

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: I Am
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I AM: The Light of the World

John 8:12; John 8:58-59; John 9:1-11; 35-38

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.”

John 8:58-59 58 “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” 59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

John 9:1-11 1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” 3 “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” 6 After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. 7 “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. 8 His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?” 9 Some claimed that he was. Others said, “No, he only looks like him.” But he himself insisted, “I am the man.” 10 “How then were your eyes opened?” they asked. 11 He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

John 9:35-38 35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” 36 “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.” 37 Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” 38 Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.

Good morning church! I know that there’s many of you watching from beaches and mountains and beautiful places. And do not fear. We are here holding it down. Carrying the church forward in your absence - the remnants. It’s great to be with you guys this morning.

Since our family moved here four years ago, I’ve become quite the Baylor Bear basketball fan. I wasn’t beforehand, honestly. I didn’t follow them closely and I jumped all in when I got here. We really enjoy going to the games, cheering on the Bears. I’ve loved Coach Drew, love his heart, think he’s the real deal. I had the opportunity, so I know Baylor played OSU this past week, but we played them here January 14th, and I had the opportunity to go with President Linda Livingstone and the First Gentleman Brad, which was quite an honor. And especially

because they went to OSU and so they are kind of like hearts divided. But they weren't, because they were cheering hard for the Bears, because they love the Bears. And so I'm there and I'm like Baylor'd out, like ready let's go Bears, and cheering them on. And I don't know if you remember the game, but Keyonte George was fouled. He goes to the foul line with eleven minutes left on the clock. Do you remember what happened? Yeah, the lights went out. And so this is what happened, if you weren't there. Watch this (shows a video). Yeah he shot the lights out! And so just being there, you know, it was like all of a sudden - I've never been at a game where this happened - but all of a sudden it's was just like momentary chaos and confusion. And what happened is the players couldn't do what they were there to do and we couldn't see or watch what we were there to see and watch - for twenty two minutes. And people were like, "Hey are they going to come back on? Are they going to be able to fix this? Do we leave? Do we stay? Do we go?" What happens, and everybody has these questions, when the darkness ensues. When it got dark in there, all of a sudden purpose was stalled, or thwarted if you will.

And I think that's a great image to think about as we're moving into, you know we're talking about the seven I Am statements. And today Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." And so what does it mean that Jesus is the light? And so last week we looked at "I am the bread of life". And we said Jesus is saying essentially I am the only thing that can sustain you in this world and in the next world. And so as we move toward Easter, in the Lenten series, we are looking at these seven I Am statements. Today, I am the light of the world. What does that mean? What is He saying? And so He says it first in John chapter 8. If you want to turn there in your Bibles, you can turn. We are going to be in John every week, so you can just go straight to the Gospel of John. We'll start in chapter 8. We're going to move to chapter 9 next, but in 8 is where the first time He says this. It's verse 12. **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."** Today I'm going to take this verse and I'm going to pull my three points from this verse, but I'm actually going to tell you a story that happens in the next chapter. In chapters 7, 8 and 9, is kind of one continuous scene in Jesus' life. And so John is capturing this scene. We're following along as we walk with Jesus and further understand who He is. And I'll tell you this up front, okay because I don't want to surprise you. Usually I would give you context to a passage up front: hey, this is what's happening in that time and culture. Today I'm going to save that for the end. So at the end of the message you're going to learn something, most likely that you didn't know when you came in this morning, from the text. And the reason I'm saving that context for the end is because I think it puts a nice little bow on all that is happening in chapter 9, where we're going to be today. Big idea up top: Jesus is the light of the world. We're really trying to understand, what does that mean? And the reason that's important is because, I'll say the reason this series is important is because we call ourselves Christians - little Christs, Jesus followers. And I'm afraid, I'm concerned, in our culture that we're just embracing that title because "I'm a Christian. I'm American. I grew up in church. My parents are Christians. You know, I've got a Bible. I went to church school". None of that makes you a Christian. Like as Christians we follow Christ, meaning we set our eyes on Jesus, the author and the perfecter of our faith. We learn what He did, what He loved, how He spent, how He gave, how He lived his life, and we seek to do the same ourselves. Like this is what it means to be a Christian. Don't call yourself a Christian if you're not committed to following Jesus. Like call yourself a churchgoer, a seeker, you're exploring, you're spiritual but not religious, say whatever you want. But if you say "Hey, I'm a Christian", you're saying I follow Jesus. I seek to live how He lived. I seek to give how He gives. I seek to save how He saves. I seek to buy what He buys. I seek to use words that He

would use, and not use words that He wouldn't use. I seek to engage people as He engaged people. This is what it means to follow Jesus. Which for some of you it's like, "No duh", but for most of us, I think it's a little bit of like an aha moment. Like "Oh yeah, oh yeah, okay, oh so I'm actually supposed to interact how Jesus did."

And so I'm pulling my points from this verse in John 8 verse 12. **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."** And so the points up front are kind of the flow of this message. We are going to talk about the source of light is Jesus, the avoidance of darkness (that's what his followers do), and then what it means that we have the light of life. Like how do we share the light of life? So that's really the flow of the message.

And then what happens next in John chapter 8 is the Pharisees are there. These are the people who are going to lead the revolt against Jesus, ultimately having him crucified. The religious people of that time. Some of the most faithful churchgoers, church leaders, if you will. And they say, "Who are you to say that you're the light of the world? Like really? Do you have anybody else to testify that you're the light of the world? How can you just testify yourself that you're the light of the world?" And Jesus is like well the reason I can testify by myself that I'm the light of the world is because I've been with God forever, alright. That's why. And in fact, he says this at the end of John chapter 8. He says: **58 "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" 59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.** So right there these churchgoers, like the religious people, are like, "Oh yeah, oh yeah, let's kill him." Why? Why were they going to kill him? Like, why would they feel justified? This was not like a murderous gang, by the way, these are like officials that believe that He has the right to die and that they should carry that out. Why? (Someone from the audience says "blasphemy") Blasphemy. Because He said before Abraham was, I am. That's out of Exodus 3 where Moses says hey, who should I tell them you are and God says tell them "I am who I am". And he goes tell them "I am" sent you. Because as we said last week, there's no letters stitched together, no syllables or sounds that we can make, words in our dictionary, that appropriately comprehend or grasp the majesty and the magnitude, the omnipotence and the omnipresence of the Creator God we worship.

And so this series is important because as we follow Jesus we have to understand who He is. This message is important because I think we underestimate the gravity of what it means that Jesus is the light, if we continue to choose to walk in the darkness. And I think, I believe at a deep conviction level, we don't fully comprehend the magnitude of the reality that every single soul we know - every father and mother, every sibling, and every neighbor, and every person in the carpool line and the grocery store checkout line, the checkout line - is a soul that will be in one of two places forever. Either in the presence of God in paradise or separated from God in a place where nothing remotely resembles God except his wrath. A place prepared for Satan and judgment. Every person, every soul, will be in one of those two places. And for some reason, unbeknownst to me, God, His strategy is that He entrusts a message to you - the light of life - that you are to share. And that the Holy Spirit interacts with your words and changes people's destiny. And that you're actually here on the earth as a missionary, meaning you have a mission here, that I'm afraid - now (claps his hands) I'll say this - Wow that was effective (claps his hands again) - I'm afraid you've heard that so many times that you just glaze over. That's what I think. Not all of you. Some of you. You're like, "Hey pastor listen. There's nothing you're going

to say up there with that little microphone strapped to your face that's going to get me to leave here and share the gospel with people. I just don't do it." And you've really got to say okay do I fully understand the light of life? Do I fully grasp that? And I'm just going to go ahead and say, make a judgment call, you don't fully grasp that. I don't know where, you know where it takes you and where it doesn't and how far you need to grasp it. But I'm just telling you if you read the scriptures, and you believe them, and you go about your life surrounded by people who don't know God and you don't tell them, it's at least really confusing. At a complete minimum very, very confusing. And then I'll just say, lastly, if you find yourself in a place where you feel purposeless, you're kind of floundering in Christianity, you're like "man where does this go? And what do I do, and I don't know". Step into the light. Like, that's the idea of this passage. It's easy to get lost, to lose your purpose in the darkness, but move toward the light.

And let's go. John chapter 9. I'm going to start in verse one and we're going to look at a story. **9 As he went along**, (so remember 7, 8 and 9 - one kind of continuous scene in Jesus' life. Right here in chapter 9) **As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"** They're like the friends of Job. Okay, what I mean by that is they're like okay this man has something wrong so clearly someone sinned, generational sin, his parents sinned, his grandparents sinned, he sinned. This is a curse because of what he's done. They've bought into the Eastern philosophy of karma. And Jesus is like no, no, no, no, you don't understand. It's not that. Jesus is going to meet his physical need. So, as a believer, a follower of Jesus, if you come across someone who's blind what should you do? Pray they can see. Say, "Lord would you help them see?" I know that's like, I think I say that and there's probably a lot of us that are like oh yeah I would never do that. I would never. I've seen lots blind and I've never prayed someone would see. And why not? What if God wants to do that through you? Pray they can see. But I'll tell you up front, this man's greatest need is not vision. It's not sight. In fact, the model in the scripture is often the physical need is met so that the spiritual need can be met. And I'm going to go ahead and give you the punch line up front: this man becomes a Christian. You'll be able to meet him in the Kingdom. Like, imagine that! "Oh what's up bro, I've read about you. That old mud stuff. Yeah, man that was wild. Tell me what that was like." You know you'll be able to talk to him. It's wild. He becomes a believer. Before Jesus meets his spiritual need, He meets his physical need. Now we don't just meet physical needs apart from spiritual needs. And we don't meet spiritual needs when there is a really clear and obvious physical need. The model that the gospel gives us is meet the physical need so you can meet the spiritual need.

3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. Where is says the works of him who sent me, underline the word "sent" right there, because that's going to be important. And then he says as long as it is day, we must do these works because night is coming when no one can work. And that is what you call an interpretive challenge. What does that mean? When you see that and think what does it mean that when night is coming and no one can work? There are three main ideas that come from this. Three main theories if you will, or understandings. One is "the night is coming" is when Jesus is arrested. Because when Jesus is arrested, you know, the disciples are running and hiding. No one is sharing the gospel when Jesus is arrested. And so that is maybe the "night is coming". The other belief that comes from this is maybe it's when Jesus dies, Good Friday. That's when no one can do the works. I don't think it's that one, when

actually a lot of theologians do. I personally don't think it's that one because that's when a lot of work did happen. The Holy Spirit came - Pentecost. The church is born. The church is exploding, it's growing by the thousands every day. So I don't think it's that one. The third one that I believe it is, is you are going to die. And when you die you can no longer do the works of the One who sent me. When the lights go out, your work is finished, because the one thing you can't do in heaven is share the gospel. The one thing you will never see in heaven is a conversion. It's "tick tock the game is locked" at that point. And so he's talking about a physical expiration that is also an expiration of evangelism, or sharing the light if you will, in that way. I'll say lastly, it's hard to understand this in a context of you walk into a room and near every door is a switch. You flip the switch and the lights are on. In a first century, agrarian society, largely agrarian society, the sun goes down and everything stops. Like, the confusion that sets in with darkness is very common to them. Like, you could be walking up on a close relative, and they're fifteen feet away but you don't know who they are at 9:00 p.m. at night. You're walking down the road, it's like I see a figure, and then you get closer and closer and it's like, "Oh I'm actually married to you. How are you?" It's like you don't know who they are. That's really common. If anything happens after the sun sets, it's by candlelight which we know is not super effective.

5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” 6 After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. 7 “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. The Pool of Siloam is the only freshwater source within the gates of Jerusalem, the city of Jerusalem. It is a well-known pool. They have actually excavated it since, so they've found this pool. You can go and see it. Which is always fun when archaeology aligns with the scriptures, and you see the place and it's actually a real place. And you're like "Oh wow! That's cool!" But think about what's happening here. The One who was sent by God, just sent a blind man to a pool called sent, so that he could be sent out with a message that he was blind but now he sees. Okay, that makes a lot of sense. The One that was sent by God, sent a blind man to a pool called sent, so that he could be sent out proclaiming "I was that blind man, but I met Jesus and now I see." And this man, he had to do something Jesus asked him to do that was very hard. Jesus, can we just wash right here, you know? He's like go to the Pool of Siloam. So this man's like, okay (JP stumbles around like a blind man) And he goes all the way to the Pool of Siloam and he walks by faith, a scary walk when you can't see. And this is what Jesus is after, he had to trust Him. Do you trust Him? Are you willing to do everything that He asks you to do? Because he is the light. That's my first point: Jesus is the light.

1. Jesus Is the Light

That's the obvious point from the text, from the scripture. Jesus is the light. He is the source by which we see. Without Him we are like his blind man. We can't see. With Him, you've come into the faith. You have an inheritance with God forever. You are going to be with Him in paradise forever. Because of what Jesus did, He shined light on you. You can't boast. For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, not of yourselves. The gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast. People ask me all the time can you lose your salvation? I said well what did you do to get saved? You know, what did you do to become saved? Because if you did something, if it's according to your works, then you can lose it. But if you didn't do anything to get saved, if God did that out of His grace, then you can't lose it. And if you did lose it, you know where to find it. It's always found in Jesus. Return to Jesus, right. You are a Christian,

because of the works of Jesus Christ, and nothing else. You are not a Christian because you grew up in a Christian home. You are not a Christian because you were born a Christian. I hear this all the time in Waco, Texas. “How did you become a Christian?” “Oh, I’ve always been a Christian.” Theologically, no one has ever always been a Christian. There’s a moment in your life where you were imputed the righteousness of Christ, and justified before God because of the works through His Son. And it happened. You don’t need to know that moment. You don’t have to have a date. You don’t have to have a spiritual birthday that you celebrate with a cake every year. But you do need to know that’s what happened. That God saved you, in spite of you, through the works of His Son. You will be in heaven because of what Jesus did. Not by works, so that no one can boast. For it is by grace you have been saved through faith. So there’s this moment in your life where you look around and you do not see things for as they are. You see them through the world view that you were made for another kingdom that you’re going to be in forever and ever.

And I remember that moment for me. And I don’t know if it’s when I was saved. I don’t know if it’s when the Holy Spirit came into my life or just some greater understanding. I can’t even explain it. But I was here in Waco. I was visiting. Didn’t live here. I was visiting Waco. I was sitting on a friend’s couch. I was new to Christianity and I had lots of questions. My questions were like age of the earth. My teacher told me it’s 100 billion years, or hundreds of billions of years. Like, I don’t understand six day creation. How is that even possible? Tectonic plates, and what about dinosaurs? I know you’re talking about behemoth and leviathan. And I was just really like this skeptical, critical, cynical doubting Thomas. And my friend, he was so patient with me. And he kept saying hey there are great answers to those questions. You’re not the first person in the history of the world to ask those questions. I was asking like can God make a rock so big you can’t lift it, just those kinds of things. And he was like “Listen, those are great questions, and I’m not afraid of your questions. And there’s great resources to those questions, but what about Jesus?” And he kept driving everything back to Jesus. And he was like who was He? Who is He? Did He die and come back to life? Why did He have to die? It’s a really weird narrative that God had a Son. Mary got pregnant by the Holy Spirit. And He lives this perfect life. And He never did anything wrong, but they murdered Him publicly on the side of a road, humiliated, naked. And then He comes back to life three days later. This is a crazy story. Do you believe it’s true? And I sat there and in the meekest, timid, possible way I was like “Yes. Yeah. I think that happened. I believe that happened. That happened.” And it was like the scales fell from my eyes. It was like in the *Matrix*. And I started looking around, everything was slow motion, and I started looking around and I thought none of this matters. Like if that’s true, if I’m going to die and be somewhere forever, like a hundred years from now I’m going to be there, and a hundred thousand years from now I’m going to be there, and a hundred million years from now I’m going to be there, and a hundred billion years from now I’m going to still be there, and a hundred trillion years from now I’m going to be there, and I’m just here for like 76 years. And it was just like what am I going to live for. I remember sitting there thinking hold on man, if this is true, it changes everything! And like, what am I going to do on this earth outside of knowing Him and making Him known? I just remember having this crisis of belief. Like hold on! Like if that’s true, I’ve got to live for that! Like I’ve just have to mentally and physically get my heart around the reality. Like if that’s true, it changes everything. This is how C.S. Lewis says it (adapted from his quote): “I believe in Jesus, as I believe that the sun is in the sky. Not because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.”

This man could not see. He interacts with Jesus. He does everything Jesus asks him to do and he can see. That's his story. And that's your story. And they think there's no way that could be the blind man. And he says "I am him and I'm not going back to being blind. I can see forever now, and I'm never going to be blind again." And so in verse 8: **8 His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man."** Nah, that man is still blind. He is probably still out there by the city gates. No man, go and see. I'm the man. I can see now and I'm not going back to blindness. I'm not. I know what I know. I know the truth and I'm not going back to the darkness. That's my second point: His followers do not walk in darkness.

2. His Followers Do Not Walk in Darkness

And remember from John chapter 8 verse 12, those who have the light do not walk in darkness. His followers do not walk in darkness. If Jesus is the light, and we walk with the light, we don't have darkness. It's a very simple idea. If Jesus is a lantern, and you're near the lantern, then the path is lit. If you've ever been camping, if you've ever been in darkness where you're afraid, it's Texas there's rattlesnakes, copperheads, you're like I don't want to step on them and it's dark and you can't see anything, and you're like "Hey man how about I hold the flashlight?" And they're like "No man, I've got the flashlight." Have you ever been in this discussion? And they're like "Well, can you make it a little wider? Can it zoom out, you know?" And you are like trying to stay close to the person with the light so that you can see where you're stepping. This is the idea if Jesus is the light, you stay near the light and the path is lit. If Jesus is the light, and you move away from the light, all of a sudden you're in darkness and you don't know where you're going. You can't do what you're there to do, right. And so it's confusing. If you're like oh yeah man I've got the light, but I walk in darkness. I know the One who controls everything, but I want to be in control of everything. He loves me, but I live in fear. I'm going to be in heaven forever one day, but I'm going to build my kingdom here. It's just confusing. Our testimony is like this man: I'm no longer bound. I'm no longer blind. I'm no longer dead. I'm no longer dead. I don't walk in the darkness. If you walk in darkness and hide it, you haven't met the light. As Christians we long for the light. We long to be in the light.

Valentine's Day was in February, in case you missed it. And I've been married 18 years and I feel like I can't get away with the card and the box of chocolates. If you can, more power to you. I just feel like it's a creative exercise every year. Like how do I uniquely remind you that I love you? And she's been looking for an olive tree, a fake one, you know online, and I knew that. And I was on 1-800-flowers.com and I learned that they sold olive trees, like real ones, and I thought this is a genius idea. You know, she wants an olive tree, I'm going to get her an olive tree. It's going to be a live one. And so I did. I ordered up the olive tree. And it worked out perfectly. It was delivered. I had it out for that morning, and she liked it. And I did my research, because it said you can have it inside. But as I'm reading more, as we have it, but they're like it needs a lot of sunlight. Like a lot of direct sunlight. So here's what that meant for us as we're trying to make sure this olive tree has a fighting chance in our home: we're moving it around, you know, so that it's always in direct sunlight. So it starts in the morning. This is every day at my house right now, in the morning the olive tree is by the front door, because the sun comes in.

And then at noon we have to move it back to the back door, the patio sliding glass door. And we just kind of move it around the house to keep it getting full light.

And this is a picture of the Christian life. Like how do I stay with the Son? Because you're like that tree. You know, you pushed through the hard soil to get to the light. The light has shined on you and now you have life. And as you grow, you can only grow with that light. And if I do not put that tree in direct sunlight, it's going to wither. It's going to droop. The leaves are going to fall and it's eventually going to die. And that's a picture of you spiritually. Like why do I not enjoy my quiet time? Why am I not thriving right now? Why, like a dog to his vomit, do I keep going back to these things? Why am I not experiencing the joy of Christ right now? You've moved out of the light. Walking in the light can look like abiding the spiritual disciplines, but it can also look like confessing. Not keeping things in darkness. Bringing them into the light. God is doing something in our country right now. I really, sincerely believe, being led by the next generation. And what I think, now this is my opinion now - I'm stepping away - it is my opinion that it is rooted in confession and repentance. That's what I see. Generation Z is saying "Hey we're not going to hide anymore. Like, we're not going to play religious games. Like, here we are. This is everything. Take it or leave it." This is who, and they are walking in the light. There's no greater freedom, when you are with Jesus, to be fully known and fully loved, and fully embraced by His body.

1 John chapter 1 verse 5 says this: **5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.** And so we don't stay in this. If you've got questions: age of the earth, dinosaurs, tectonic plates, big rock you can't move it - great! But don't stay in a place where you just have questions and you don't search out the truth. There's never been more resources, in the history of history, for you to find answers to your questions. Seek out the answers. You're going through a deconstructing phase? Fine. We're not afraid of that. But just make sure you move toward a constructing phase, a rebuilding phase. That you don't stay in demo mode where you're just tearing everything down. At some point you have to begin to rebuild. Great, erase the white board, but pick up the marker and start to write down what is true. This is what I know is true: Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so. And maybe that's all you know. Great starting place. Really, really good starting place.

So Jesus is the light that saved us, and Jesus is the light that we walk in. We don't continue to walk in darkness. We don't go back to who we are. We now have the light of life. John 8 verse 12 those that don't walk in darkness, they have the light of life. What does it mean? Verse 10: **10 "How then were your eyes opened?" they asked. 11 He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."** Let me tell you a story. I was the blind man. That was me. I met a man named Jesus. I did what he asked me to do and now I see. I was blind. I met Jesus. Now I see. That's my story. That's what I'm here to share with you guys. Jesus changed my life and now I see by Him. My third and final point: Whoever has the light of life, shares it.

3. *Whoever Has The Light of Life, Shares It*

Whoever has the light of life, shares it. I think the role that we play in this story sometimes is the Pharisees. Man, are you sure that's the same guy? I don't know man. You sure he's changed? You sure he's new? You sure she's new? You sure she's not the same? Hey, are you sure that's a revival? You sure that's the Spirit? You sure that's not selfishly motivated? Are you sure that's a miracle? Are you sure that's the work of God? Are you sure that's the Holy Spirit? I don't think so. In John chapter 10 verse 10, Jesus says the enemy (that's Satan) came to steal, kill, and destroy. But I (that's Jesus) came so that they might have life and have it to the fullest - or have it abundantly. I see lots of people in the church that have never experienced the abundant life that Christ offers. They continue to walk in darkness clumsily through their faith and never really get to that place where they're thriving in the Holy Spirit, experiencing the adventure, the joy, the life of sharing, being on mission, living with a biblical worldview, understanding the word, courageously living it out. He did not give you a spirit of timidity, but one of power, love and self-discipline. I think that so often, especially the next generation, looks at the church and they think oh, the church came to steal, kill and destroy. Steal my good time. Kill my fun. And destroy any chance that I had of momentary pleasure under the sun. And Jesus came so that He would give us a bunch of rules. And that's different. That's not what I see in the Bible. That's a different message. I see that He came so that we might have life, and have it to the fullest. Have it abundantly. That's different than following a bunch of rules. But that we would pursue Him. Walk with Him. Walk in the light. Stay close to Him and experience something greater.

2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 4 says this: **4 The god** (the word there is god, but it's a little "g") **The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.** And what this first does is it gives you so much patience for those that don't know God, because Satan's blinded them. Maybe it's a son or a daughter or a father or mother or a neighbor or a coworker. You don't have to be angry or frustrated at them. You could be, "God please open the eyes of their heart. God please. Please let them see. God, please silence the voice of the enemy and his demons that have blinded their minds. God, please let the eyes of their minds and the eyes of their heart see this gospel and give me the courage to share it. And give me the words to say so that they would be changed, so they would come into the light." But you just have one enemy. It's not your neighbor, or your coworker, your father or your mother, the prodigal. You have one enemy and he hates you. And he hates your faith. And he wants to keep your faith from as many people as possible. And he's going to speak words of fear over you, and lies over you, so that you just mind your own business and live your life under the sun. That's his plan. That's his strategy. Don't let him win! Don't let him win!

Verse 35, same chapter. I'm jumping. Okay, so what's happened in between here, the blind man actually has a little swagger. Like he's got an edge to him. And they're like, "Tell us what happened." And he's like, "I already told you what happened. What do you want to be one of His disciples or something? Like, why are you asking me all these questions? I told you I was

blind. Now I see. It was Jesus.” “Yeah, but who made you see?” “I already told you it was Jesus. What’s y’all’s problem?” And they throw him out. Which is not just to throw him out of the temple or the synagogue. I mean it really is, he’s now an outcast in the community. Now Jesus, being filled with compassion hears that and He says this in verse 35: **35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” 36 “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.”** Look at that word: tell me so that I may believe in him. There are people around you right now saying tell me so that I may believe in Him. Tell me. Do not assume I’ve heard it a million times. Maybe you’re the one that the Spirit is going to intersect with your words and awaken my heart to the light of life! Tell me so that I may believe in Him. **37 Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.”** I love when Jesus goes Yoda. You know it’s like I am Him. He is I. I am the one. **38 Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,’ and he worshiped him.** Jesus meets his physical needs so that He can meet his spiritual needs. And the greatest healing in this story is not his eyes, but his heart. We have to pray that spiritual hearts are opened, that they can see. Pray for the spiritual eyes of our city, that they would be opened. Pray for the spiritual eyes of our university, that they would be opened. Pray for the spiritual eyes of our community, that they would be opened. Pray for the spiritual eyes of our children, that they would be opened. Pray for the spiritual eyes of those we work with, that they would be opened. Plead with God. “Please God, let them see! Let them see!” Because what I think that we want to do is come around blind people and say “See! See! Oh, oh, oh you can’t. Okay, let me tell you where to go. Here’s the rules. Here’s what you need to do. Hey, stop doing that. Start doing this. Oh okay. Let me grab you by the arm. Let me drag you to church. Just come to church with me.” And we want to lead them, and guide them, and speak to them.

This week we ran a little experiment where we blindfolded someone and we put them in a room and said hey you have to get from this side of the room to that side of the room. And we put a bunch of obstacles in front of them. And then we brought three people in and we said hey, you need to help this person get from this side of the room to that side of the room. Okay, that’s your assignment. We didn’t give them a lot of instruction. We just said hey you have to help the person who’s blindfolded to get from this side of the room to that side of the room. And this is what happened. Watch this. (Plays video) Yeah. Yeah. It’s funny we want to clap because it’s so simple. Right, you’re watching that and it’s like that’s what we do with people, with coworkers, and relatives, and lost friends and family members, is we just want to sit there and we want to tell them all the reasons why they need to see. Just show them Jesus.

I get asked every week, “Hey how do I share the gospel with....? How do I share the gospel with my dad? How do I share the gospel with a child? How do I share the gospel with a lost coworker? How do I share the gospel with a person that’s a member of this cult? Or how do I share the gospel with a person that’s a member of this world religion?” You share the gospel by telling the story of Jesus, with anyone. And sure you may learn new ways in effectiveness, and bridge illustrations, the Kennedy questions, the 1 to 10, and all kinds of methods, but tell the story of Jesus. And say you are dead in your sins. You are a sinner, separated from God. God loves you so much that He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to die for you. And three days later He raised from the dead. That if you believe in Him, you won’t die. He’s defeated death. If you believe that He paid for your sins on the cross, then you will live with God forever. And you can ask Him for his Holy Spirit to live inside of you and with you, right. This is the gospel. Share the

gospel with a parent, with a child, with a coworker, with anyone. It's the gospel. It's always good enough. God will intersect with your words. That's what you're dependent on, the Holy Spirit.

In summary, Jesus is the light. Whoever walks with Jesus, does not walk in darkness. And whoever has the light of life, shares it. I'll conclude with this: John chapter 7 - 7, 8 and 9 one continuous kind of vision into Jesus' life - in John chapter 7 it goes out of its way to tell you repeatedly that they're celebrating the Feast of the Tabernacle. Okay, here's what happens when they would have celebrated the Feast of the Tabernacle. The priests would go to the temple and light these four lampstands. Now these were no ordinary lampstands. They were 70 feet tall with huge golden bowls of lamp oil. And in fact, the wick was actually made of the priestly garments. And so imagine taking robes and twisting them. That's how big the wick was sitting in the oil 70 feet tall. And there were four of them. It was said that when you lit these lampstands that every courtyard in Jerusalem would be lit up. Now typically when you're celebrating in this culture, the celebration ends at sundown. There's no tiki torches or things of that nature. When the sun goes down, and we could no longer see, it's time to go home and go to bed. But in the Feast of the Tabernacles they could celebrate past sundown in all of the courtyards because these lamps gave light. The Feast of the Tabernacles would culminate, it would all crescendo, into the High Priest going to the Pool of Siloam and dipping into the water and then pouring out the Pool of Siloam over the altar. This was the day before yesterday. Like this is what just happened when Jesus says, "I am the light of the world" everyone is like whoa. How can He say this? Oh, we have a context for light and being able to see everything for how bright that was. But this is what the Feast of the Tabernacles, also known as the Feast of Booths - same thing Feast of Tabernacles, Feast of Booths, same festival - this is what it's celebrating in Exodus when God's people are wandering through the desert to the Promised Land, they're being led by a light. The light is showing them where to go so that they can get to the Promised Land. This is repeated in Exodus, is where we see the story. It's repeated in Nehemiah chapter 9, and then again in the Psalms. That they followed the fire by night so that they would know where to go to get to the Promised Land. And this is the context of Jesus saying, "I am the light of the world. You are moving to my Father's kingdom, and the only way that you're going to know how to get there is if you stay close to me. You don't stay close to me, you're going to lose your way." You can be extremely successful and have lost your way. You can have everything looking great in your life and have lost your way. You can go to church every Sunday and be sitting in darkness in church. The only way that you know where to go in this world is if you remain close to the light of the world. That's how you know where to step. That's how you know where to go. I'm going to pray that you would.

Father, help us to remain close to the light of the world. Thank you for your word. That your word does not return void. And thank you that your word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. Thank you for the example that we have in the "I am the Bread of Life" and the "I am the Light of the World". That we get to learn about your Son, so that we can better yield to your Holy Spirit and live a life that honors You through Him. As we sing, God, I pray that you would conform our hearts to your desire. Shape our lives to be an offering, an act of worship, an act of sacrifice, a living sacrifice to You. We love You, and we give You praise now. In Jesus' name. Amen.