

# The Light Of The World

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 10 September 2023

Preacher: Jonathan Chancey

[ 0 : 00 ] Please take your Bibles and open them up to the book of John chapter 8. Our text this morning is John chapter 8 verses 12 through 30 and I ask that if you are able, would you please stand for the reading of God's Word. Do you know why we do this?

A couple of reasons why we do this. One, we're about to sit for a while and I'm asking you to stay awake and listen as the Word of God is preached, but two, we stand in reverence for the Word of God as it's read. So if you would, let's stand. Please follow along with me as I read John chapter 8 verses 12 through 30. 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 Pharisees 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 came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I'm going. You judge according to the flesh.

I judge no one. 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. In 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 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. So the Jews said, will he kill himself since he says where I am 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?

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 declared to the world what I have heard from him. 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. This is God's holy, perfect, true, inspired word. Let's be seated and pray once more. Father, your word is a lamp to our feet and it's a light to our path. And so we pray now that you would help us to see the glory of Christ clearly in it. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

[ 3 : 48 ] Are you following the light or are you walking in darkness? Somehow this week, don't ask me how, I found myself reading up on the seven wonders of the ancient world. I knew some of them. I could have named the pyramid. I could have named the gardens of Babylon, but for the first time I did a little bit of reading on the lighthouse of Alexandria. For years in the ancient world, the lighthouse of Alexandria was the brightest light. It was built around 280 BC out of limestone and granite. It stood approximately 330 feet tall, which just for point of reference is taller than the Statue of Liberty.

It's twice as tall as the Cape Romain lighthouses down the road here. It's just a massive structure built without any modern technology made entirely by hand. It had three sections to it. On the inside of the lighthouse, there is a pulley system, an elevator system, kind of a dumbwaiter type system that would be used to deliver piles and piles and piles of lumber and wood all the way up to the top of the lighthouse where there was a furnace that would be used to burn an enormous fire up at the top. But what was really impressive to me was at the very top of the lighthouse was a curved giant mirror that would be used to reflect the light of the fire during the night and it would be used to reflect the light of the sun during the day. So anytime, day or night, anyone within 35 miles of this giant lighthouse could see the light of the lighthouse of Alexandria shining as far as 35 miles away, which if you're geographically challenged like me, again, just for point of reference, that's as far as Georgetown this way or as far as

I think it was Somerville High School, this way. Just an enormously bright light. Sailors know the benefit of a lighthouse. If you're sailing in the dark, they know just how beneficial a lighthouse can be. It warns them of the dangers of the darkness. It protects them in the middle of the night. It guides them safely into port for any who are sailing through the night and how much more so in 280 BC, before the advances of modern technology, before the advances in technology of lights and ships and onboard navigation. Those who followed the light were alerted to the dangers of the darkness.

And given the choice between sailing under the light or sailing without the light, I would be willing to bet 10 out of 10 sailors would agree that sailing under the light would be much better. Let me follow the light. How foolish would it be if the light was shining down, the light was offering to guide your path for any sailor to say, you know what? Turn that thing off. I prefer to remain in the darkness. We recognize, don't we? That's foolishness. But that's exactly what we see happening here in John chapter 8.

Here in John chapter 8, we see that Jesus is the light of the world. To reject him, to refuse to follow the light is infinitely foolish, but to follow him and to live in his light is infinitely wise.

[ 7 : 36 ] That's the big idea of our passage this morning. And we're going to see that unfold by asking three questions this morning. Three questions this morning. First, what is Jesus claiming about himself here?

What is Jesus claiming about himself here in verse 12? Look there again with me. Look what it says. Jesus says, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. What does this mean? Well, Jesus, again, he's teaching us a lesson about himself that's based on everyday experiences, everyday interactions with everyday objects. We all know the benefits of light. We need light in order to see. And the light, it shines in the darkness. It illuminates our path.

The light is there to defeat the darkness. It conquers the darkness. When the light comes on, there's no question that it is there to overcome the darkness and to guide our steps. Well, all of that was just as true for the Jews listening to Jesus's words as it is for us here and now. But there's an extra layer of context here in John chapter 8 that I think would be helpful for us to understand. This conversation, we should remember, is taking place at the Feast of Booths. The Feast of Booths. Now, if you remember from the past several weeks during this context of the Feast of Booths, this was one of the major Jewish festivals and feasts where all the Jews were required to come gather together to celebrate the harvest and to remember their years of wilderness wanderings. Forty years after they were delivered from slavery where they wandered through the wilderness being led by the Lord. And so they remembered this wilderness wandering by reenacting several of the elements of their time in the wilderness. So for example, Feast of Booths, they lived in temporary shelters throughout the week to remind them of the time when they lived in temporary shelters in their wilderness wanderings. They poured out water on top of the altar to remember, to remind them of water flowing out of the rock as God provided miraculously water for them in the wilderness. That's when Jesus said, out of your heart will flow rivers of living water for any who believe in me. Now, in the evenings during the feast, the Jews celebrated by lighting large lamps in the court of women in the temple as large as the temple walls, which may have reminded them of the way the Lord went before them in a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by the day. They followed the light of the Lord. So these Jews would light these lamps and then individually they would take torches and they would all through the night, they would dance and sing and celebrate and rejoice and remember the ways that the Lord led them through the wilderness. They would celebrate under the illumination of the light and it's here in this context at this moment of the feast that Jesus says, I am the light of the world. And the way that this light illuminates the darkness, the way that that this light gives you clarity of sight, all of the joy, all of the celebration, all of the happiness that you feel right now dancing and and rejoicing and singing under this light is ultimately and only found in me. I am the light and I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me, just as the

Israelites followed that pillar of fire through the wilderness, just as they followed the pillar of cloud during the day. Whoever follows me, not just the Jews, but any who follow me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. In fact, this is a better offer than what the Jews had in the wilderness. The pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud, they went before them, they led them, they followed them for 40 years in the wilderness. It led them outside of them.

But Jesus says, whoever follows my light will have the light of life, will possess the light of life.

[12:11] He says, follow me and you will not only see by the light, you will have the light of life in you. It will guide you and enliven you and lead you and enthrall you from within. What a claim that Jesus is making here. Oh, what a, what an offer that he's, he's making here. Do you realize that this is an offer of everything that all of us desperately want and desperately need? All of us want joy. All of us want and crave leadership. All of us want and crave illumination. All of us want and crave guidance. All of us want and crave life. And Jesus says, all of this is ultimately and only found in me. How can he say this? Yeah, no ordinary man can honestly say the things that Jesus is saying here. You know, this claim to be the light of the world, we need to understand it's a claim to be God himself. And we've mentioned before that in the gospel of John, Jesus makes several I am statements. And these are statements that are direct claims to divinity. Jesus is claiming to be the I am of the old

Testament. He's claiming equality with Yahweh himself. And so we saw in John chapter six, he said, I am the bread of life. And now here in John chapter eight, he's saying the same thing. He says, I am the light of the world. In me, you find joy. In me, you find guidance. In me, you find life itself because I am God in the flesh. Come down to you. So come. The invitation is, is come follow me and you will not walk in darkness, which leads to death. Come follow me and you will have the light of life. This is a remarkable claim, isn't it? And it, it seems remarkably simple, which makes the way that the Pharisees respond here that much more shocking, doesn't it? He offers them life and, and light in the simplest terms possible. And they don't even entertain what he just said. They say, your testimony is not true. We should look at this and realize how, how foolish of a response this is. It is eternally, infinitely foolish to reject the light. So question number two, why would anyone reject the light?

Why would anyone reject the light? This offer is so simple and the stakes are, are so high, why would anyone say no? I mean, you might, you might wonder if you've been walking with the Lord for a while, you may wonder, how could anybody reject him? And maybe you've forgotten what it was like before the Lord by his grace saved you. You forgot what your rebellion against the Lord was like.

And so you just look around at the darkness around us and you wonder, how could they possibly live that way? How could they possibly think that way? How could anybody reject what Jesus simply offers to you by faith? And we just want to shake our non-believing friends and family and say, just, why can't you just see it? Why can't you get it? Why can't you just believe? I can think of four reasons here. There's more, but I see four reasons here in this passage. Reason number one, why anyone would reject the light.

They're misinformed about the light. They're misinformed about the light. These Jews, they say in verse 13, you're bearing witness about yourself, your testimony is not true. This is a callback to Jesus' own words in chapter 5, verse 31, where he said, if I alone bear witness about myself, then my testimony is not true. See, they remember that, but they misunderstood what he said and they turn it and twist it against him. Apparently, they forgot the four witnesses that Jesus listed and mentioned in John chapter 5. John the Baptist bore witness to his glory. The works of Christ bore witness to his glory.

[ 16 : 36 ] The scriptures themselves bore witness to his glory. And here's where he decides to go in this interaction. The Father himself bore witness to the glory of Christ. Jesus says to these Pharisees in verse 14, you don't really know as much as you think you do. You think you understand God. You think you understand the scriptures. You think you know about me. You don't know as much as you think. I know where I am.

I know who I am. I know where I've come from. I know where I'm going. You don't even know where I've come from. And you don't even know where I'm going. You know, it is shocking how much misinformation there is out there about who Jesus is. And the fact is, many of the people who reject him honestly don't know much about him. And that's why it's so important for us as we share the gospel with our friends to ask them, well, have you actually ever read the gospel? Have you actually ever read some of these accounts of Jesus' life? I understand what you've heard. I understand what you're saying. But that's not what the Bible says. Have you ever actually listened and read the words of Jesus? Have you ever actually considered what the Bible says about who Jesus is and what he's done, his death on the cross, his resurrection from the grave? It could be that they reject the light because they misunderstand it.

But we should know it's much deeper than that. Which is reason number two, why anyone rejects the light is they simply can't see the light. Reason number two, they simply can't see the light. They are blind.

They cannot see the glory of God. This is what Jesus means in verse 15 when he says, they are saying these things because, he says, you judge according, what? To the flesh. They are seeing with flesh eyes. They are hearing his words with flesh ears. They do not have the spiritual sight that's required in order for you to spiritually perceive the truth about God and the truth of Christ.

If you judge by the flesh, live by the flesh, see by the flesh, if you do not have spiritual sight, then you are blind and cannot see the light. If you and I sit in a dark room and the lights come on, all of us see it, right? Well, that assumes that we have the capability of seeing. We have sight. We can see when the light comes on in the room. The curse of sin under which we all are in our natural state is as if we're all in a dark room. The lights are off and there's blindfolds, thick blinding blindfolds over our eyes, so thick and so heavy and so dark that even if the lights are turned on, none of us can see it. Unless someone comes and takes the blindfold off, we are blind and unable to see the light.

[ 19 : 54 ] Jesus says to these Pharisees, you are, you're blind. You still, you judge according to the flesh. I judge no one, meaning not like you. I judge no one according to the flesh. Yet even if my, even if I do judge, my judgment is true. Why? For it is not I alone who judges, but I and the Father who sent me. So he points them to their own law. Says, your law says the testimony of two people is true. So let's, let's count them up. Me, I bear witness about myself, number one. And number two, my Father who sent me.

Their problem was they could only see one and him not even clearly. We need to know that fundamentally the problem with those who reject Christ is not evidence.

The Pharisees had all the evidence they could have possibly needed. The problem fundamentally with those who reject Christ is not proximity. They were face to face with Jesus Christ himself.

The problem with those who reject Christ is they are blind. They need to be given eyes to see the truth. But it goes even deeper than that. Third reason why anyone would reject the light, they love the darkness and they hate the light. They love the darkness and they hate the light.

And they hate the light. You know, sometimes in the morning, maybe you have a similar experience. I will get up early in the morning. I will go into the kitchen and I'll start making breakfast.

[ 21 : 41 ] And then Amanda will come in behind me and she'll do something terrible. She will open up the blinds and turn on the light. And she'll say something like, well, why is it so dark in here? Turn on the lights. We can't see anything. Let some sunlight in. But I'm not ready for that early in the morning. I prefer to live in the darkness that early in the morning. I do not want the light to shine that early in the morning. I reject the light because I prefer the darkness. That's how it is with those who reject Christ. People reject the light because they simply don't want the light. They prefer darkness. It is deeper than just an issue of sight. It is an issue of the heart. It's an issue of love. We love the darkness and we hate the light. The most famous passage in the gospel of John, maybe the most famous passage in the whole Bible. What is it? John 3 16, which says, for God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. That sounds familiar, doesn't it?

To what Jesus has just said in John chapter 8. John 3 16, whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. John 8, whoever follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life. They're saying the same thing here. It is an offer of eternal life for any who would come to Christ in faith. Why would anyone reject this offer? John 3 19 gives us an explanation. It's a few verses later in John 3 19. He says this, this is the judgment. The light has come into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light. The light exposes the foolishness of our idols. The light exposes the ugliness of our depravity. And we don't want what we love to be exposed as infinitely foolish and empty.

But the time is coming soon when all will be exposed. And we have a choice presented to us here.

Jesus says, come to me. Come into the light and have your sinfulness exposed right now and you will be welcomed and and you will be purified and you will be forgiven. He says, come to me. Come into the light with all your sin. Bring it to me. I came to to heal the sick. I came to save sinners. I came to give sight to the blind. I came to heal the ugliest sinner in the room. Come to me now while this offer of forgiveness still stands. Or remain in the darkness of your sin until the time of judgment when everything will be exposed and it will be too late. See, we shouldn't mistake Jesus's words here when he says, I judge no one to mean that he doesn't judge at all. Of course he does. The time is coming soon when Christ will return us judge of all the earth and we will all give an account of ourselves before the Lord.

Those who walk in darkness fear that day. Those who follow the light have nothing to fear. Because we belong to Jesus. Which is the fourth, the final reason why this offer is rejected. Reason number four, we reject the light because they belong to the darkness, not to the light.

[ 26 : 15 ] These Jews were so certain, so confident that they belonged to God. That they were children of Abraham because of their blood, because of their lineage, because of the promise made to their forefathers, that they belonged to God. And yet, Jesus says, you don't even know him. Look at verse 19.

Jesus says, my father bears witness about me. And they said, well, where is he? Bring him here. Let's hear from him. But Jesus says, you know neither me nor my father. If you knew me, you would know my father also. He said these words in the treasury as he taught in the temple. But no one arrested him because his hour had not yet come. And down in verse 23, if you look there, verse 23, he says, you are from below. I am from above. You are of this world. I am not of this world. He's illustrating to them.

There is a complete, utter distinction between them and him. They do not belong to God because they don't know him. Why? Because they have rejected Christ Jesus. Now, this is unbelievably offensive.

And it is incredibly, completely true. This is a uniquely Christian claim, isn't it? If you do not know Jesus, meaning if you do not see him and trust him and love him as God himself, then you do not belong to God. You may know a lot about him. You may love what he provides. You may live a very religious and upright life. But if you do not know Jesus and receive him as he is, he says, you do not know God. We need to be crystal clear here, church. Crystal clear. Because more and more and more and more pressure is going to be put on you, Christian, by your friends, by your family, by your co-workers and your places of work, by society all around us to say, well, can we just loosen up a bit here? And we need to know that we cannot budge an inch here. We believe that Jesus is the light of the world. Not Muhammad, not Buddha, not Joseph Smith, not the false Jesus Christ of

Mormonism or Jehovah's Witness who would claim and tell you that they're Christian, they are not. If you do not know and receive and trust and love the Jesus Christ of this book, you do not know God and you do not belong to God. You can't claim God if you don't worship Christ.

- [ 29 : 42 ] So many in our world want to claim God. They want to claim that they they belong to God. They truly they believe deeply that they belong to him, but they don't know him because they reject Christ. Can we just can we just think about the consequence of this for a minute?

Look what he says in verse 21. 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. And the Jews, again, they they didn't understand. And so the Jews said to him, is he is he going to kill himself? He said, 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. Unless you believe that I am he. You cannot go where I am going and you will die in your sins and the wrath of God will be against you for the rest of eternity.

Is there anything worse than this? Do we see how how rejecting the light of the world is infinitely foolish? Does your heart break over this?

- [ 31 : 25 ] Do you want some motivation for evangelism this morning? There are over three billion souls in the world who have never even heard this invitation of Christ.

Christ, come to me and live. Come to me and live. And this is what awaits them. And this is what awaits the the billions of people who have heard and have rejected him.

One point eight billion Muslims in the world. One billion Hindus in the world. Five hundred million Buddhists in the world. Fourteen million Jews in the world. One point one billion who claim no religion at all.

Does your heart break for them? How many in Mount Pleasant? How many in Allendahl? How many in Huges?

How many in McClellanville? How many in our own neighborhoods are rejecting the light of Christ? They will die in their sins and be separated from the light of Christ forever.

- [ 32 : 37 ] Unless. Unless. They hear this invitation of Christ. Follow me. Believe in me.

Trust me. Love me. And by the grace of God they come into the light. There is an eternity of hope in that word unless.

You see it? What it means is that if you still have breath in your lungs and the Lord has not yet returned, the offer still stands.

If you will believe, if you will trust, if you will turn to Christ, you will not die in your sins. He will die for your sins and you will have the light of life now and into eternity.

So my final question for us this morning. How do we receive the light? How do we receive the light?

- [ 33 : 40 ] Look there to verse 25. The Jews still didn't get it. So they said to him, Who are you? Jesus said, This is 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've heard from him. They didn't understand 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's not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him. Verse 30, As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

See, what these Jews needed, and what we, Christian, what we needed before we knew the Lord, what our lost, unbelieving friends and family and co-workers need, what the lost, dark world needs, is for the grace of God to come and to give us a new heart.

[ 34 : 52 ] A new heart that has the scales removed, so we can see the light of the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. A new heart that now loves Christ Jesus and hates our sin, where before we hated Christ and loved our sin.

We need, by the grace of God, to be given a new heart that belongs to the kingdom of light, no longer to the kingdom of darkness. And how is that grace extended?

It's through the cross of Jesus Christ. When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know. That's where you'll see. Ironically, the place where we see the light of Christ shine most clearly, is in the darkest moment of human history.

where the Son of God Himself hung upon the tree, in the place of sinners. The whole land went dark, and for days it seemed as if the light had been taken out of the world.

We're told on Sunday morning, when the sun came up, the light shone, Christ Jesus rose from the grave, to conquer the darkness of sin and death, and to offer that victory to any who would turn to Him in faith, and trust that He is who He claims to be.

[ 36 : 28 ] The Son of God, the light of the world. How do you receive Him? Look to Christ on the cross. Ask God for the grace to see Him clearly, to trust His words, to receive His provision, His sacrifice, His victory, to trust Him completely, to save you from your sin.

Look to Him at the cross, and trust Him to rescue you from the domain of darkness. If you want to see Him, and believe in Him, pray something like this, Lord, show me the glory of the cross.

Lord, show me my sin, paid for by Christ's death. Lord, show me His righteousness, given undeservedly to me, by Your grace alone.

Lord, give me faith in this risen Savior, and then help me, Lord, to follow Him all the days of my life. John tells us, at the end of our passage in verse 30, that as Jesus spoke these words, many believed in Him.

they were called out of darkness, and into His marvelous light. It happened for them. It can happen for you, non-believer.

[ 37 : 55 ] It can happen for your neighbors, your co-workers, your family members, your friends, those who you think are so far gone, nothing could ever call them back.

It will happen by the grace of God, as we, the church, shine forth the light of Christ, and proclaim the gospel.

You know, the darkness around us is not a reason to run and hide. The darkness around us, anywhere we see darkness, is an opportunity to shine the light of Christ, for the glory of God, and pray that He would work His wonders of grace through us, for His glory.

Let's pray. Lord, what a privilege it is to be called into Your light, to walk as children of the light.

Lord, we all once belonged to darkness, lived in it, and loved it, but it leads to death.

[ 39 : 07 ] And by Your grace, Lord, You have called us out and called us to belong to You through the atoning blood of Jesus. We pray now, Father, would You help us to live and follow Your light, God, and to proclaim it, We pray, Father, that those who still walk in darkness around us would come to faith in Christ as we proclaim the gospel.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.