

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #38

John 8:12-20

Every morning, I get up before light appears. Every morning I come to my office, I step into our garage and it is dark. I cannot see where I am going. I have tripped more times than I can count. Now I know this garage well. I know where things are. But the truth is, apart from light, I cannot help but be tripped up. When it comes to spiritual things, apart from a close relationship with Jesus Christ, we cannot help but be tripped up. I am more and more totally convinced of this reality.

When Jesus Christ was here on earth, He did not shy away from teaching the truth of God because it was confrontational or controversial. He went right to the temple in Jerusalem and proclaimed the truth to a group, for the most part, who wanted Him dead and to a group who would die in their sins (8:21). He proclaimed that He was the bread of life. He proclaimed that He was the water of life. He proclaimed that He was the light of life. These are not comments of a normal person. These are comments from a God/Person.

Christ drives home time and time again that the only way to have life was to believe in Him. **Now in this text Christ drives home a point that the only way to have a life that does not walk in darkness is to follow Him.** Think of the claim. Jesus Christ is claiming that if one follows Him, he will never continually (present tense) walk in a dark direction. There may be a moment of failure, now and then, but that life will continually move in a light direction rather than a dark direction. When a child of God drifts away from a close dependency on Jesus Christ, things will become very dark. When a child of God draws close to Jesus Christ, life has new life and vigor.

That is the main thrust of this text:

THE ONLY WAY FOR A PERSON TO HAVE A LIFE THAT IS NOT CONTINUALLY DARK, BUT HAVE A LIFE THAT IS CONTINUALLY FULL OF LIGHT AND LIFE, IS TO FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST AND TOTALLY DEPEND ON HIM.

For most people, life is continually full of gloom. It is continually dark and dismal. Most people just stumble through life sensing something is missing, but they really don't know what it is. It may be a religious life or it may be a heathen life, but the truth is, life, for most people is continually very dark and depressing. Oh there may be a moment or two of a resemblance of happiness, but it is short-lived. **Jesus taught that the only way for a person to have a life that was continually lit up was to follow Him.** That is clearly what He stresses in these verses.

Now I want to draw your attention to verse 20. Christ is teaching these things in the treasury . area of the temple. The treasury area of the temple was the area where the women were allowed to enter the temple. There were 13 trumpet shaped collection boxes in this part of the temple for offerings and there was a huge golden candelabra - called the Menorah - which was ceremonially lit during the feast of Booths, to remind Israel that the fire and cloud guided her through the wilderness (Numbers 9:15-23; Exodus 13:21-22).

At the end of the festival, the fire of the candelabra was extinguished, but Christ is saying I am not extinguished. The one who believes in Me and then follows Me will discover that I will walk them right through this dark world in a life that is lit up. Jesus says, I will guide them and direct them. Remember John is establishing in this Gospel that Jesus is God so that people will believe in Him (John 20:30-31). This part of the narrative of the life of Christ features four very important declarations:

DECLARATION #1 – Jesus declares that He is the light of the entire world. 8:12

Just as the SUN is the light of the physical world, so the SON is the light of the spiritual world. The claim that Jesus makes here is a high claim of Deity. No normal person can make such a claim because every normal person has a dark sin nature abiding in him or her (I John 1:8).

Now understand what Christ is declaring here - He is stating that “I am **the** light of **the** world.” This is a Divinity statement because God is Light (I John 1:5). Christ is claiming here that He is God. **He is the one and only light that can bring a person out of darkness and sin.** Every person in the world is born in sin and the only person who can get the person out of His sin is Jesus Christ. To get out of darkness, one must look to Him. Now there are two important follow-up statements that Christ makes to this:

(Statement #1) - The one who continually follows Christ shall not walk in the darkness. 8:12a

The word “follow” is more of a discipleship term than simply believing. **Believing on Christ gives life, but following Christ brings about a life that manifests the light and glory of God.** The word “not” is **the** most emphatic negative that can be used in the Greek language. Christ is saying the person who continually follows Him will not ever be capable of a walk in darkness. That does not mean the person will be perfect, but it does mean that one who follows Christ will not ever walk in the sphere of darkness again. Life will be alive and productive. There will be a sense of vitality and purpose. No psychiatrist or psychologist can get you out of depression or darkness like Jesus Christ. They may momentarily put some emotional Band-Aid on the problem, but they cannot guarantee that for all of life your life will be a light walk, not a dark walk.

(Statement #2) - The one who continually follows Christ will have a walk in light. 8:12b

Jesus Christ is Personally promising one who follows Him a life walk and a light walk. In other words, He will Personally lead one who follows Him not just to eternal life, but in a life that radiates light. If you try to walk blindfolded or with your eyes shut, you will discover that you don't make much progress and you often trip up. The same is true if you try as a believer to walk through life without a close dependency on Jesus Christ. You won't make much progress and you'll trip up time and time again. However, if you purpose to carefully yield to His spirit and follow Him, you will discover He will lead you in life in a way that radiates light, not sin.

DECLARATION #2 – The Pharisees declare that Jesus testimony of Himself is an arrogant lie.
8:13

When one sets forth the truth of God, one will generate some kind of response. The Pharisees hated Jesus Christ and they accuse Him of arrogant bragging and boasting and then they accuse Him of being a liar. They knew that the statement He just made was a statement of Deity. There are two statements the Pharisees make concerning Jesus Christ, both of which are not true:

Dr. Ironside said when men are determined to reject truth and their hearts are filled with self-righteousness, they will go to any length to discredit the messenger (*John*, p. 357).

(Statement #1) - You are bearing witness or testimony of yourself. 8:13a

Their thinking was that in order for a statement to be proved true it must have multiple witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15). What they didn't know is that everything Jesus did and said had multiple witnesses, the entire Godhead. These leaders are hanging all of their eternity on the technicality that He was testifying of Himself. People will go to great lengths to reject Jesus Christ.

It is a shame that people don't operate this way. We have had people tell us something one person told them which is a lie and multiple witnesses can verify it, but they never bother to check. They just assume the testimony of one person is "A-Okay."

(Statement #2) - Your witness or testimony is not true. 8:13b

Think for a moment what these men are alleging - they are alleging that Jesus is not telling the truth when He says He is the only way to have life and they are gambling their entire eternity on the false belief that He is lying. It is no wonder Jesus said to them in verse 21 - you shall die in your sins.

There are many people who do exactly the same thing. They will not accept the fact that Jesus Christ is telling the truth about Him being the only way to be saved. They refuse to believe that only faith in Jesus Christ can save them (3:15, 16, 18; 4:48; 6:29, 35, 40). They would rather rely on their own works. They assume He is lying and they are willing to gamble their whole eternity on that which they believe which is a lie. That is what you must do if you rely on your own works; you must gamble your entire eternity on you. Put your faith in Jesus Christ and you have life, don't do it and you will die in your sins.

DECLARATION #3 – Jesus declares that His testimony is always true. 8:14-18

Now Christ gives a series of three reasons why His testimony is always true:

(Reason #1) - I know where I came from and where I am going. 8:14a

Jesus Christ was God who came out of heaven and in a short time He would return there. He would go to the cross, be put in a tomb and come back to life and ascend into heaven. He would make it possible for sinners to have a relationship with the Holy God.

Think about this for a moment - no human, apart from external testimony, can testify concerning His origin. Scientists try and tell us what happened millions of years ago and they weren't even here 100 years ago. Jesus is the only Person in a position to discuss eternity, for that is where He came from. As God from all eternity and He could testify of the truth about eternity.

(Reason #2) - You do not know where I come from or where I am going . 8:14b

These were the religious leaders of Israel who should have been able to document everything about the Savior because it was in the O.T. They didn't have a clue what His work was all about.

(Reason #3) - Your judgment is different than My judgment. 8:15-17

Christ's testimony is always true. We may be certain that when it comes time for us to face Jesus Christ, His judgment will be true. In this section He gives a series of three main differences between His judgment and their judgment:

Difference #1 - You judge according to the flesh . 8:15a

In other words the judgments of the Pharisees were based on flesh works. The Pharisees judged people by outward appearances, however, God does not operate that way - ever (I Samuel 16:7; John 7:24).

Many religious people use the same standards of judgment the Pharisees did. For example, if a church has big numbers, it must mean it is really blessed by God. To some of these places it doesn't matter if the church is given to prayer and ministry of the Word. If the numbers are good, and we can see it and count it, it must be successful. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just look in Revelation at the mega church Laodicea and the small church Philadelphia. The numbers for Laodicea were spectacular and God said - I'll spit you out of my mouth.

Difference #2 - I am not presently judging anyone . 8:15b

There will come a day when Jesus Christ will judge everyone, but when He came to this earth the first time His goal was to offer Himself as a sacrifice so that sinners could escape condemnatory judgment. His goal was to offer Grace (John 1:17).

Jesus Christ will not ever judge any person into hell based on what that person did in the flesh. He will judge a person into hell based on what that person did with Him. If a person believes in Him, he is saved, if he doesn't, he isn't.

Difference #3 - Even when I judge, My judgment is always true . 8:16-18

Christ's judgments were always true judgments because every judgment He makes is a judgment of God in conformity with God the Father. Even the O.T. law admits that multiple witnesses determine true judgment (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15). God the Son and God the Father both support any judgment He makes.

Now one might ask, how did God the Father actually testify to the Truth of God the Son (v. 18)?
1) By His physical voice; 2) By His miraculous works.

DECLARATION #4 – The Pharisees want to know where Jesus' Father was. 8:19

I am certain these Pharisees had heard that Joseph was not His real father. They probably wanted to know who His real father was. Actually what they are implying here is that Jesus came into this world by means of some immorality (8:41). They are mocking the virgin birth and spreading rumors that He was a child of fornication. Jesus said, if you really had a relationship with God through Me, you would know who My Father is.

Now I carefully want you to notice what Jesus says in this verse - if you know Jesus Christ, you know His link to God the Father. Listen to this verse - if you do not know Christ's connection with His Father, you do not have a real relationship with God. Any relationship a person will really have with God the Father is a relationship that must go through God the Son.

You can believe whatever you want to believe about Jesus Christ, but know this - if you are going to live in heaven, you must realize that Jesus Christ is God the Son and that He is your personal Savior.

These Pharisees wanted to kill Him, but they couldn't because "His hour had not yet come (8:20)."

The key to knowing God, the key to having light in your life is Jesus Christ. You believe on Him and purpose to follow Him and you have a wonderful relationship with God.