

I AM The Light of The World

John 7:53-8:20 (ESV)

Key verse 8:12, "Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Introduction: One of the running themes of the Bible is this: God is always the One who brings light into darkness. It all starts back to Genesis. Before there was life, before there was order, before there was anything we know today, there was darkness. Then God spoke His very first recorded words: "Let there be light" (Gen 1:3). From the very beginning, light has always been connected to the presence, power, and work of God. As you keep reading Scripture, that theme keeps showing up. God leads Israel through the wilderness with a pillar of fire (Exodus 21-22). Isaiah prophesies that the coming Messiah would be a light to the nations (Isa 42:6; 49:6). Then John opens his Gospel by telling us that the true Light has entered the world, and that the darkness has not overcome it.

Which is why John 8 is such an incredible moment. Jesus is standing in the temple, surrounded by people celebrating God's faithfulness. Then he says something that would've stopped everyone in their tracks: "I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12) What does Jesus mean?

As we walk through this passage together, we'll answer three questions: *Who is Jesus? Why do we desperately need Him? And what does it really mean to follow Him?*

Part I: Life in Darkness (1-11)

What is darkness? Let me give you a simple illustration. We all know the sky is blue . We know that intellectually. But I want everyone to close your eyes for a second. What do you see? Darkness. Why? Because light is absent. The moment light is removed, darkness remains. Darkness isn't really a thing by itself. It's simply the absence of light. Scripture often uses darkness as a picture of spiritual blindness. In our natural fallen condition, that darkness is not merely around us; apart from Christ, we are children of darkness. Not simply because we don't know enough, but because sin has corrupted the human heart. Joseph Conrad, a classic novelist called it the *Heart of Darkness*. A heart corrupted by sin naturally runs from the light. That's why the Bible speaks about works done in darkness. They conceal what they're ashamed of. Darkness is where sin is fed, protected, and kept away from the eyes of others. But even when no one else sees it, God does.

In this passage, we see two pictures of darkness. One is the darkness of the Scribes and the Pharisees. The other is the darkness of the woman caught in adultery. Let's take a look at verses 1–3. To understand what's happening here, we need to remember the setting. This takes place during one of

Israel's greatest celebrations, the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus had stayed in Jerusalem for a few days after the feast (John 7:37), and it is in that context that this scene begins. After spending the night on the Mount of Olives, Jesus returned to the temple early the next morning. As people began gathering around Him, Jesus sat down and started teaching them when suddenly the Scribes and Pharisees interrupted everything by bringing a woman who had been caught in the very act of adultery.

Can you imagine what she must have been feeling? Shame. Fear. Embarrassment. She's dragged into the middle of a crowd with nowhere to hide. Everyone is staring at her. Everyone knows why she's there. We don't know what led her into adultery. John doesn't tell us. Maybe she was looking for love in the wrong place. Maybe she was lonely. Maybe she wanted acceptance. Maybe she believed the lie that this would finally satisfy her. Isn't that what sin always promises? It promises life. It promises satisfaction. It promises happiness. But in the end, it leaves us exposed and empty. Maybe you're thinking, *"I've never committed adultery. What does this have to do with me?"* But maybe you know the same struggle. Maybe you've looked for love in the wrong relationship. Maybe through dating apps, or someone's attention online. You just wanted to feel wanted. Maybe you compromised because you were lonely through sex and pornography. You believed it would satisfy you, even for a moment. And afterward, you were left with the same shame, the same emptiness, and one more part of your life buried in the dark. The details may be different, but the lie is the same. SIN promises life, but it always takes more than it gives.

You have to wonder, how did they even end up with this woman? How long were they waiting for an opportunity like this? And the male accomplice was surprisingly absent. This wasn't some random interruption. Listen to what they say in verses 4-6a:

"Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" ⁶ This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him."

They had been planning this. They weren't interested in the woman. They weren't interested in rendering justice. She was simply a tool they could use to trap Jesus. And notice they do this publicly. They drag her right into the middle of the crowd. They wanted everyone to watch. They wanted to humiliate the woman, and at the same time put Jesus in a position where, no matter what He said, they believed they finally had Him. Their strategy seemed foolproof. This was the trap. If Jesus showed mercy to the woman, they could accuse Him of ignoring the Law of Moses. But if He told them to stone her, He would be stepping into Roman authority (because the Jews didn't have the legal right to carry out capital punishment on their own). Either way, they thought they had Him cornered.

The Pharisees and the scribes, the very men who were supposed to be the overseers and teachers of God's Word, had become bloodthirsty. They knew the Law. They taught the Law. They could quote it. But instead of allowing God's Word to expose their own hearts, they used it as a weapon against someone else. They had no compassion. They weren't interested in repentance or restoration. They were willing to publicly humiliate this woman and destroy her life just to trap Jesus. Maybe they even believed they were doing God a favor. That is religious darkness. You can know the Bible. You can attend

church. You can even believe you're defending God, while your heart is still filled with pride, hatred, and self-righteousness. You can clearly see the sin [word] in everyone else while remaining completely blind to the sin in your own heart. That may be the most dangerous kind of darkness: darkness that believes it is righteous. They are deep in their sins.

So how does Jesus respond to men who are completely blind to their own sin?

Look at verse 6b: "Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground."

What did he write? The truth is, we don't know. The Bible doesn't tell us, and I'm okay leaving it there. What we do know is this: Jesus didn't answer them right away. Instead, *he bent down and wrote on the ground*. Can you picture the scene? The woman is standing there. The Pharisees are waiting for an answer. The crowd is watching every move. They're trying to corner Jesus, hoping he'll say something they can use against him. But Jesus isn't rattled. He's not pressured by the crowd or intimidated by His accusers. Then, after they kept pressing Him, He stood up and says, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."

How did they respond? They walked away one by one beginning with the oldest because they were convicted by their own conscience (Verse 9). They knew each other. They knew exactly what kind of men they were. Let me ask you a question. If Jesus exposed the sin you've been hiding, and your own conscience convicted you, what would you do? Would you run from him or would you run to the only One who can forgive you? I hope I'd run to Christ... But that's not what they did. They walked away. The very One who could forgive them was standing right in front of them, and instead of running to Him, they ran from Him. That was the problem with the Pharisees. They didn't want to face the reality of their own sin. They loved exposing the sins of others, but they refused to deal with the sin in their own hearts. They continue to be in the dark.

Read verses 9b–10: "And Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?'" Now it's just Jesus and the woman. Her sin wasn't hidden. It was out in the open. She had been caught in the very act of adultery, and now she's standing before the Light of the world. You would think she'd run away in shame and embarrassment. But she doesn't. She stays. The Light exposed them all. The Pharisees ran from it. The woman remained. She stayed. The difference is how she responded. She says, "No one, Lord." Jesus had every right to condemn her - right there. He is the only One in that crowd who was truly without sin. Yet listen to what He says: "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more." How can he say that? Did he just let her off the hook? Sin always has to be paid for. Someone has to die. But here's a beautiful thing, Jesus could extend mercy because He knew exactly where He was headed. He knew the Cross was before Him. He knew He would bear her adultery in His own body. He knew He would take her condemnation upon Himself. That's the only reason forgiveness could be offered. Let me remind you, Grace is never free. It cost the Son of God His life – but It's the only way.

This is why we desperately need Him. The bottom line here is: One knows she's a sinner and one thinks he's righteous. Do you know you're a sinner? Are you desperate for Jesus to forgive you? Or have you convinced yourself that you don't need Him? Take an honest look at your heart.

Part II: The Light Revealed (12-20)

Phew... that was heavy. But now we come to the heart of the passage. Today, I don't want us to simply study the biblical theme of light. I want us to meet the One who said, "I am the Light of the world."

And we remember Isaiah in the Old Testament (Isa 9), when he gave his messianic prophesy of the one who would come the servant of the Lord. He says that "the people who walk in darkness have seen a great light."

Now we look at the Light. Read verses 12. Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Jesus didn't say, "I reflect the light." He says, "I am the Light of the world." Jesus is making a claim about who He is. The Light that first shined over creation... The Light that led Israel through the wilderness... The Light the prophets spoke about... is now standing before you. And His name is Jesus.

Sometimes we deceive ourselves into thinking we're walking in the light, when in reality we're still living in darkness - in our sins. So let me ask you: What light are you really following? What are you chasing after? Maybe it's vaping, smoking, edibles, or getting high. Even in the church, these things have become so normal that people barely stop to consider whether they're walking in the light. But as believers, our goal isn't simply to ask, "Is this allowed?" The better question is, Does this honor Christ? Does this help me pursue holiness, or does it feed the flesh? (1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:31). Maybe a job? Stock Market? Marriage? Social Justice? A new President? A job because you want security. Marriage because you are lonely. Stock market to bounce back. All of these are valid. Perhaps that's what you've been chasing, believing that's where life is found. But every one of those lights will eventually leave you in darkness. They promise life, but they can never give you the life you're looking for. So let me encourage you today: shift your attention to Jesus. Follow the true Light that gives life. Jesus says, "Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Jesus is the only way, the truth, and the life. He is calling you to follow Him. Will you keep chasing lights that cannot save you, or will you follow the true Light? Will you trust Jesus with your life?

We'll move a little quicker through verses 13–20. The Pharisees immediately challenge Jesus' testimony. Jesus responds by reminding them that He knows where He came from and where He's going. They don't. Their judgment is based on human standards. Jesus speaks with the authority of the Father. Then Jesus meets them on their own terms. They wanted two witnesses according to the Law. So, Jesus gives them two: Himself and the Father. The problem was never a lack of evidence. The problem was unbelief. What is the problem? Unbelief. They didn't know the Father; they couldn't recognize the Father's testimony through the Son. John ends this section by reminding us that no one arrested Jesus because His hour had not yet come. God was still in complete control.

Some people receive the Light (The Woman - perhaps repented?). Others stand right in front of the Light and still reject Him. Not because the evidence wasn't there, but because they didn't want to surrender their own authority, pride, and control. That's exactly what we see with the Pharisees. Jesus gave them every witness the Law required (John 8:12–30), yet they remained spiritually blind because they refused to believe. You see the pattern - Refusal. If someone continues to reject Christ, you're still in sin and the end result is eternal death.

Testimony Part : This is my family. My beautiful wife, Dennie, and our son, Abraham Jr (Photo in PPT). I'm usually the one behind the camera documenting them, so I'm not in many of the photos. By trade, I'm a wedding photographer. I get to do what I love for a living. Almost every weekend I'm surrounded by celebrations, photographing beautiful moments and happy people. Looking from the outside, you'd probably say I'm living my best life. But it wasn't always like that. I came to know Christ in 2012 through Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." That day changed my life. I encountered and received the True Light. I know I've been redeemed. I know I'm saved.

But even after coming to Christ, there were still parts of my life I kept hidden. Deep pockets of darkness I didn't want anyone to see. Even though I belonged to Christ, there were places in my heart that I didn't want Him to touch. I struggled with depression. I tried all kinds of things, hoping something would finally satisfy, but nothing did. I remember telling my wife one day, "I think God designed my life to suffer." She looked at me and said, "That's not true. God wants to bless you, and I believe He's going to use your life to bless many people." At the time, I struggled to accept that. Even after coming to Christ, I still carried the weight of my past. Years of pornography had distorted the way I viewed women and manipulated them for my selfish desires. Those sins didn't just disappear overnight. They followed me into marriage and affected the way I loved my wife. On top of that, I was still carrying wounds from a difficult childhood. I thought, "This is just who I am. You can't teach an old dog new tricks." But Jesus didn't leave me there. Because He is the Light of the world, and because I kept following Him even when I couldn't see any progress, He slowly began shining His light into every dark corner of my life. Because He is the light of the world, He brought freedom from my sexual sin. Because He is the light of the world, He restored relationships in my family. Because He is the light of the world, He blessed me with an incredible wife and son. Because He is the Light of the World, He blessed me with God fearing church community. And because He is the Light of the World, He gave me a reason to live and that is to worship Him. I have not arrived - I am far from it. But by God's grace, I am no longer the man I once was. He's still changing me today.

Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." God didn't save us just so we could sit in the light. He saved us to walk in it. He has called our family to serve Him, beginning in our own home, then in our church, and wherever He places us. Jesus is the Light of the world. And because we belong to Him, we now have the privilege of reflecting His light to a world that is still walking in darkness. Thank you Jesus.

Part III: Following the Light

Jesus said in Matt 5 “You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that^[a] they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Did you know that if you belong to Christ, you are now the temple of God? Think about that. The Holy Spirit lives in you. Not in a building. In you. Wherever you go, you carry the presence of Christ. If we're not following Christ, we're not reflecting Christ. Jesus says, “Follow Me.” As we follow Him, something begins to happen. His life starts showing through ours. We're not the Light. Jesus never stopped being the Light. We're simply reflecting Him. I like to think of us as little lanterns. A lantern isn't impressive by itself. It doesn't create light. It just carries it. That's us. We carry the Light of Christ wherever He places us. I've seen that in our own church. Think about the Byuns. God is sending them to Kazakhstan. Think about the Raricks. God is sending them to Italy. And think about the UBF missionaries who left their homes and comfort, pioneered campuses around the world. Many of us are here today because of their faithfulness. They're simply carrying the Light of Christ into places that are still dark. Maybe God isn't calling you to another country. Maybe God is calling you to your workplace. Your neighborhood. Your family. Maybe it's your marriage. Maybe things have grown cold. Maybe you're distant, tired, and struggling to see any light in it. Perhaps God is calling you to stop waiting for your spouse to change. Reflect Christ in how you love, forgive, serve, and stay faithful. God can use your obedience to bring light into a dark place. Maybe it's your children. Maybe one of them has wandered away from God, and you don't know how to reach them anymore. Keep praying. Keep loving them. Keep showing them Christ through the way you live. You cannot change their heart, but you can keep pointing them to the One who can. Maybe He's calling you to your campus. Our campuses are dark. Students are chasing everything they think will satisfy them. Success. Relationships. Sex. Approval. Identity. But they're still empty.

Because apart from Christ, that's where all of us were. They don't need another opinion. They don't need another trend or scheme. What do they need? They need Jesus. One lantern doesn't seem like much. But have you ever seen hundreds of lanterns together? The darkness doesn't win. Light always wins. That's God's design. He shines His Light through ordinary people so others can see Christ. Not us. Christ.

To wrap this up, let me ask you one last question. What kind of light are you reflecting? Can people look at your life and see Jesus? Not perfection. Not someone who has it all together. But someone who has been changed by Christ. Jesus is still saying, “Follow Me.” So... Will you keep chasing lesser lights? Or... Will you follow the true Light? And if you already belong to Him... Will you faithfully reflect His light in a world that is still desperate for hope?

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”