

- D) "Therefore" (NIV omits), Jesus makes clear that it is this depraved sinfulness which prevents them from going "where I [Jesus] am going" (8:24). The only solution for their sin is to "believe that I am."
- E) The source of their worldliness, their inability to "see" beyond the physical was their unbelief. J.C Ryle notes, "Let it be noted that unbelief is the thing that specially ruins men. All manner of sin may be forgiven. But unbelief bars the door against mercy." (J.C. Ryle, *John*, Vol. 2, Page 106).
- F) The confusion of the leaders, "who are You?," and Christ's answer "What have I been saying to you from the beginning?" are significant (John 8:25)! Who must we have faith in? The one who has revealed Himself to us from the beginning! Remember John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word...?"
- G) Jesus gives us a great measure by which we share about Him with others in vs. 26. He has much He wants to say to the religious leaders (as you can imagine)! However, in order to hear the truth -- He will only speak those words which are "from Him" (the Father) to the world (John 8:26)!
- H) Finally, Jesus Christ plants the seed of His death and resurrection (at this point, a future event), as being the validation and "stamp" that what He is saying is rooted in the sacrificial death which the "Father taught me" (8:28). At the center of any message about faith in Christ is the cross!
- I) Jesus concludes His gospel presentation by speaking about His relationship with God. That He is the perfect representation, the ultimate radiance of God, that He is one with the Father means that those who have faith, will be saved (8:29-30).

Lightin' It Up!

Long Beach Alliance Church • December 12th, 2004 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**THEN JESUS AGAIN SPOKE TO THEM, SAYING, "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD; HE WHO FOLLOWS ME WILL NOT WALK IN THE DARKNESS, BUT WILL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE."
~ JOHN 8:12 (NASB)**

1) Bright Light In Darkness

- A) After the quick story about Jesus and the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11), we pick the story back up again from John 7:52, where Jesus has been speaking with people (lit., discourse) on the final day (the great day -- 7:37) of the Feast Of Tabernacles (8:12).
- B) Playing on another theme of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus speaks to the people about being the "Light of the world" (8:12). The theme of light was introduced in John 1:4-5 and John 3:19-21, but had particular application for the pilgrims as the temple lit "all of Jerusalem" (*Mishnah:Sukkah 5:3*).
- C) Jesus makes clear (8:12) that only those who "follow" Him (the participle expects continual/permanent, not temporal, following) will escape darkness and "have" (possess) the "Light of life" (eternal life in Christ, John 3:14-15).

2) Darkness Illustrated

- A) The Pharisees immediately reject Jesus Christ's testimony on a legal technicality* (8:13). They note that since He was speaking about Himself without a corroborating witness (cf. 5:31 & 7:16), His testimony was invalid.
- B) Jesus, as He has before (5:36-38), makes sure to clarify that the only testimony which matters to Him is His Father's testimony (8:14-18).
- C) Knowing (perhaps having even witnessed) the confusion that the religious leaders were having regarding Jesus Christ's origins (7:40-52), He clarifies that He knows His origins, and He knows His destiny (8:14). Both are statements of authority and strategic purpose!
- D) As He did in John 5:33-47, Jesus hammers the religious leadership for rejecting the testimony of God the Father by depending on their own teaching ("your law" -- John 8:17), and ultimately, rejecting Christ (8:19).

* The technicality is found in the Mishnah:Ketuboth 2:9, "none may be believed when he testifies of himself... none may testify of himself." This technicality is not a new tension in John's Gospel account. You'll remember that Jesus essentially quotes the technicality Himself in John 5:31 in His defence of healing the man at the Bethesda pools earlier in John 5:1-17. The tension is also at issue when Jesus begins His teaching in the midst of the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:16). It is notable that this issue only comes up in Jerusalem, not in the Galilee region. This is, perhaps, because Jesus was well known in the Galilee region, and was an unknown down in Judea, especially in Jerusalem (where He is a virtual "dead man walking" after running amok of the religious leadership). The deeper issue is that Christ's credibility is constantly at issue in Jerusalem, where the Pharisees were in hyper-control of the religious situation. The basic idea when the Pharisees are constantly badgering Christ is, "how can a teacher who hasn't been approved through one of our own prestigious schools and been a student of our system make claims of any substance? You and your teaching are not just invalid, it must be heresy, because we did not approve of you or of your teaching in the first place." This is dark foreshadowing of the impending violence which will ensue against Christ from the religious leadership.

3) Jesus, Champion Of Women's Rights

- A) To make sure we understand that Jesus was not 'just' speaking to the established religious leaders of His day, John notes that Christ was in the "treasury, as He taught in the temple" (8:20). This was significant because it was the only area of the temple in which women had full access (cf. Mark 12:41-43)†.

4) The Gospel According To Jesus Christ

- A) The next section (John 8:21-30) is an excellent example of how Jesus Christ described His ultimate purposes for Himself and for those who would believe in Him.
- B) First, Jesus talks about the reality that He is going to a place where the religious leaders cannot go because of their sin (8:21).
- C) The leaders are confused, thinking in earthly terms, rather than spiritual (8:22). Jesus points to their depravity, their earthly and worldly sinfulness and sinful attitudes, which separate them from God the Father (8:23)

† The Treasury was part of the Court of Women, which got its name because men and women could enter that portion of the temple court (Mark 12:41-43 & other Talmudic/Midrashic material). There were thirteen trumpet (shofar) shaped collection boxes, each with its own inscription showing the use to which its contents would be put. The passage is a pointed note that Christ was speaking in an area specifically designed to reach ALL the people, in particular the women. This comes after the important excursus of John 7:52-8:11 on the adulterous woman. Pastor John MacArthur notes, "In no way does the New Testament treat women as spiritually inferior. The first person Jesus revealed His messiahship to was a woman (John 4:25-26). Jesus healed women (Mark 5:25-34; Luke 13:11-13). In contrast to the prevailing practice of the rabbis, Jesus taught women (Luke 10:38-42). Women ministered to Jesus and the disciples (Luke 8:2-3). Following His resurrection, Jesus appeared first to a woman (Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18). Women and men were involved in the prayer services of the early church (Acts 1:13-14). Peter reminds men that women are to be "granted honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life" (1st Peter 3:7). The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:21-22) are for both men and women. In short, all the promises, commands, and blessings of the New Testament apply equally to women and men." (Rev. John MacArthur, *Commentary on 1st Timothy*, Page 85).

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) It seems rather odd that Jesus Christ had to explain what being “the Light of the world” was all about in John 8:12ff. Why did He have to explain that the Light had come into the world? Couldn’t people see that He was the Light?
- B) Do you have friends or family who are living in the dark, but think they are living in the Light? How do you explain the gospel of Jesus Christ to them?
- C) Jesus takes a great deal of time to explain Himself to the religious leadership. The religious leaders were well versed (to the point of being numbed) to the Law of the Old Testament. They had so much experience with the Law, they actually could figure out how to break the Law, and still be found “not guilty.” Have you ever sensed this kind of “familiarity which breeds contempt” in your walk with Christ? Describe how you have taken advantage of your knowledge of Christ and grace for your own purposes.
- D) What does it mean to “believe” in Christ? So many people have gone forward at crusades and Sunday School because they “believe.” Often these commitments do not result in any change, but those same people believe they have done what it takes to be saved. Have they? Are they? What can we do in situations like these in our own circle of influence?
- E) Thomas Aquinas, a thirteenth century theologian and scholastic scholar, said that “once something has been proven philosophically, it is no longer believed, it is KNOWN. Thus, faith is no longer involved.” What do you think of Aquinas’ estimation that faith is only necessary for those things which are unknown, or cannot be proven (philosophically)? Hebrews 11:1 & 6 are helpful. Share some prayer requests in your own group for God to grow your faith and to show you the areas of your life which have slipped out of the realm of faith, and into the realm of “faith no longer being involved.” Pray together!

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