

the gospel of

# JOHN

he is the one

## **JOHN: THE ONE WITH THE TRUTH**

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John 8:12 - 20

Hi, my name is McKenna, I'm a member here at Doxa. Today, we'll be reading John 8:12 through 20. Please stand in your homes for the reading of God's word.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, I'm the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. So the Pharisees said to him, You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true. Jesus answered, Even if I bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I'm going, but you do not know where I come from or where I'm going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I am the Father who sent me. In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. I'm the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me. They said to him therefore, Where is your Father? Jesus answered, You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also. These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

Hello, I'm Jeff. I'm one of the elders here at Doxa and I'm excited to dive into this text with you today. As we consider the text that was read, I want to ask a few questions for you to consider personally, as we look at the text. First of all, have you, or are you presently feeling in the dark? Feeling lost or confused, discouraged or in despair?

Maybe when you think about the future, do you find yourself experiencing a lot of fear about the unknown and what could happen, especially the reality of death. I mean this last year, more than ever, we're all aware that we will not live forever in this body, on this planet, that there is

an impending reality in terms of the limitation of life. So I wonder if you felt real fear around the future.

Or lastly, maybe you feel presently stuck. Maybe in a pattern of sin or destructive behavior. And I want to encourage you that in this passage, we're going to discover that if you feel like you're in the dark, you don't have to stay in the dark. You can experience the light, breaking into your darkness. And if you have fear about the future, you don't have to continue to fear the future, but have hope for eternal life.

And if you feel stuck in the present pattern of sin or a broken situation, you don't have to stay there, you can be free. You don't have to be a slave to that, you can be set free. And that's what this passage is all about, but it all depends on how you see, follow, and trust Jesus.

I'm going to ask in prayer that God will open your eyes today. To see Jesus afresh, and give you light where you need it. Hope where you lack it. Freedom where you feel like you're stuck. Let's pray.

Father, thank you so much for your word and how it points us to the truth that is in Jesus and the need that we have for him to give us truth today for our lives. We pray you would do that. As we look at this text, Holy Spirit, shine the light of the truth of Christ into our hearts. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Well it begins, first of all, with how you see Jesus. We're still with Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles, that's the end of the feast, and this particular story occurred in the busiest part of the temple. It was called the treasury or also called the court of women. Now at one side of this court was this colonnade with 13 great treasure chests that they called trumpets. And the reason why they called them trumpets is because they looked like a trumpet on its face, that the top was kind of narrow, and then it would expand outward, looking like a trumpet was set on it on the face or on the horn. And there were 13 of them and each one of them represented a different gift that the Jews were called to give to support the work of the temple and the work of the people.

Now that was one part it, which meant this was a really, really important place to be. It was very, very busy. Lots of people going in and out all the time. And so therefore it was a perfect place for Jesus to make the announcement that he's about to make. But there's another reason why it was a perfect place for Jesus to say what he has said. And that is, it was the place where they celebrated the illumination of the temple. You heard a few weeks ago, me teaching on this celebration of the pouring out of the water, that Jesus then declares that he's the one who can give the living water, referring to his spirit. And so Jesus enters into that part of the celebration and declares that he is the one they've always longed for whenever they poured out the water and look to God to not only satisfy their thirst, but to provide the Spirit that would change everything in their hearts.

The other festival or celebration is called the illumination of the temple. The water pouring event took place in the morning, but the illumination of the temple took place at night. And it took place in this particular location, the treasury, the court of women, and it was an amazing visible celebration. In the center of the treasury, there are these very tall torches. Most accounts say that they were higher than the highest walls of the temple. And on the top of

these torches, you had these great bowls that would hold 65 liters of fuel, of oil. And there was a ladder that was next to each one of these huge torches and the younger priest would basically ascend the ladder every night, carrying all the oil that they would fill these big, huge, bowls with. And then they would light these gigantic wicks.

And it was so, so bright. And so just like glorious that not only would the whole temple be lit up, but much of Jerusalem would be lit up from the lights of these torches. In fact, it was so bright. They called it the light of the world. Now the people during the celebration would dance and celebrate all night. They, they, they, they dance all the way to dawn, celebrating the remembrance of God being the glorious pillar of light that rescued them out of slavery in Egypt, guided them all the way through the wilderness and brought them in to the promised land. And so in the morning they celebrated God providing water in the desert in the evening, they celebrated God being the great pillar of light, the light of the world that rescued them from slavery.

And so it's in this place that Jesus says, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life. What Jesus is in effect saying, he's saying, I was the pillar of light that rescued you out of your slavery. I was the pillar of light that stood between the Egyptian armies and God's people at the edge of the Red Sea. I was the glorious light that led you through the desert, providing for all of your needs and getting you safely to the promised land. I am the light of the world.

Now John says at the beginning of his gospel about Jesus in John chapter 1 verse 14, he says, The Word became flesh and dwelt among us -- that word dwelt could be translated "tabernacled". So we are now having the Feast of Tabernacles, God amongst us in Jesus. And he goes on, he says, We've seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. This glory is the shekinah glory of God's glorious presence in their midst. And the Israelites would sing in Psalm 27:1, The Lord is my light and my salvation.

They also knew Psalm 36, which said this about the glorious future. When both the Water Festival and the Illumination Festival, the Festival of Light, would find their fulfillment in God coming to be with them. He said this, They feast on the abundance of your house, God, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; and in your light do we see the light.

Jesus is saying in this moment, I am not only the source of the fountain, but I am the light that brings light to your darkness. Are you in the dark? Feeling confused, experiencing despair, discouragement? Jesus is saying to you, I am the light of life, and I want to be the light in your life. He's saying, come to me, come to the light, let me bring light to your darkness. Let me bring hope to your despair. Let me guide you in the way you ought to go. Jesus is really clear, he doesn't just say, I am the light of the world. He says, I am the light of life. Meaning every single part of your life that has darkness, Jesus wants to enter into with his light. He wants to bring guidance and direction to where you're lost or confused. And he makes himself available to show up in your life if you will have him and follow him so that you don't have to walk in darkness ever again.

The Pharisees, they couldn't see it. Verse 13, it says, The Pharisees said to him, You're bearing witness about yourself. Your testimony is not true. And we know a few weeks back, I talked about this idea that in their context you needed two or three witnesses in a court of law to bear witness. And so Jesus already showed them he had at least four. And so now they're coming back to that same technicality, cause Jesus is saying something about himself and they're going to challenge it. And I don't want to spend a lot of time talking about that. But what I do want to acknowledge is that one of the ways you and I can discern whether we're in the dark in a particular area of our life, is by seeing how often we push back against Jesus and his word in that area.

Where in your life, like the Pharisees, are you going, Yeah, but this Jesus or yeah, but it doesn't quite fit what I believe here. How many times have you been in a situation where someone brings the truth of Jesus to your life and you find yourself pushing back on it, rejecting it, not wanting to receive it? And I would ask the question, why in the world would these leaders who've been longing for the fulfillment of the festival of light to show up one day and they've got light right in front of them in Jesus, why in the world would they reject him? Why would they keep pushing him away? He is fundamentally saying everything you've always wanted is here. I'm here to give it to you and they don't want it. And they push back. And John tells us why they don't want the light.

Jesus said in John 3 verse 19 and 20, This is the judgment: light has come into the world, referring to Jesus, and people love the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his work should be exposed.

See these men don't want to be exposed. It's interesting that the text that I preached last week when that was included into this particular section of John, I have to believe that the people who are led by God to include that story right before this story were so fully aware that the religious leaders kept rejecting Jesus because they knew he would expose them and their deeds and show that they were just as in need of a savior as the woman caught in the act of adultery. And for some reason, they couldn't come to believe and accept their need for a savior. So instead they pushed back the very light they long for, the very hope that they need, the very forgiveness of sins that God had given in Christ for them. All they see is darkness.

Here's what I found. To those who follow Jesus, he is light to them, but to those who reject Jesus, he only remains darkness to them.

Ironically, these men are just like the Egyptians in the story. If you recall the story when God delivered his people out of Egypt and brought them to the edge of the Red Sea and the Egyptian army is chasing after them wanting to destroy them, God shows up as a pillar in their midst, protecting the Israelites from the Egyptian army.

And it's really a remarkable story because as the Jewish people look at the pillar, they see a pillar of light. But on the other side of the pillar, the Egyptians only can see a pillar of darkness, confusing them, keeping them from moving forward. And what's really amazing is it all depends on what side of the pillar you're on. If you realize you need salvation and you need deliverance and you need light, Jesus will be for you the light. But if you don't think you need

deliverance, you don't think you need salvation. You don't think you need forgiveness. You don't think you need light, then Jesus will be for you a dark pillar.

These men are in the dark.

Sadly, there's many people who have been in the very presence of Jesus and have remained in the dark. Hugh Hefner, founder of Playboy, was raised in a pastor's home. Joseph Stalin studied for the priesthood. Mao Zedong was raised under the teaching of Christian missionaries. But to them, Christ was only darkness.

Are you in the dark? You know, if you answered, yes, Jeff, I think I am, I'm confused, I'm in the dark. That's good news actually, because all of these other people didn't think they were in the dark. They thought they saw the light, but it was only darkness that they were in. But if you realize you're in the dark, then you know, you need the light. And if you recognize you're in the dark, then you will actually long for the light that Christ can give.

I've said this many times, this last year, as I've been in my own journey, that I needed to feel the truth about my needs so that I could actually know I needed Jesus in that way. If you feel the truth about your darkness, of your despair, your loneliness, that's a gift that God's given you so that you can cry out and say, God, I need you to be light. I need you to be with me. I need you to come and deliver me right now.

So I just want to encourage you, if you're seeing that truth, that you've been in the dark, that you've been confused, that you've been lost, that you've been in despair. That's a gift God has given you in this moment. And Jesus says, if you follow me, you will never walk in darkness again. He wants to be for you, the light of your life.

If you follow him, not only will you see the light, but Jesus is clear, you will have the light as well.

So that's the good news, it's not only that Jesus wants to come and show you the truth and guide you in the way. But he wants to come be in you as the light of life so that you will have the very light of God with you everywhere you go.

And then if you have that, number two, you will follow Jesus into life eternal. You don't have to fear death or what the future holds because he is already gone ahead of you to overcome death for you and to bring you into eternal life and enjoy a heaven and an earth that will never fade away, and glory that will never, ever diminish.

So he says to them in verse 21, I'm going away, and you're going to seek me.

Now, he's referring to the fact that they're going to keep looking for the Messiah to come. And it's just the irony of all this, its like, they're longing for a Messiah to show up, And he's saying, I'm here right in your midst and you won't receive me, so you're going to just continually be seeking and never find what you ultimately need unless you come to me.

And he says this, and this is so discouraging, it's such a depressing moment, You will die in your sin. Where I'm going, you cannot come.

You know, if you know the story of God's people and Moses, whom God used to deliver his people out of slavery and Egypt, Moses due to his rebellion and unbelief never got to enter the

promised land. And now Jesus is telling them you're not going to get to follow me either. You're not going to go where I'm going.

There's real consequences for rejecting Jesus. It's not as though Jesus doesn't care about how you respond to him. He knows if you don't respond to him as the light of life and believe in him as the one who can bring you into eternal glory and a new heaven, a new earth, then you won't get to follow him there.

Thomas Paine was one of the great intellectuals among the founders of our country and an infamous unbeliever. He was a man who led so many people away from the truth, away from scriptures, away from the belief in who God is. And on the day that he died, this is what he said:

I would give worlds, if I had them, that The Age of Reason, which were his writings, had not been published. O Lord, help me! Christ, help me! O God what have I done to suffer so much? But there is no God! But if there should be, what will become of me hereafter? Stay with me, for God's sake! Send even a child to stay with me, for it is hell to be alone. If ever the devil had an agent, I have been that one.

So sad. So dark. So hopeless. Separated from God forever. And then you hear those words in contrast to Isaac Watts words, the famous evangelical poet and hymn writer, who gave us many, many hymns -- one of them that you might know, "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" -- on the day that he passed away, these were his words:

It is a great mercy that I have no manner of fear or dread of death. I could, if God please, lay my head down right now and die without any terror this afternoon.

Totally different stories. One full of dark and despair and hopelessness, all alone. And one with absolute confidence and hope that he's going to enter into glory with Jesus forever. So we don't have to be afraid of the future and have despair about our death. We get to have anticipation and hope that we will enter into the glorious light of his presence forever. But the Jews, they just don't get it.

Verse 22 the Jews said, Will he kill himself, since he says, where I'm going, you cannot come?

Now this is a pretty sarcastic jab at Jesus because they believed if someone took their own life, they would go to the very worst place in hell. So what they're really saying is, he says we can't follow him, well then he must be going to hell, I guess he's right. We won't be following him there.

But Jesus clarifies. He said to them, You're from below; I'm from above. You're of this world; I'm not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.

So they're not able to look beyond their present circumstance. They're so caught up in the moment that they don't have eyes to see beyond. Many of you are missing Jesus because you're so caught up in the moment, so consumed with the world, so saturated with things that are not of heaven, not of God.

CS Lewis says it this way in mere Christianity, Aim at Heaven and you'll get earth 'thrown in'; aim at earth, you'll get neither. It seems a strange rule, but something like it can be seen at

work in other matters, he says. Health is a great blessing, but the moment you make health one of your main direct objects, you start becoming a crank and imagining that there is always something wrong with you. You're only likely to get health provided you want other things more like food, games, work, fun, open air. In the same way, we shall never save civilization as long as civilization is our main object. We must learn to want something else even more.

The light of the world is standing right in front of these guys and they can't see it. And they don't want it because they're far too satisfied with their own religion, with their own performance, with the temporary things of this world. And so they miss heaven standing right in front of them. And they're not going to join him. They're not going to get to go be with him where he's going, because as Jesus says, unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sin.

Now, what is that phrase? Because that's really important. What Jesus saying, many of us would miss it, but the statement, "you've got to believe I am he" is really, really key. What does he mean? Well, there's a reference to Isaiah 41, and many other chapters in Isaiah uses the same phrase. But in 41:4 it says this, Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am he.

Isaiah 43:10, You are my witnesses, declares the Lord, and my servant whom I've chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.

So what Jesus is saying in this moment is, I am he, I am the God of Israel, I am Yahweh, I am. I am he.

And they got it because this is their response, they say to him, Who are you? Jesus said to them, Just what I've been telling you from the beginning. He'd been saying this over and over again, we've heard it. And it's very clear to these religious leaders, that Jesus is equating himself to the God of Israel, Yahweh himself.

And he says, I have much more to say to you about this and much to judge, but he who has sent me true, I declare to the world what I've heard from him.

And they didn't understand because he was speaking to them about the Father. Jesus said to them, When you've lifted up the Son of Man, referring to his crucifixion, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father has taught me. And he who sent me is with me. He's not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him. As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

When Jesus is lifted up on the cross, they will see the full display of God's glory. Many of the people have started to believe right now that Jesus is I am he, but he's letting them know, wait until you see what's coming. See at the cross, the full glory of God is seen, the true light of God is seen, the truth of what God is like is really seen. That's what the word glory means, it means the full display of something you've yet to see, it's the invisible being made visible, and Jesus saying at the cross, when you lift the Son of Man up, you're going to really see the true nature of what God is like. You're going to see how much he loves you. You're going to see how desperately you need him. You're going to see the true nature of your sin because it took a cross to display how bad your sin is. You're going to see that God did not come to condemn

you, but to save you from your sin, that instead of putting your sin on you and condemnation all over it, Jesus took your sin on himself and removes condemnation from you.

At the cross, when he's lifted up, the true glory of God will be seen. That's the truth.

I want to ask, do you see it? When you look at the cross, do you see the light of the world, the light of life, telling you the truth about yourself, about how much God loves you, about how much you need the light in your life to remove the darkness and give you hope for a future. And eventually, as we're going to see, set you free.

Do you believe that Jesus is I am he for you? God made flesh sent to save you from your sin. And if you do, then you also will come to find out that he is the one who gives you the truth that sets you free.

Jesus says to the Jews who believed in him -- so he's gotten some people starting to see the light is dawning on them -- He says this to them, If you abide in my word, which is another way of saying, you know it, you hear it, you believe it, you trust it. It changes you. If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

They answered him, We're offspring of Abraham and we've never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you can say you'll become free?

Now, I think this is hilarious because they're absolutely in denial about their story. I mean, everybody knows the story of God's people. I mean, it was not a good story, but we all know they were in slavery in Egypt for 400 years. So this is not something like you just cover up. You don't get to rewrite the narrative of a history that lasted that long. I mean, everyone knows they were slaves. But they hated it so much, they hated their story so much, they wanted to live in denial. So in their own hearts, they would say, history may say it, others may say it, but we were never slaves.

It's interesting to note that years later, as the Jewish soldiers were defending Masada from destruction, one of the leaders Eleazar cried out, Long ago we determined to be slaves neither to the Romans nor to anyone else save God. So when all hope was lost and they could not survive, instead of defending, they all committed suicide so they would never become slaves again. They so loathed their story of being slaves, that they refuse to accept the truth. They were slaves in Egypt and now Jesus is telling them you're still slaves to sin.

It's interesting later in the book of Acts in chapter seven, Stephen is getting accused falsely. And as he responds to the accusations that they bring against him, he rehearses the entire story of God's people in slavery being set free, turning from God, being once again, brought back to Babylon in exile. And he says, basically, because you rejected God and his prophets, and now his sent one, Jesus, you're experiencing the reality of your own darkness and brokenness, and you are still slaves.

It's interesting, when you rehearse your own story, if you're honest, you're going to find patterns of sin, brokenness, and destruction. But so many of us just live in denial because we don't want to face the truth that we need someone to set us free.

I wonder if that's where you're at? Have you been denying the truth of your own story?



Sometimes we do it out of survival. I know for me, I discovered this last year that I had so colored over my broken story with rose colored painting, or paint, that I had never seen it for what it really was. I remember the first time I met with the counselor that I've been meeting with for the last year, and I was telling -- now I can see a really, really bad and sad part of my story. And as I was telling it, I was smiling and he stopped, he said, wait a minute, you're smiling. What you just said is sad and painful. I would think you were really hurt and really sad over that. And as he said it, I heard him say it, and then I thought about my story, and I started to feel the sadness. I felt the hurt. And I realized I had been retelling my story in such a positive, optimistic light, because I did not want to face how hurt or sad or broken I had become.

And this last year as I've been able to honestly tell my story, and have others reflect back to me the truth of what I experienced or what I did. I've been able to finally see more than ever before the depths of my need for Jesus. And his healing. And his comfort. And his restoration in my life. In a lot of ways, I was in the dark because I was denying the truth of what I'd gone through and what I'd done.

And maybe that's you, and you need Jesus to be the light who shines on your story. And I'll just tell you, I think you've got to do this in community. Because all of us have been living in denial, and we need someone that knows Jesus, who can do what Jesus is doing to these men right now and saying, you're a slave. You're stuck. This isn't, this isn't healthy. This isn't the way you were made to live. Something's got to change.

And all of us need people who will love us enough to reflect on our story honestly, so that we don't continue to live in denial as though we haven't had darkness or brokenness or pain that needs to be given the kindness and healing and presence of Jesus.

So Jesus says to them, because he is the light and he wants to give you the light and he wants to tell you the truth about yourself, he says to them, Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

In other words, whatever you submit to is your master, and if you continue to submit to sin, continue to walk in ways that are rebellious, continue to live in the darkness, then you're still a slave to sin. Is that true of you? Maybe you go, Well, I know it's not true in every area of my life, but there are some areas of my life right now I don't feel free. I have this struggle that I just can't get over. Or this brokenness that I don't know how to face. Jesus wants you to come to him and know that you don't have to remain a slave. You don't have to remain stuck. He says this, The slave doesn't remain in the house forever, but the son does. The son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you'll be free indeed.

So they have to admit that they've been slaves and they aren't really truly sons, these leaders had to. And that Jesus is the true Son who can bring them into the household and set them free from slavery forever to their own sin.

And he says that to you, too. If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. Do you want to be free? Do you want to have light in the darkness, hope for the future, but then power over sin today?

Jesus said this, If you abide in his word, which means you keep remembering who he is, what he's done, who you can be and are in Christ, then you're truly my disciples, Jesus says, and then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

You know, I said that I think there's a reason why the passage Ken taught on last week was put exactly where it was in the narrative that John has captured. I think one of the reasons is because of the words that Jesus speaks, Jesus says, if you abide in my word, if you abide in my truth, the things that I say then you'll know the truth and the truth will set you free. What did he say to the woman caught in the act of adultery, the woman who was being used and abused for these religious leaders' purposes, what does he say to her after he asked where, where is everybody, where are your accusers? And she said, they're not here. And he says, who is there to condemn you? And she said, no one. And he says to her, And these are the words I want you to hear, neither do I condemn you. That's the truth. If you abide in that, you'll be set free because what does Jesus say next? Go and sin no more. So Jesus knows that the word "I don't condemn you" leads to the freedom that I don't have to be a slave anymore to the condemnation of sin in my life.

You know how you get free from sin? You go to the one who took on your condemnation and can speak a better word over you than your sin does. He speaks a word of forgiveness, not condemnation. He grants you grace and kindness, not judgment. He didn't come to condemn the world, but to save the world from condemnation. And you know, there's a key here in remembering the truth of what Jesus says is true of you when you face your sin and struggles.

Years ago, I was counseling a guy who was struggling with pornography, and I asked him about what he experienced in his struggle. And he said, man, after, after I look at the stuff, I know I shouldn't, I feel so much shame and so much condemnation. I just hate myself. And I said, what if in those moments you remember, Jesus' word, you abide in the truth. And this is the truth that Jesus died to forgive you of that sin, and Jesus is not looking at you with condemnation, but with kindness and grace, extending the truth that you are already forgiven at the cross where he cried out Father, forgive him, he doesn't know what he's doing. What if you believe that in that moment, and you express thanks to God in that moment for his kindness and his grace and his forgiveness to free you from any condemnation? He's like, man, if I did that, I think things would change. I said, let me give you another option, what if before you're about to look at it next time you stop and say, Jesus, I know you already died for what I'm about to do, and there's no condemnation for the sin I'm going to engage in. And I know that you love me and accept me and your kindness towards me can lead me to repentance. So what if you did that before you were going to look at the stuff? He said, I wouldn't look at it. I said, that's what Jesus is talking about.

If you abide in my word, in my truth, in what I've done and what I've said and who you are in me, then the truth will set you free. You won't continue in the pattern of ongoing sin because the grace of the gospel be so much stronger in your life than the condemnation and power of sin that has kept you enslaved. If the Son sets you free, you're free. Free from condemnation. And free from the power of sin that Jesus overcame at the cross.

John Newton is the author of the song that all of us know, Amazing Grace. John Newton was a slave trader. I was just in Charleston, and I got to see the church that is reported John Newton

came to see the light. He heard the gospel. He came to finally see the grace of God for a sinner like him. And yeah, he saw the wretchedness of slavery and the darkness of how they treated people in such dehumanizing ways. And he still had to do a few more trade routes, but he was agonized with the guilt of what he was doing. And he finally wrote the song Amazing Grace. In his place of darkness, light shown. In his place of condemnation, grace was given.

Amazing grace, how sweet, the sound that saved a wretch like me, I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind but now I see.

The newer version adds, which I think is so appropriate to this text, My chains are gone, I've been set free, my God, my Savior has ransomed me. And like a flood, his mercy rains, unending love, amazing grace.

Are you in the dark? Come to the light. Are you fearful about your future? Come to the one who would give you eternal life. Are you a slave to sin? Abide in Jesus's words. Believe the truth of what he's done that is enough for you. And if you will abide in his word, believe that he will do what he says. His truth will set you free. Let's pray.

Father, we live in a dark world and many of us have a lot of darkness in our lives. We need the light of Christ. Would you come and shine your light and expose what's wrong in us, what's broken in us, what's sinful in us? But then would you set us free as we believe the truth that we're forgiven and there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And Lord, with that, we will hope with everything we've got in the future, that Jesus will bring us to be with you forever. Would you make that true for anyone listening right now? We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

When we reflect on the amazing grace of God, that he would shine light in our darkness by giving us his very Son and that he would set us free from condemnation and slavery to sin because Jesus would take it on himself and die for it. It should lead us to respond with so much thanksgiving and so much celebration. And so I want to encourage you to continue responding to God's grace through giving. Family, if you've been giving, thank you for the expression of your worship to Jesus that definitely blesses the staff team here and churches and leaders that we're supporting here and around the world. Want to encourage you to keep doing that. Keep being faithful to engage in that act of worship in response to God's kindness to you.

And then second, we're going to encourage you, whether you're alone or with others to take communion together. We always provide an opportunity for you not only to know how to give in the chat, but also how to respond in communion. But I want to encourage you to just process a couple of questions. You can do this by yourself if you're alone, encourage you to even to journal it, if you'd like, or you can do it with those that you're sitting with. And these are the questions: Where do you presently need the light and truth of Jesus in your life? Second, and you don't have to answer all these questions, but these are just optional ones, How have you experienced freedom in Christ already? Let's boast in what he's already done. And then where do you now want to be free? Maybe in an area where you feel stuck.

And after you process through that, I want to encourage you to take the bread and remember Jesus, the light of the world who came to bring light into your life and set you free from your slavery of sin, by taking on sin in his own body and destroying its power in condemnation for

you. And then as you take the cup, give God thanks for the way that Jesus poured out his blood for the forgiveness of your sins, so that not only can you have the light of life in your life, but you can live a new life because you've been forgiven and set free. So remember him together and celebrate Jesus's kindness to you.

Now as we end our time together, I want to pray for you and send you into a world of darkness, but as children of light. Let's pray.

Father, would you shine the light of Christ into our hearts to reveal any darkness we don't yet see, would you fill us with the light of life so that our lives would be lit up with the presence and good news of Jesus. And would you through us bring light into a dark world this week? Jesus, we want you to shine brightly through your people so that the world might see your true glory. We pray this in your name, Jesus. Amen.