

Subject: *Jesus is the Light of the World*

Scripture: *John 8:12-30*

The purpose of John is described in the well known prayer of Richard of Chichester: “Help me to know Christ more clearly, to love Him more dearly, and to follow Him more nearly.”

In verse 12 we have the second of Christ’s “I AM” statements:

- *I am the bread of life (6:35)*
- *I am the light of the world (8:12)*
- *I am the door of the sheep (10:7)*
- *I am the good shepherd (10:11)*
- *I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)*
- *I am the way, the truth, and the life (14:6)*
- *I am the true vine (15:1)*

These are some of the most astounding claims ever made. Only Jesus Christ could truly make these claims about Himself.

In John 8 we find six contrasts:

- *Human sin and Christ’s holiness*
- *God’s strict law and His compassionate grace*
- *Spiritual light and darkness*
- *Spiritual life and death*
- *Spiritual freedom and bondage*
- *Honoring man and dishonoring God*

THE CONTEXT OF CHRIST’S STATEMENT

- *The feast of tabernacles had been observed (7:2; 37)*

This feast celebrated how God cared for His people during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. When God brought them out of Egypt He gave them manna to eat and water out of the rock. He also guided them by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. We can see the obvious connection to Jesus as the light of the world.

- *The adulterous woman had been forgiven (8:1-11)*

She was living in sin and Jesus forgave her and told her to stop sinning and change her lifestyle. She came out of spiritual darkness into the God’s light. Light always overcomes darkness. When a person is saved he comes out of darkness into light.

1 Peter 2:9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

THE CLAIM OF CHRIST (vs. 12)

- *This was a statement about Himself*

Jesus is the source of spiritual and moral light. Intellectually light refers to spiritual truth and darkness refers to error or false teaching. Morally, light refers to holiness or purity and darkness refers to sin.

John 1:4-5 ⁴ *In him was life; and the life was the light of men.* ⁵ *And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*

John 9:5 *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

- This was a statement about His followers

John 12:35-36 ³⁵ *Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.* ³⁶ *While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.*

1 John 1:5-7 ⁵ *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* ⁶ *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:* ⁷ *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

THE CRITICISM OF THE PHARISEES (vs. 13-20)

The key word in this section is the word “record” (testimony, witness). Jesus gave testimony about Himself and the Pharisees challenged it and found fault with Him. You can disagree with what Jesus says about Himself and what the Bible says about Him, but that doesn’t change the facts. People have a right to be wrong.

Their criticism was that Jesus made claims that were unsupported and therefore not valid claims. The Old Testament law required two or more witnesses to certify that something was legally true. Jesus answers their charge in three ways:

- Jesus knows His origin and His destiny (vs. 14)
- Jesus is one with the Father (vs. 16)
- Jesus and the Father agree in their testimony about Him (vs. 17-18)

At this point in the conversation the Pharisees have a choice to make. Instead of humbling themselves and agreeing with Christ, they rejected Him and continued to challenge Him by asking, “Where is your Father?” Jesus gave a short reply: “You don’t know me or my Father. If you had known me, you would have known my Father.” In other words, you are the very ones who claim to know God well, but you don’t know Him at all.” Jesus sometimes called them blind guides. How sad that anyone could be in that shape, and yet many are in that shape today. They claim to know God and even speak on behalf of God, but they don’t know Him as the Bible presents Him.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING CHRIST (vs. 21-30)

We are free to choose whether we will believe in Christ or reject Him, but we are not free to choose the consequences of our choice.

The main consequence of rejecting Him was that they would die in their sins, and by this He means spiritual death (vs. 21, 24). There are only two ways to die: in sin or in Christ. To die in sin is to die without hope.

In these verses we see the character of people who reject Christ:

- People who reject Christ are proud and arrogant (vs. 22)

When Jesus said they could not come where He was going, that should have alarmed them, but instead they made light of it and mocked Him: “Is He going to kill himself?” which implied taking His life and going to hell. The common Jewish belief was that anyone who took his life would go to the worst part of hell.

- People who reject Christ are earthbound (vs. 23)

They are of this world, live for this world, think about this world, and are tied to this world. Like Nicodemus found out, we must be born again (from above). To be heaven bound, we must be heaven born.

- People who reject Christ are willfully ignorant (vs. 25-29)

The worst form of spiritual blindness is those who refuse to see. They would only realize who Jesus was after they crucified Him. Some of them would be saved, but for many it would be too late because of their hard hearts. Some of the people who heard Jesus then believed on him (vs. 30), but as we will see next time they really were not true believers at all and they even tried to stone Him to death before the day was over (vs. 59).