

THE LIGHT AND FRIEND OF SINNERS

February 14, 2016

John 7:53-8:12

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” John 3:19

This message continues a series focused upon the “I am” statements of Christ. Thus far we have considered His affirmation “I am the bread of life” in John 6. Now His statement “I am the light of the world” is our focus.

John 8 introduces Christ’s claim by reporting an event that illustrates His power to enlighten. A woman, allegedly caught committing adultery, was brought by the religious leaders to Jesus. They cited Moses’ instruction that adulterers should be stoned (Deut. 22:22, 23), then asked Jesus what He had to say.

Jesus stooped and with His finger wrote on the ground. He challenged any accuser who was without fault to cast the first stone at her, then continued writing. The accusers began departing, the oldest first, consecutively until the last dismissed himself. Noting this, Jesus said to the woman, “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (Jn. 8:11).

The narrative of this event is followed by Jesus’ statement, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (v. 12).

The self-righteous Pharisees who condemned the women were not concerned with her sin or her sad life. Their only motivation was to discredit Christ. Whatever it was that Jesus wrote upon the ground, His response discredited them, so that they “being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last” (v. 9).

By His own omniscience, Jesus turned a searchlight upon their hypocrisy and ill motivation, exposing their disqualification to stand in judgment of the woman. He illumined the woman’s heart and brightened her day, refusing to condemn her. And He showed forth His own divine identity, omniscient and compassionate, the one who can forgive sin. In short, he demonstrated before them that He is the light of the world.

They could not withstand His presence, so they departed. Their departure exhibited yet another truth that Christ had revealed: “For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3:20, 21).

The proud, self-righteous person cannot see the light of the world. Like the Pharisees, sinners’ guilt is exposed by His radiance, so they flee from His presence. By contrast, those who know their guilt, who perceive their poverty of spirit and their wickedness; they are the ones who come to the light to be delivered from their spiritual blindness and death. Indeed, “the Lord is nigh

unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Psalm 34:18). “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psalm 51:17).