As an atoning. Sacrifice. Is no less. Than global. It has. This rich. International. Flavor. In what sense.

Does this text. Teach. Or advocate. Universal. Salvation. That Jesus died. For everyone. And that everyone. Will ultimately.

Be saved. Regardless. And go to heaven. In other words. All roads. Lead to heaven. No. The bible. Never teaches. Or advocates.

Universalism. What it does mean. However. Is this. That God's love. Reaches. A diversity. Of sinners. All. Over. The world.

And that. Is a point. Of emphasis. In this. Saying. You see. Jesus Christ. Makes it. Very. Very. Clear. That. His.

[19:01] Salvation. That he is not. Limited. To one. Particular. Group. Of people. Or. Just. To certain. Geographical. Area. Such as.

The. Commonwealth. Of Israel. No. This. Message. This. Saying. Carries. With it. A worldwide. Application. And that point.

Cannot be labored. Enough. Because this is a significant point. Which raises eyebrows. Amongst. The more discerning Jews. It alerts. The Jews.

Around him. To the scribes. And the Pharisees. The Sadducees. Others. To the astonishing reality. That salvation.

Applies. To both. Jew. And Gentile. You see. Jesus is addressing here. As he does. Time and again. A narrow.

[19 : 59] Thinking. Jewish society. Where there was no love lost. Between Jew and Gentile. The Jews. Many of them. They prided themselves.

On being. The children. Sons. And daughters. Of Abraham. And at times. They prided. Themselves. On this special. Distinction.

And status. And got carried away. With their own. Self-importance. How dangerous is that? You see. The Christ. That the Jews.

Eagerly. Awaited. Was their Christ. Their Christos. Their Messiah. Exclusively theirs. And this kind of.

Possessive. Attitude. Was such that. If. Any Gentile. Wanted. To. Have. Any part. In being associated. With.

[20 : 52] The Messiah. Then. They could only do so. On rigorous. Jewish. Terms. They essentially. Had to become. Jews. Themselves. And this.

Pride. And prejudice. Left. Jew. And Gentile. At opposite ends. Of. A hostile. Divide. But what does Jesus do? Well.

Jesus. Blows apart. That. Antagonistic. Distinction. Or division. He is.

Is he not. In the words. Of the community. Of Samaria. The Christ. The savior.

Of the world. Remember the testimony. Of the woman. Of Samaria. A community. That knew. What it was. To be at the receiving end. Of prejudice.

[21 : 49] A community. That knew. What it was. To be. Sidelined. And ignored.

And despised. But on the rooftops. In Samaria. They're crying out. Through the testimony. Of the woman. Of Samaria. Having discovered.

For themselves. Jesus Christ. They're crying. From the rooftops. Quite literally. John 4. 42. This. Is. The Christ. The savior. Of the world. The Christ. Of both. Jew. And Gentile. Little wonder. Paul. Is compelled. To say. That there is. No distinction. And he can say it. On the authority. Of this text. There is no.

[22 : 44] Distinction. Between Jew. And Greek. For the same. Lord. Overall. Is rich. To all. Who call. Upon him. For. Whoever. Calls.

Upon the name. Of the Lord. Shall. Be saved. Yes. Everyone. You will remember.

When Jesus. Commissioned. His disciples. To spread. The word. To proclaim. The gospel.

Matthew 28. But acts. One. In particular.

Echoes. Again. Something. Of the. Rich. International. Flavor. Of the gospel. That. Penetrates. And saturates.

The words. Of our text. And should be music. To our ears. This morning. You will recall. The words. Of Jesus. On the threshold.

[23 : 40] Of his ascension. He says. To his disciples. You. Will. Be. My witnesses. And perhaps. The disciples. Ask the question. Where do we begin?

Jesus says. You will be my. You will be my witnesses. Jesus. In Jerusalem. And in all. Judea. Oh yes. He said. And Samaria.

Don't forget. Samaria. And to the end. Of the earth. You know. It's almost. Like throwing. A stone. Into a pond.

And you watch. The ripple. Effect. It begins. At Jerusalem. The ripple. Spreads. Throughout all. Judea. It reaches. Yes. Even Samaria. And to the ends.

Of the earth. You see. The point is this. And this is the timeless. Timely. Message. Of the gospel. That filters through.

[24 : 38] The words of our text. This morning. Some two thousand. Years later. That the gospel. Is for everyone. The gospel. Is for you. And me. Every man.

Woman. Boy. Girl. Within these walls. This morning. And out with these. Walls. The gospel. Is for you. Regardless. Of status.

Social. Class. Upbringing. Personal history. It is for everyone. I am the light. Of the world. No one. Is excluded.

No one. Is barred. From coming. To Jesus Christ. Oh how the gospels. Stress that point. Time and again. What about the leper? He's not excluded. What about the blind beggar?

He's not excluded. What about this notorious woman. From Samaria? Well again. Read John chapter 4. He is the light. Of. The world. He has.

[25 : 35] As Paul puts it. So beautifully. He has. Broken down. The middle wall. Of separation. Imagine. Imagine.

Imagine. Imagine. Imagine. Imagine. Imagine. Being. Within the courts. Of the temple. Imagine. A literal divide. Running down. This building. Imagine. A wall. Separating. Gentile. From Jew. That's how it was.

Signs. Were posted. Excluding. Gentiles. From the inner courts. But Jesus says. No. I am. The light.

Of. The world. This was. An explosive. Doctrine.

[26 : 32] To those. Who were at the receiving end. Of this particular. I am. Seeing. You see. At an. At an immediate level. Jesus. Blows.

Apart. The local. Distinction. Between Jew. And Gentile. Because. This light. The light. Of his person. His work. His ministry. Is no less.

Than global. It's not. Race. Sensitive. It's not. In any way. Class. Sensitive. It's not. A western. Eastern. Religious. Phenomenon. It is all.

Encompassing. He is the light. Of the world. Jesus. Is the true light. Who came. Into the world. To save. Sinners. And I say. To you.

This morning. That he is. Freely. Offered. In the gospel. And through. The gospel. To every. Man. Woman. And child. Without exception.

[27 : 29] To all. Who. By faith. Call. Upon his name. You see. Without the way.

There is no going. Without the truth. There is no knowing. Without the life. There is no living. Jesus. Stresses. That. Does he not?

In John. Chapter. 14. You see. Only he. And I finish. With this. Only. Only. The Lord. Jesus Christ. This morning.

Can enrich. Our poverty. And lighten. Our dark world. Christ. Alone.

Has the words. Of eternal. Life. And he. Alone. Remains. The light. Of the world. But you say. To me. As many. Many do.

[28 : 23] In society. This. Is. Unacceptable. To put. So much. Stress. On the definite. Article. It is. Unacceptable.

It is. Too. Exclusive. It is. Uncompromising. So be it. This is. The truth. That lies. At the heart. Of the Christian.

Faith. A claim. Which goes. Against. The grain. Of political. Correctness. It goes. Against. The grain. Of multi-faith. Tolerance. But. Jesus.

Christ. Christ. Himself. Testifies. To being. The. Light. Of. The world. Jesus.

Says. I am. The way. The truth. And the life. No one. Has a warrant. To come to the father.

[29 : 19] But. By. Me. How. Uncompromising. Is that. How uncompromising. Is this. Saying. The only way.

To God. Is. Through. Jesus. And many. Will. Not. Even.

Entertain. That. Teaching. But. I say. To you. On the authority. Of. Scripture. It is. It is. The testimony.

Of. Scripture. From. The book. Of. Genesis. To the book. Of. Revelation. It is. The testimony. Of. The Lord. Jesus. Christ. It is.

The testimony. Of. The prophets. Of. The prophets. Of. The old testament. It is. The testimony. Of. The apostles. And.

[30 : 13] It is. The testimony. Of. Every. Preacher. Of. The gospel. Of. Jesus. Christ. Neither. Is. There. Salvation. In. Any. Other.

Peter. Says. In. Acts. Chapter 4. For. There is. No. Other. Name. Given. Among. Men. By. Which.

We. Must. Be. Saved. And. So. I. Commend. To you. This morning. John's. Christ. The light. Of. The world. He is. The Christ.

Of. The Bible. And. He is. The Christ. You need. Friend. More. Than. Anything. Else. In. This. Life. This. Morning. If. You. Are. A. Stranger. To. Grace. And. To.

God. I. Say. To. You. You. Need. To. Know. Jesus. Christ. You. Need. This. Light. This. Divine. Light. To. Shine.

[31 : 06] And. Penetrate. And. Dispel. The. Darkness. You. Cannot. Do. It. Perhaps. You. You. Have. Tried. Perhaps.

You. Have. Exhausted. Every. Avenue. There. Are. Many. People. Out. There. Looking. For. Light. But. I. Say. To. You. They. Are. Looking. In. All.

The. Wrong. Places. If. They. Are. Looking. For. Light. Out. With. The. Person. Of. Jesus. Christ. Out. With. The. Light. Of. Scripture.

Out. With. The. Finished. Work. Of. The. Cross. I. Say. To. You. This. Morning. You. Need. To. Follow. The. Light. Of. The. World. He. Is. The. Light. And. Should. Be. Not. Leave. The. Last. Word. To. Jesus. Himself.

[31 : 59] Whoever. Follows. Me. Will. Not. Walk. In. Darkness. But. Will. Have. The. Light. Of. Life.

Amen. Let us. Pray. O. Lord. Our. God. We.

Give. Thanks. That. You. Are. Our. Great. God. The. God. Who. Is. Light. And.

Grant. Us. We. Pray. This. Day. To. Seek. The. Leading. And. Guidance. Of. Scripture. May. We. Know. That. Light.

And. Lamp. May. We. Know. The. Guidance. Of. The. Pillar. Of. Fire. Fulfilled.

[32 : 57] In. And. Through. Jesus. Christ. Grant. Us. To. Follow. Him. To. Place. Our. Hope. And. Our. Confidence. In. Him. And.

In. Him. Alone. So. That. We. May. Know. That. Light. Shining. Upon. Us. Continue. With. Us. We. Ask.

These. Things. In. Christ's. Name. Amen.