
JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

TRUE LIGHT IN A DARK WORLD

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on September 17, 2017

INTRODUCTION

Light is a common symbol, but it is so very much more than that. Light is a great metaphor because it is also quite useful and transformational. Light is not merely functional, like a simple tool for doing this task or that; light also affects the emotions and the perspective. Seeing what lies ahead is important, so that one may avoid the obstacles or pitfalls, but darkness alone carries some perils and fears. The Bible makes great use of the language of 'light,' and Jesus makes a dramatic statement amid a vivid scene that deserves our attention. In this message, we shall look as intently as we can at Christ – the light of life.

JOHN 8:12-20 (ESV)

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 am 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.

THE POINT I'M AIMING AT TODAY

Jesus Christ is light, and we desperately need light.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

(1) WALKING THROUGH THE PASSAGE

(2) WE DESPERATELY NEED LIGHT

(3) CHRIST IS LIGHT

(4) APPLICATION: WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS?

MESSAGE

(1) WALKING THROUGH THE PASSAGE

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."*

- **Another Big Moment at the Feast**

- As we have mentioned before, the Feast of Booths is a celebration and remembrance of what God did for His people in the Exodus.

- ***The pouring out of the ceremonial water***

- *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink..."* (Jn. 7:37).

- ***Now, the lighting of the lamps***

- Carson explains, they would light "four huge lamps in the temple's court of women," and then an "exuberant celebration [began] (Mishnah Sukkah 5:1-4)." He wrote, "*Men of piety and good works*' danced through the night, holding burning torches in their hands and singing songs and praises. The Levitical orchestras cut loose, and some sources attest that this went on every night of the Feast of Tabernacles, with the light from the temple area shedding its glow all over Jerusalem."¹

¹ Carson, D. A. (1991). The Gospel according to John (p. 337). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

13 So the Pharisees said to him, “*You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is **not true.***”

- **Trying to twist Jesus’ words**

- Jesus did say, “***If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true***” (Jn. 5:31).
 - The context is Jesus explaining that He is not “*bearing witness about Himself*” alone because He “*does nothing on His own,*” but only seeks “*the will of Him who sent*” Him (v30).
 - Jesus is effectively saying, “*I am not a lone witness, because I am telling and doing only what I have heard and seen from the Father... If I were a lone witness, I would not be a true witness.*”

14 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 am going.** 15 **You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one...***”

- **Jesus’ testimony is true because He is from (and going to) the Father**

- Jesus again argues that His testimony is true, precisely because He is “from” God, sent by God, and speaking with the authority of God.
- *It is also interesting to note Jesus’ pointed words:*
 - “***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***” (v14).
 - The Pharisees would most certainly have taken offense at this.

- **I judge no one... like you judge... according to the flesh**

- Possible confusion:
 - “*Testify alone = testimony untrue*” (5:31)
 - “*Even if I do testify alone = testimony is true*” (8:14).
- Another confusing set:
 - “*I judge no one*” (v15).
 - “*Yet even if I do judge, my judgement is true...*” (v15).

15 You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one 16 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.** 17 In your Law it is written that the **testimony of two people is true.** 18 **I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.**”

- **Jesus judges rightly, and in unity with the Father**

- Jesus does judge, but His judgements are right (not fleshly/worldly)
 - “**All judgement**” has been given by the Father to the Son (5:22).
 - The Son removes “**judgement**” from those who believe (5:24).
 - The Son will “**judge**” all humans at the final resurrection (5:29).
 - The Son “**judges justly,**” because He seeks His Father’s will (5:30).
- The Son and the Father are so closely united that their judgements are identical... and this leads into verse 19...

19 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.**”

- **Loving, knowing, believing Jesus IS loving, knowing, believing the Father**

- This is always an important feature of the Gospel, but it is so clearly stated here that we must consider it more attentively.
 - The Pharisees are arguing that their love for and relationship with God is what is motivating their rejection of Christ.
 - Jesus is arguing that their hatred for Jesus is evidence that they actually hate God and God is their violent judge.
 - **Let me be clear:** One cannot love God, know God, believe God, enjoy God, or benefit from God apart from loving Christ, knowing Christ, believing Christ, enjoying Christ, and benefitting from Christ.

20 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*.

- **John's Need to explain...**

- Based on Jesus closing statement, it would seem that the response would have been hostility; therefore, John feels the need to tell us why Jesus was not arrested or murdered right then.
 - And what is the reason John gives for the delay?

- **The Triune God's perfect time-table**

- Jesus has an hour, and the angry opposition can do only as God's perfect plan has ordained.
 - We learn about the confluence of human and divine activity in the crucifixion of Jesus from an early Church prayer:

"truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place." (Acts 4:27-28)

Summary: So, Jesus is at the Feast, claiming equality with God amid a dramatic backdrop of celebration and praise...

(Segue) *But, what did He mean, "I am the light of the world!"?*

Is light really that meaningful?

(2) WE DESPERATELY NEED LIGHT

- **Darkness = Ignorance**

- *“you do not know where I come from or where I am going.”* (Jn. 8:14)
 - Jesus is from the Father, and He is going to the Father.
 - To know God is to have wisdom, knowledge, and understanding (Prov. 1:7, 2:6).
- Until God speaks and you hear, you are ignorant.
 - You are ignorant of your beginning.
 - You are ignorant of your end.
 - You are ignorant of your purpose.
 - You are ignorant of any hope for salvation.
 - ***You are aware of your guilt, shame, and uncertainty; but you are ignorant of the most valuable things.***

- **Darkness = Confusion**

- *“You judge according to the flesh”* (Jn. 8:15).
 - Jesus tells the Pharisees that the way they judge a person’s value, truth, and strength is wrong.
- Worldly darkness makes you judge wrongly about everything.
 - You think value is measured by things like profit, function, or pleasure.
 - You think truth is measured by things like passion, sincerity, or consensus.
 - You think strength is measured by things like activity, dominance, or body-count.
 - ***You judge according to the flesh.***

- **Darkness = Isolation (*Loneliness*)**

- *“You know neither me nor my Father”* (Jn. 8:19).
 - The strength of the Pharisees was their claim to have God as their Father – protector, provider, law-giver, authority delegator, etc.
 - Jesus says they are alone, isolated and cut off from God.
- Worldly darkness isolates you from God and from others.
 - Apart from God, you are utterly alone in the universe.
 - There is no one to hear your deepest pains and longings.
 - No one is providentially keeping charge of your life or bringing you a sure ‘tomorrow’.
 - ***You do not know God, and you are alone.***

- **Darkness = Lifelessness (*Hopelessness*)**

- *“Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life”* (Jn. 8:12).
 - If ‘light’ is the opposite of ‘darkness,’ and ‘light’ is ‘life,’ then ‘darkness’ is the opposite of ‘life.’
 - Darkness is death.
- Worldly darkness steals your life and hope.
 - In cold and confusion, there is no vigor.
 - In lonely darkness, what direction do you run?
 - What thing will you grasp, to say, *“This! This, is my hope!”*

Summary: **We desperately need light...**

(Segue) *And, Christ is Light!*

(3) CHRIST IS LIGHT

- **Light = God's Presence and Glory**
 - Glory and presence of God during the Exodus (Ex. 13:21–22)
 - This was both protection and guidance (Ex. 14:19–25).
 - The people of God sang the Psalms, Ps. 27 being a regular praise:
 - *'The LORD is my light and my salvation'* (Ps. 27:1).

- **Light = Clarity/Truth from God**
 - God's word/law is *"a lamp to my feet and light to my path"* (Ps. 119:105).
 - Speaking as a father to a son, the Scripture says, *"My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck. When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you. For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life..."* (Proverbs 6:20–23).
 - These are not merely the instructions of fathers and mothers.
 - The Bible presupposes (and asserts) that all true wisdom and helpful counsel is from God.
 - Fathers and Mothers are to pass these along to their children.
 - Light, then, is instruction from God – clarity and truth, which illumines one's path, corrects the dangerous course, and keeps one in the way of life.

- **Light to the World = Messianic / Eschatological Anticipation**
 - In a Messianic passage, telling of the "servant," the "Holy One," the "chosen" one of God, Isaiah says:
 - *"I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth"* (Is. 49:6).
 - Already, and Not Yet...

- **Light = Heavenly glory in the New Creation**

- In the new heavens and the new earth, we are told that there will be no sun or moon, because the Lamb of God Himself will be our light.
 - *“The glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb”* (Rev. 21:23–24).

- **Light = the Face of God**

- The “face of God” is the beatific vision... This is the chief end of man!
- One Psalm speaks of God’s deliverance and the motive for His planting and freeing His people:

*“1 O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us,
what deeds you performed in their days, in the days of old:
2 you with your own hand drove out the nations,
but them you planted;
you afflicted the peoples,
but them you set free;
3 for not by their own sword did they win the land,
nor did their own arm save them,
but your right hand and your arm,
and the light of your face,
for you delighted in them”* (Ps. 44:1–3).

Summary: Christ is Light! Glorious, truthful, clarifying, eschatological, and heavenly light!

He is the smile of God fixed upon you!

(Segue) Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

(4) APPLICATION: WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS?

- **Will you abandon darkness and run into the light?**
 - Non-Christian, will you leave darkness behind and follow Christ in His light?
 - Christian, will you bask in the light of life, following Christ wherever He may lead?

- **Will you rest in the light of God's favor through Christ?**
 - Will you look and see that the beaming light of God's favor has dawned for you!?
 - Will you savor and enjoy this glorious sunrise upon God's face!?

- **Will you welcome the intrusion of light?**
 - Will you resist being exposed, or will you give yourself over to renovation?
 - Will you read and ponder God's word, letting the light of Christ intrude even more?

Major Point: Jesus Christ is light, and we desperately need light.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

The Light of the World by Charles Spurgeon

<http://www.spurgeonministries.com/sermons/light-of-world/>

I Am the Light of the World by John Piper

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/i-am-the-light-of-the-world>

Life, Light, Lamb, and the Logos by James T. Dennison

<http://www.kerux.com/doc/0101A4.asp>