

Jesus is the Light of the World – John 8:12-30

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-Over the past several weeks, we've been walking through the book of John to gain a fuller understanding of who Jesus is so that we can learn to live and love like Him

-From the opening pages of the Gospel, John has been declaring Jesus' deity, that He is fully God; that Jesus is the Messiah sent from God; the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world by dying on the cross as a sacrificial death in place of us who have all sinned

-John has captured His teachings and the miracles He performed because they all reveal the character of God and the mission given to Jesus. By understanding just who Jesus is, we can begin to follow Him, live like Him and certainly love like Him.

-John has been clear about his purpose all along... that we ... **may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John 20:31**

-Today, we pick up in John 8:12, turn there with me

-I need to connect the context of the verses we will read today so that you have a clear picture and understanding of just how important and impactful Jesus' declaration about himself is

-In John 7, Jesus makes his way to Jerusalem to celebrate one of the 3 important religious celebrations in Judaism- the Feast of Tabernacles

-Andrew Bondurant shares some great history about this specific feast 2 weeks ago

-The Feast of Tabernacles was a celebration commemorating how God had led and blessed the people of Israel while they were wandering in the wilderness for 40 years after leaving Egypt

-During this time, God's presence has been very evident to the people of Israel. He guided them during the day with a cloud and with a pillar of fire at night. He provided manna for them in the desert, water, their clothes and shoes did not wear out, and ultimately, He led them to the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. It's where the Israelites were living when Jesus came to earth and where He is now, in Jerusalem

-Leviticus 23:33-43 and Deuteronomy 16:13-17 instructed the people to celebrate this festival in the fall, at the time of harvest, as a celebration for all of God's blessings. It was a time of joy. -

They were instructed to build "booths" or tent to live in for 7 days, and to rest and make sacrifices to God of thanksgiving for all his blessings. Feast of Booths, Feast of Ingathering

-Andrew shared about how this festival involved lots of signing and dancing, and featured a specific water pouring ritual where the priest each day for 7 days would, gather water in a gold pitcher from the Pool of Siloam and pour it out. On the 7th day, the celebration was at its climax with loud music, dancing, and all the people following the priest like a parade gathering the water, then joining in joyful celebration while he poured it out at the altar in the temple

JOHN 7:37-38

-Nothing that happened in the life of Jesus was accidental or coincidental. It was all very intentional to reveal His true identity as God in the flesh so we could have a clear picture of who God is and how to experience true life through believing in Jesus

- Many present in this moment, heard his teachings and saw his miracles placed their faith in Jesus while others doubted and rejected Him as Messiah and Savior
- John records the religious leader's rejection of Jesus and their plot to kill him
- We looked at a trap they tried to set for Jesus last week involving a woman they had "caught in adultery" and questioning Jesus about stoning her.
- Many feel this moment in Jesus' life was inserted in between Jesus' invitation to come and drink living water from Him and the declaration we will hear Him make in John 8:12
- But there's another significant part of the Feast of Tabernacles that I need to share with you [Stepping Up- A Journey through the Psalms of Ascent by Beth Moore]
- Picture this scene...the city and surrounding countryside is filled with literally thousands of small little tent like structures for a week, most likely lit with small little oil lamps
- During this festival, 4 large Menorah's, giant candelabras with large branches extending to large bowls of oil lamps, which gave light throughout all Jerusalem. They were placed in the Court of Women in the temple, most likely were Jesus has been teaching and where he might have been approached by the religious leaders with the woman they had trapped in adultery
- These lamps were lit at the beginning of the Feast of "LIGHTS" and were maintained by the priest all week, never going out. I learned that the wicks of these lamps were made from the garments of the priests and younger priests would climb ladders to keep the lamps full of oil
- Remember, this festival was probably the most celebratory of all of the major celebrations
- I picture it like Christmas for us in modern times. Lots of family gathered, music, dancing, feasting, and decorations. Lots of joy.
- I've shared my favorite moment at Christmas is on Christmas Eve after everyone has gone to bed and I just take a moment to sit by the Christmas tree with the lights, all is calm all is bright
- My least favorite moment is taking all the decorations down. Can I get an AMEN?
- Remembering what goes in which box, cleaning up all the tree particles, and shoving it all back in the attic (it's handy if you have one of those pull-down staircases to your attic 😊)
- The house feels so bare and dark once everything is taken down
- It's the morning after the climax of the Feast of Tabernacles, when all the lights have been extinguished and everyone is feeling some let down when Jesus makes another powerful I AM statement...it's the second of 7 statements recorded by John that I hope you are keeping track of in your journal. He's already said, "I am the Bread of Life" after feeding a multitude miraculously
- Jesus now says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12
- Light is a powerful metaphor all throughout Scripture to refer to God's presence
- From the beginning of creation when God said "Let there be light", the pillar of fire by night, the lampstand in tabernacle and temple, God has revealed Himself as the source of light and life, and John connects this theme all throughout His Gospel in reference to Jesus
- In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^[a] it. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. John 1:4-5,9
- Jesus declaration is confirming that He is the Messiah, the promised one from God

-Zechariah 14 has prophesied both "streams of living water" and "continuous light" at the coming of Messiah, and Jesus was the fulfillment of both!

-Of course, the religious leaders didn't want to accept Jesus as Messiah and they immediately challenge His declaration, saying, "You can't make these claims about yourself. Testimony about yourself (or by yourself) is not valid." Listen to how Jesus responds...

JOHN 8:14-18

-Jesus continues to make powerful statements about his identity as the Light of the world:

- "I know where I came from and where I am going" vs 14

-Origin and destiny bring confidence and courage. Jesus had a clear picture of who He was, where he came from, and where He was headed.

- "I pass judgement on no one, but if I do judge, my decisions are right" vs 15-16a

-Jesus' wisdom was from above. He didn't operate by human standards or according to any other directives other than those given to Him by His Father in Heaven.

-As we saw last week in his interactions with the woman, Jesus' identity isn't judge by savior. He has the authority to judge, but offering mercy and grace is a higher calling.

- "I am not alone, I stand with the Father who sent me." vs 16b. "light=Yahweh

-This is best understand as "the Father and I are one". This is a theme reinforced all throughout John and ultimately the stumbling block that led the religious leaders to kill him. It was obvious He was from God and was fully God but all must decide to believe

-Jesus says clearly, "I am capable of giving testimony about myself, because I know fully who I am and so does my Father. That makes 2 of us, and that's all the Law requires."

-The question him by saying, not "Who's your daddy?" but "Where's your daddy?"

-Scholars think the religious leaders were poking fun at the fact that Jesus' virgin birth was hard to accept, that Joseph would have already been dead by now, or the fact that Jesus hailed from Nazareth, but the Messiah was to come from Bethlehem. They knew the facts.

-The religious leaders didn't want to be confused by the facts about Jesus

-Jesus makes a deliberate statement that challenges their spirituality by saying, "You do not know me or my Father," If you knew me, you would know my Father also." John 8:19b

-John Piper says, "Jesus speaks from God and for God, as God."

-This is a complete fulfillment of John 1:10-11

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

-It echoes what John said following Jesus' interaction with Nicodemus in John 3

"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God." John 3:19-21

-And later, John records Jesus reaffirming this

JOHN 12:44-46

-Jesus told the religious leaders, "You will keep looking for me, meaning the Messiah, but miss that I am the Messiah. And because of that you will die in your sins, and not be in Heaven."

-All of this angered the religious leaders. They judged Jesus by his appearance based on their prejudices. To them he is an unschooled Galilean peasant making extravagant claims. Their limited and biased judgment leads them to reject Jesus and kill him.

-John says they didn't arrest him because "his time has not come." (3 of 9 references)

-This is again a reference to His death by crucifixion, the ultimate expression of his deity and his humanity, and the ultimate fulfillment of his mission as Savior of the World

-And Jesus speaks this plainly to them again

JOHN 8:23-30

-Jesus clearly states again who He is and what His mission is and those who believe in Him find life through His death and resurrection.

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. John 1:12-13

-The light of the world dispels the darkness, but you must accept and receive the light

-Jesus is confident in the authority He has been given and the power his light brings.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Are you scared of the dark? Why or why not? What else scares you?

-We are living in a dark time. There is sickness and death, hatred and discord, racism and violence all around us. We are surrounded by darkness and the effects of sin.

-Now, like never before, we need the light of Jesus to give us peace and direction.

-The declaration that Jesus is the Light of the World is a true, relevant and timely today as it was when He made this declaration that day in Jerusalem

-Jesus is the Light of the World and this world needs His light. Every one of us needs His light.

-As the light of the world, Jesus brings hope and direction.

-C.S. Lewis says, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

-David found confidence in the Light God provides

PSALM 27:1-3

-The darkness cannot overcome the light Jesus brings. His light is true, reliable, trustworthy, strong, constant, gracious, comforting.

[POEM BY ANDY TEARE]

-All living things need water, air, food, and light to survive. Jesus says, I am Living Water, I am the Breath of Life, I am the Bread of Life, and I am the Light of the world! He's the unquenchable source of God's revelation and of true life.

-Do you see why it's important to know who Jesus is? And to believe in who He is?

-Jesus said, "those who follow me will never walk in darkness"

COLOSSIANS 1:9-13

-"When one turns on the light, all the rats, the bats, and the bed bugs crawl away. Light exposes sin." J Vernon McGee

--Without the light of Jesus we remain in darkness and are filled with that darkness.

-We must allow the light of Christ to fill us and also shine through us.

-Jesus' light is a holy and pure reflection of God's character incarnate. We must shine that same light! His light in us illuminates true life and gives us meaning and purpose

-Jesus said in Matthew 5:14-16

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

-Jesus gives us the vision to see who we are in Him. Only the light of the world can show us who we are and guide us responsibly through life. We must choose to rely on and reflect Him.

-John Piper says, "Following Jesus is more than tagging along behind him. It means following Him for who He is. Being so taken with him that you join yourself to Him."

-This world needs the light of Jesus to shine brightly. We shine His light when we live and love like Him.

PRAY

BAPTISM CELEBRATION

Luke has been part of our kids' ministry since before he could walk. For the last three years, he has faithfully served on our kid's church worship team and continued to grow in his relationship with god. He went through our kids' salvation and baptism class in March and decided to receive Jesus as his lord and savior. His baptism was originally scheduled for my 5 but had to be postponed due to Covid. He was so excited to finally demonstrate his decision through baptism last week!