

- **\*READ John 8:12\*** This morning, we looked in **John 6** and considered Jesus's conversation with the multitude that had gathered to Him at Capernaum. In this lesson, we considered the fact that Jesus referred to Himself as the bread of life. "I am the bread of life" were His exact words, and this was only the first of seven times we find Jesus making similar statements throughout John's Gospel account.
  - *"I am the bread of life."* (**John 6:35,48**)
  - *"I am the Light of the world."* (**John 8:12**)
  - *"I am the door."* (**John 10:9**)
  - *"I am the good shepherd."* (**John 10:11**)
  - *"I am the resurrection and the life."* (**John 11:25**)
  - *"I am the way, the truth, and the life."* (**John 14:6**)
  - *"I am the vine."* (**John 15:5**)
- So what is John's purpose of recording such statements made by Jesus? We don't find these statements in the synoptic Gospels, so why include them in this one? Remember that John's purpose in writing this Gospel account was for the expressed purpose of bringing the reader to a knowledge and belief in Jesus as being the Son of God. Thus, it makes sense that he would include these statements because they teach the reader about who Jesus truly is.
- Furthermore, these statements of Jesus not only teach us about Himself, but they also teach us about our current situation and the world around us. So with these things in mind, what is Jesus trying to teach us when He states, *"I AM the light of the world?"* This is what we want to consider and come to know better this evening. Let's begin with what this statement of Jesus teaches us about the world in which we live.

## **I. We live in a dark world.**

### **A. Darkness is most often used to describe that which is opposed to God.**

1. 145 times in the New American Standard Bible we find "darkness" being addressed and the vast majority of those times we see it being used as that which is opposed to God, that which is evil, sinful, wicked, foolishness, or leading to death. Think to everyone's most well known Psalm...**Psalm 23:4**, *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for You are with me."* The imagery is that of someone who is walking through a dangerous and scary place that has the chance of taking their, and that place is described as being a shadow or in a place of darkness.
2. Paul describes the enemy that we battle against in this life as being darkness. *"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."* (**Ephesians 6:12**) Paul is saying that the enemy itself is darkness, and that is because the enemy stands in direct opposition to God and His will.
3. At the beginning of John's Gospel, He says, *"The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."* (**John 1:5**) Why could the darkness not comprehend the Light that had come into the world? That is because the two things are diametrically opposed to one another. Just as water and oil cannot mix, neither can light or darkness mix. Either one is present or the other is. Both cannot occupy the same space. Unfortunately, darkness takes up much of the space in this world.

## B. We can see the darkness of the world all around us.

1. We read or watch the news for five minutes and we are left shaking our heads in disbelief that such sadness, pain, and hurt can exist. We look around us at nearly all portions of the human experience and we see that which is contrary to God's will. Perversions of every kind are not just present, but so often they are encouraged and put forth as being that which is right and good. Many of us have experienced the pain that is produced by this dark world.
2. The Apostle Paul admonished the brethren in Ephesians that they no longer walk in the way of the world because doing so would only lead to further condemnation. *"walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness."* (**Ephesians 4:17-19**)
3. This describes the current state of the world and those who live in the darkness, but we must ask why is this the case? Why would a world created by God be in such a state? The answer lies in the fact that the ruler of this world, Satan (**II Corinthians 4:4**), has such a major influence on the happenings of this world. It isn't that man himself is incapable of doing good as some would lead us to believe. The Preacher tells us that God created man upright and good (**Ecclesiastes 7:29**), but the issue rests in the fact that there are so many factors and influences in this world that push us towards a rejection of God and an embracing of ourselves and our own desires. When we succumb to such a thing, then we are simply taking up residence in the darkness that exists in this world, but living in darkness isn't our only option.

## II. Jesus is the light that can illumine this dark world.

### A. Jesus stands opposed to darkness.

1. John was able to write, *"The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it"* (**John 1:5**) because Jesus is able to overcome that which is dark. Take note that John specifies that Jesus is "the" light and not "a" light. He alone is that which stands opposed to darkness and can allow others to come to the Father through Him. (**John 14:6**)
2. Why is He able to do this? He is able to do so because He is opposed to all that is dark. Where the darkness is wickedness and evil, Jesus is holy and righteous. Where the darkness leads to death, Jesus leads us to life. Where darkness leaves us hopeless, Jesus provides hope. Everything that darkness is and stands for, Jesus stands against.
3. This is why John says what He says in **I John 1:1-7**. If we want to be in fellowship with Jesus, then that demands that we walk in the light. It is impossible for us to think that we can be joined to Jesus while we live our lives in darkness. If we want to walk with Him then we must walk as He walks which is in the light. This is because *"in Him there is no darkness at all."*

### B. He offers light and life to all people.

1. He wants for us to be able to walk in the light and come into fellowship with Him and His Father. In fact, I'm convinced that this is exactly why we have John even recording this statement of Jesus for us. *"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**) Jesus is wanting for all people to come out of the darkness and find themselves in the light which He gives.

2. When Mary went to see her cousin Elizabeth, we find her praising God the child which Elizabeth was carrying. Notice what she says this child will be busy doing. *"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways; To give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."* (Luke 1:76-79)
3. Mary is prophesying that Elizabeth's son John would be the one who would go before the Light and prepare the way for Him to be able to and proclaim light, salvation, and life to a dark and dying world. This *"Sunrise"* would *"shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death."* Who is she speaking of? Of course she is speaking of Jesus, and John the Apostle records that John the baptizer fully accepted this role and didn't try in any way to act as if he himself was the Light. (John 1:6-9) John knew that the One coming after him was the One who was of higher rank than he, and John the author notes that it is in the fullness of Jesus, the true Light of the world that all have received *"grace upon grace."* He acknowledges that *"grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ."* (John 1:15-17) So how do we come to have access to this grace and truth? John says in John 8:12, that those who follow Jesus would no longer walk in the darkness.

### III. If we will follow Him then we will be illumined to that which is good.

- A. Coming to the light and becoming a disciple of Jesus will create a whole new life for us.
  1. As the Apostle Paul is recounting his conversion to Jesus to King Agrippa, he details the instructions that were given to him by Jesus concerning his new life and what that would mean for other people. (Acts 26:12-18) His purpose as an Apostle was to lead others out of darkness and into the light, to rescue them from Satan and deliver them to God.
  2. This happened for any and all who would who would put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord Savior and Light who would guide their paths. Anyone who was willing come to Jesus as the light of their lives as David was willing to do in Psalm 18:28 could find their way out of the darkness. *"For You light my lamp; The Lord my God illumines my darkness."* Only with the light of God can we truly know about this life and how we can make it home to be with Him for all eternity.
  3. Far too many people spend their lives stumbling through this life with not purpose, no passion, and no direction. Every path they take leads to a dead end, and it is all because they can't see. They are stuck in their ignorance and foolishness because they haven't found the true Light of the world, and as long as they continue to live in this way, then they will continue to stumble and fall. Yet, Jesus says, *"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)
- B. This life of walking in the Light will result in great spiritual blessings.
  1. If we are willing to *"walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin."* (1 John 1:7) What a blessing it is to be able to know what life will bring once all is said and done. What a blessing it is to know that our fellowship with God will result in our sins being forgiven and us having the ability to spend eternity with Him forever in heaven.
  2. But even before we get to heaven, we can experience great blessings of being in the Light of God. Firstly, we get to live this life with Jesus walking along with us guiding us along the way. There is a great sense of safety and confidence that comes with knowing that Jesus will be with us and that He will be strengthening us along the way. (Colossians 2:6,7)

3. Secondly, we will be people who are fruitful for the Lord. If we are committed to walking in the Light and looking forward to the last day, then Paul says that we ought to be *“steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.” (I Corinthians 15:58)*
4. Lastly, our walking in the Light will allow for us to be His mini lights to those around us. *“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16)* No we are not the true Light, but we can be clear reflections of the light that He has put within us.

While contained only within one verse, Jesus’s claim that He is the Light of the world comes with deep and significant implications. It reminds us that this world is not our home. The darkness of this world reminds us that there is a better place prepared for us if we are willing to forsake the darkness and seek to live only in the Light that has been given to us by our loving God. May we always remember that darkness can and will always be defeated by the Light of God. The only question that remains is whether or not we will find ourselves in darkness or in the light when the end comes. May each of us live in such a way that we will be found in the Light of God.

**\*PRAYER\*** *Jehovah God...we approach You this evening fully aware that we find ourselves in a dark and dying world. A world that is blinded by sin and without hope for the future. We are so thankful that You have loved us to the extend that You would send Your Son into this world to be its Light. May each of us seek out that Light and live in Him day by day. As we go throughout this week, we pray that You would strengthen us to overcome the darkness. Strengthen us to not only overcome ourselves, but help us to shine our lights in such a way that others might find their way to You. We are nothing without You, and we pray that you would continually be with us as we walk through this life. Thank You Father, and may we praise Your name day by day. In the name of Your Son, the Light of the world we pray...amen.*