

DIVINE
"Light of the World: Part 2"
December 27, 2016

The "I Am" sayings of Jesus:

- "I AM the **Bread** of Life" (John 6:27-59)
- "I AM the **Light** of the World" (John 7:2, 14; 8:12)
- "I AM the Good **Shepherd**" (John 10:1-10)
- "I AM the **Resurrection** and the Life" (John 11:17-26)
- "I AM the Way, the **Truth**, and the Life" (John 14:1-7)
- "I AM the True **Vine**" (John 15:1-8)

God is not merely at your fingertips but within your grasp. Live each day like a child digging through an antique treasure chest rifling for the next discovery. Open your arms and your eyes to the God who stands in plain sight and works miracles in your midst.

-Margaret Feinberg

When you really "GET" what it means for Jesus to be the "Light of the World":

1. You realize Jesus is a bigger deal than you thought!

"A light from heaven brighter than the sun shone down on me and my companions. We all fell down, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is useless for you to fight against my will. "Who are you, lord?" I asked. "And the Lord replied, 'I am Jesus.'" Acts 26:13-15 (NLT)

"Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light... The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground." Matthew 17:1-6 (NLT)

"When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw... someone like the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were like flames of fire... And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead."

Revelation 1:12-17 (NLT)

"In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it." John

2. You find answers to some important question.
3. You trust the Lord as your source of light.

"I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." John 8:12 (NLT)

Leadership Tip!

Now is a good time to reflect and give thanks for the growth that has occurred within your group. This will help you set the course for the group in the coming year.

Divine “Light of the World: Part II”

STARTER QUESTIONS:

Have you ever lost power in your house at night and searched around for a flashlight or some candles? What are some adjectives you would use to describe the experience? Describe how you felt once the power and lights came back on.

MAIN IDEA:

This series is helping us re-discover who Jesus is, and this week we continue to look at his six, “I AM” statements. Last week we discussed Jesus’ statement, “I am the True Vine.” This week we look at His statement in John (7:2, 14; 8:12), “I AM the Light of the World.”

Read John 8:12

“I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”

Many of us say we want to experience God, but are we truly looking for His majesty? We travel life’s paths with our heads down, focused on the next step with our school or our career or family or retirement plans. But we don’t really expect God to show up with divine wonder.

What obstacles might keep us from following the Light of Jesus in our everyday lives?

Pastor Hank talked about how a flashlight helps us navigate at night; it doesn’t necessarily illuminate our final destination but may only show us the next few steps. Similarly, though Jesus illuminates our path in life, we don’t necessarily know what His ultimate plan for our life might be. Not knowing all the answers can be frustrating and scary at times.

Was there ever a time when you were unsure Jesus was lighting the “right way” in your life only to find out later the destination was just fine after all? If you are willing, please share the experience with your group.

While Jesus’ Light illuminates the world like a guiding light, the reality is, His Light means so much more. Consider these passages:

“A light from heaven brighter than the sun shone down on me and my companions. We all fell down, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is useless for you to fight against my will. “Who are you, lord?’ I asked. “And the Lord replied, ‘I am Jesus.’” Acts 26:13-15 (NLT)

“Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. As the men watched, Jesus’ appearance was transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light... The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground.” Matthew 17:1-6 (NLT)

“When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw... someone like the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were like flames of fire... And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead.” Revelation 1:12-17 (NLT)

These passages indicate a Light that is an awesome power. In fact, this is a light so powerful people glow after encountering it. Recall that Moses’ face radiated light after he had been in the presence of God’s light. Now that’s a Light!

How does the imagery of light described in the previous three passages affect your understanding of Jesus’ statement, “I AM the Light...”?

FINAL THOUGHTS:

Jesus was a great teacher. He was a great Rabbi. He was a great man. But let’s not forget that when He says, “I AM,” He is telling us that He is God. The first chapter of John describes Jesus’ Light quite well;

“In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.” John

Let’s close by reflecting on a few questions to capture how we are using the Light of Jesus in our lives:

Are you letting Jesus be the Light of your life?

Do you trust that Jesus has your best interests in mind?

Do you seek God’s Light as a life-giving necessity?

FAMILY FOCUS:

Read John 8:12 - When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Do others know that you have the light of life, the light of Jesus? What does that mean? What does that look like? Talk about this, and help the children with practical ideas about how they can shine the light of Jesus in their neighborhood, classroom—and to the ends of the earth. You can BE LIGHT by talking to your friend at school about Jesus and inviting him to church. When your friend attends church with you, he will hear more about God and meet more friends who are LIGHT, providing more power to lead your friend to accept Jesus ... As Christians we have the privilege—and responsibility—of shining Jesus' light into the world.

Do this short lesson to further explain the concept:

Light the candle and use drops of wax to adhere candle to center of dish. Extinguish the candle. Place the dish on the display table in front of the class. Pour water into the dish (practice a few times to know the amount of water to add). Add food coloring to the water. Have glass vase, lighter or matches, and fire extinguisher within easy reach. Let's take a look at an experiment that teaches us about the light that God gives each of us.

Ok, let's get started. Let's close the shades and turn off the light. (Assign one volunteer to turn off the light, briefly.) We are now in darkness. Now let's see what one light can do. Light the candle. See, one light shines very brightly. It pierces the darkness so that even one little candle light can fill the room with light.

1 John 1:5 says "God is light; in him there is no darkness."

Ok, let's turn the light back on. (Have volunteer turn on the light; extinguish the candle.) But, what if I start to lose my connection with God by not praying, going to church, or reading my Bible? What is going to happen to my light? Let's see. (Relight the candle and cover it with the vase.) Wow, what just happened? (Wait for a response.) Yes, the water went in.

Isn't that what we do when we try to fill ourselves with other things and not seek after God? But it is not the same, is it? Only when we remove these things can we reignite the light, spread the Word, and REALLY feel full again. (Remove the jar and relight the candle. It may take some effort since the candle wick will have become wet during the experiment.)

Conclusion

So, what have we learned? (Wait for a response.)

Yes, do not let your light go out.

How can we keep our light bright? (Wait for a response.)

Yes, by going to church, reading the Bible, and praying.