

# John 8:23-30,12-19

## Light of Life

Image Church // Follow Me // Week 2

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### Introduction

Happy Grand Opening Weekend, as we celebrate this move in our new permanent location that we're calling our hub!! ***We're excited to continue to serve and partner with this community in an even bigger way now that we have this incredible resource!***

In fact, at the end of next month we're hosting and feeding the ***Georgia division of family and children services*** and the families that are partnered with their *foster care program here in Cobb County!* Which is incredible!

In addition, we're in conversations with local businesses on how we can use this space to serve and collaborate with them!

Speaking of local businesses, I want to give a special welcome to all those who are here from some of the surrounding businesses- we're excited that you're joining us today. We want to be a blessing to you and this community! We would love for you to join us here each week!

One of the things that we say here is that ***we believe that the flourishing of the church should fuel the flourishing of the community-*** we want to see that happen here!

Well, this morning we're continuing in our new series called ***Follow Me***, where we're looking at who Jesus is, why He's worth following, and the implications He has on our lives...

I'm going to confide in you this morning... I am VERY directionally challenged... *My wives like AMEN...*

I know that you're thinking *aww that's cute*, yeah I'm not great either...

You don't understand. I've lived here for 5 years and I just got to the point where I can get to ***Target pick-up*** for my wife without using Google maps...

I have trouble getting to my own house from most places... We run out of data because Google maps is my best friend and even with that I STILL miss turns!

But here's where it gets really tricky- I love to hunt and google maps doesn't take pictures of hunting trails- you can barely even see them with your own eyes...

And the thing about hunting is that you walk-in in the dark in the mornings and you leave in the dark at night... *So you can see how this is a problem for a guy like me...*

- Nighttime- pitch black, shady trails, directionally challenged, out in the middle of nowhere...

But there's a saving grace for me- there's these really small pin sized reflectors that you stick in the trees, but here's the key. In order to see them you have to have a ***flashlight...***

When the ***flashlight*** hits these reflectors they shine like crazy and they illuminate the trail so that you can see the way...

The crazy thing is that you could be standing right in front of one of those reflectors but if you don't have a light you won't be able to see them! The only way you can see them is with a light!

What we're going to see today is a group of people who have markers right in front of them that are designed to lead them to where they need to go but they can't see them, **because they're missing the light source that they need to illuminate them...**

### **If you have your Bibles go ahead and turn to John 8...**

*As you're turning there I want to set the stage for you to give you some context before we jump in...*

We're picking up about 6 months after Jesus fed the 5,000... which was really closer to 20,000...

*Here's the setting:* There's a festival that was happening in Jerusalem called the **Festival of Shelters** or the **Festival of Booths**...

Throughout the OT God would give His people festivals in order to remember and celebrate His faithfulness and goodness...

This **Festival Shelters**, looks back to **Leviticus** when God freed His people from being ruled and enslaved by Egypt...

It's called the **Festival of Shelters** because when God got them out of Egypt, they were on the move and literally lived out of these little shelters during that time...

So, the way they would celebrate it is the Jews would travel to Jerusalem, and they would build little shelters and they would live in them for several weeks as they partied together in celebration of who God is!

- *For my baby boomers this is the truer and better Woodstock! No college students I'm not talking about the town that's 15 min from here- Google it...*
- **BYW**, for those of you that think God's boring- God gave parties as a way to remember who He is and what He's done!

So, every year people would come to Jerusalem from all over to celebrate this festival.

And what would happen is when the sun went down, the Priest would light candles and torches in the temple and the light from the temple would put out a glow all over Jerusalem and they would "**get jiggy wit it**" and they would do "**The Jerk**" all night in celebration...

- *Baptists I'm sorry there's dancing in the bible... Y'all would struggle any way w/rhythm!*

Well, we're going to be picking up at the tail-end of the **Festival of Shelters**.

Jesus is in the temple, and He would have been in the exact same place in the temple where they would have lit the torches and candles just the other night for the **Festival of Shelters**... <sup>1</sup>

And Jesus is talking to what *seems* to be a mixed group of people that had been part of the festival... There would have been religious elite, and lay people...

What we're going to do is jump in on the middle of the conversation to see the **crux** of what the conversation is about and then work out from there...

## **John 8:25-30**

*Let's look at **verse 23**, Jesus is talking with the religious elite here...*

**23 "You are from below," he told them, "I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 Therefore I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in**

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<sup>1</sup> Some thoughts and insights in the above section were gleaned from Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (around pgs. 338–339).

**your sins.”** 25 “Who are you?” they questioned. “Exactly what I’ve been telling you from the very beginning,” Jesus told them. 26 “I have many things to say and to judge about you, but the one who sent me is true, and what I have heard from him—these things I tell the world.” 27 They did not know he was speaking to them about the Father. 28 So Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own. But just as the Father taught me, I say these things. 29 The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do what pleases him.” 30 As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

So this is the matter at hand- Jesus has been revealing over and over again throughout the gospel of John that He’s not of this world and He drives this home here again for them...

And Jesus goes on to talk about **why** He’s come- to alleviate the impact and implications of sin... And Jesus says *unless you believe that I am He then you will die in your sins..*

What Does He mean when He says *unless you believe I am He?*

- He’s pointing to the reality of the fact that He is the deliverer that they had been waiting for...
- Sin entered the world through Adam and Eve and jacked everything up...
- God confronts them and lets them know the implications but then He gives them a promise of a deliverer that will one day deal with all of the brokenness that their sin caused... **See Gen. 3:15**
- Throughout the whole OT, they were looking and waiting for this deliverer...Jesus is saying I am He...

Then Jesus says this will be made clear when I go to the cross...

Jesus does a lot of talk here about and we’ll see more about **His relationships with the Father...**

And here’s what you need to understand about this relationship between Jesus and the Father...

The gospel- good news of Jesus- summed up in 3 words is: **Jesus in my place...**

See, Jesus lives out **perfect submission** to the **Father**, He exercises **perfect obedience to the Father**, doing what we could not do, being perfect in our place...

And then He would continue in our place, and He would continue to submit Himself to the Father’s will for extending salvation to the world...

By going to the cross substituting Himself in our place on the cross paying for the sin we committed...

And then He would raise from the dead- proving that He was who he said He was and extending us the opportunity of new life where we are free of sin, and be united with God **through His finished work!**

**And Notice:** Jesus gives us the key for **how** we receive this in **verse 24:** we receive the work Jesus accomplished by **believing in Him!**

- **Faith is the means of freedom from sin not works...**

And what we see from the text is that this clicked for a lot of people and that many believed!!

But many also missed it...

So this is a big and powerful moment... Now let’s look at how we got here and the implications that it has for us...

**John 8:12-19**

Jump back to **verse 12**: *Jesus makes this statement: "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."*

Ok, huge statement... But to understand the full weight of it, we have to remember back on what's been going on here...

Remember they had just got done celebrating the **Festival of Shelters** where they reflected back on God's faithfulness to get them out of slavery to Egypt...

Well as a part of the great escape put on by God... **Exodus 13:21-22** tells us that God led the people from Egypt with a Pillar of Cloud and **Fire**...

- The Pillar of fire guided them, gave them light, it protected them, **but it was also an indicator of the presence of God**... That God was with them...
  - This is what they would have been a part of what they were remembering and celebrating...
  - The lights that shined at night from the temple would have been a key reminder of this...

Which just happens to be the place where Jesus is teaching from...

So, when Jesus makes the statement that **He's the light of the world** it would have come with stunning force! *This is what kicked up the hornet's nest...*

And He doesn't just say I am the light of the world... he goes on to say *whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life...*

#### **Here's the connection:**

In the same way that Israel **followed** the pillar of fire and it expelled the darkness providing light and life... Jesus is saying that whoever

**follows** Him will never experience darkness but will have the **light of life**...<sup>2</sup>

*The Pharisees were not having it and they challenged Him...*

**Verse 13** So the Pharisees [religious elite] said to him, "You are testifying about yourself. Your testimony is not valid."

They essentially say, you're a liar! And they take something Jesus said earlier in **John 5:31** and they hold it up against Him... The problem is they stripped what Jesus said of its **context, again** missing Jesus' point!

*To which Jesus says in Verse 14: "Even if I testify about myself," Jesus replied, "My testimony is true, because I know where I came from and where I'm going. But you don't know where I come from or where I'm going. [Y'all are over here wanting to judge me and you don't even know me... I have every right based on who I am to testify about myself] 15 You judge by human standards. I judge no one.*

**IOW:** *You're judging me based on superficial human standards and worldly criteria ... I'm not of this world, so I don't judge people like you...*

The problem with these religious leaders is that they continued to view Jesus as **one just like them**, and not **as one greater than them!**

- Even after all He's done up to this point...

Here's one of the things that scares me so much about this interaction... These *religious elite* are standing face to face with the Savior of the World and they're completely missing it...

**Proximity to Jesus doesn't mean that you have the presence of God in your life...**

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

- There are some of you here that are like these guys, you've been around the things of God your whole life- grew up around religion, going to church- praying before meals, you
- But you don't have the presence of God in your life because you've missed Jesus...

I need you to understand that ***you're not accepted by God based off of association...***

- *Listen, these guys were associated with God's people; they were part of the right groups, they were conservative, they were pro-life, they only watched fox news- you feel me...*
- But they were missing Jesus...
- The same is true for some of you- you've been around religion but your not received the person of Jesus...
- The evidence is just like for these guys- Jesus has no true impact on your life!

*Jesus goes on to say this:*

**Verse 16** *If I do judge, my judgment is true, because it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. 17 Even in your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. 18 I am the one who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me." 19 Then they asked him, "Where is your Father?" "You know neither me nor my Father." "If you knew me, you would also know my Father."*

*OK, here's what I want you to see- Jesus has allowed these guys to go on what seems like a little detour as they **played 21 questions**... But Jesus did it for a very specific purpose...*

*When Jesus lets someone take him on a detour, he handles the detour in a way that really illuminates the starting point and the destination. So it turns out not to be a detour after all.<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>3</sup> Piper, "I am the Light of the World"

*Jesus wants them to see that He's the deliverer that's come to bring light and life to a dark world!*

#### **Example:**

Like think about Batman, 99% of the time when he is fighting crime, it is in the cover of night. Why? Because bad things happen at night when it is dark... It doesn't take a scientist to see that our world is dark and broken...

The question really is, what can pierce the dark??

**Jesus illuminates your heart and he leads you to life**

Listen...For some of you are in some dark places...

Others of you, you're operating the the dark... The darkness is where bad things happen...

The darkness is not good, it doesn't lead to life, it leads to death... it's fun for a few then on to the next thing...

- *Flesh out...*

\*Some of you push on this with your religion... don't miss this point:

- ***Jesus allows the detour to show us that they do now see/have the light of life...***

Some of you are so close to religion and yet you're walking in the dark...

The only way to escape the darkness is to experience the True Light through the gospel.

#### **Example:**

How many of yall have been at the beach all day in the sun, and then its time for lunch and you head back to your hotel or condo. And you

walk inside, and even with the lights on, you are more in tune with how dark it is compared to the light of the sun you just experienced

IN THE SAME WAY, Jesus illuminates our lives and experiencing True Light makes us more aware of the darkness around us.

***When Jesus illuminates your heart it does 2 things:***

**A. changes you internally**

When you become a new creation the light of Christ indwells in you, He takes a spiritually dark heart and he radiates it with light! Like the sun that comes up on a cool morning gradually warms you, the light as it continues to shine in you begins to gradually transform you little by little as you continue to look to Jesus.

**Let me give you an example of the what the gospel does in us:**

- Think about being in a massive warehouse, like **IKIA** ... strike a match, cell phone light, lantern, flashlight...

In the same way as the light of the gospel permeates your life it begins to open your eyes to the sin in your life... And you begin to identify it and recognize that...

\*The gospel also changes the way that you view yourself...

- *Press in here...*

**Martin Luther King Jr.** said: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that."

Only the light can drive out the darkness inside of us... Only the gospel can transform us from the inside out...

**B. changes you externally**

**"I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."**

We cannot miss that word **follows** ... This is huge, the demons acknowledged Him, but they didn't follow Him...

Following Jesus is a posture that you assume that is evident to the world...

**Example:** The Chair...

You see my belief based on my action... is that true for you?

**Example:** i-75

- If you tell me, "I am going to Florida" but then I see you on find my friends or life360 for you android people in the room, going north on 75... No matter how much you tell me you are headed to Florida, it just doesn't change the reality that you are headed to Tennessee. <sup>4</sup>

**Example:**

getting from point A to point B... I may run, jog, walk or crawl... but at the end of the day you will know that I am heading in that direction...

\*If you want to see external change, it only come by looking to Jesus... as you are reminded of the gospel, you are compelled to **respond** by the way that you live...

***Here's the last thing that I want you to see from this today...***

**Jesus illuminates your heart and he leads you to life**

**Jesus Leads you to life...**

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<sup>4</sup> Jobi Martin influenced

Preach this...

**Verse 24** Therefore I told you that **you will die in your sins**. For if you do not believe that I am he, **you will die in your sins.**"

**Verse 28** "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he,

## Conclusion [VAMP]

Want to give you a chance to respond...

Note card...

- Explain

*[Slide with this on it]*

**Name**

**Email**

**A) I surrendered to Jesus**

**B) I want to be baptized**

**C) I want to take next steps to get connected**

Give space to fill it out...

Call for Pastors and prayer team...

We stand you come...