

John-19
“Follow the Light”
John 8:12-30 (NIV)

Hey Newsong!

I want to take a moment and welcome our first-time guests and those watching online...

We're walking verse by verse through the Gospel of John...John was Jesus' best friend...and He wrote his eyewitness account because...

Series Verse

31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.-Jn 20:31 (NIV)

Last week here in John 8 we met one of the many people who believed, put her trust in Jesus and found life in His name...

She's known as the woman who was caught in the act of adultery...

If you missed last week's message then you've got to go to our YouTube Channel and watch it...take lots of notes because it's life changing! Didn't our Next Steps Director JoMaris do a great job last week?

Today we're continuing our journey in John 8...

John 8:12-30 (NIV)

Pray

I have a question for you...

How many Christians does it take to change a light bulb? The answer depends upon which denomination you belong to...

If you're a Charismatic then it only takes 1 because your hands are already in the air...

If you're a Baptist then it takes 15...You need 5 deacons who are in charge of lights, to meet with the 5 deacons who are in charge of ladders...since this is an official meeting you need 4 deacons who are in charge of arranging the food...and of course 1 deacon to change the bulb!

If you're a Catholic...you don't have to worry about light bulbs because they still use candles!

If you're a Pentecostal...you need 10...1 to change the bulb and 9 to cast out the spirit of darkness...

If you're a Lutheran...none because Lutherans don't change...

If you're a Presbyterian...none because the lights will go on and off at predestined times...

If you're Amish...What's a light bulb?

In our text this morning we've come to the 2nd of Jesus' famous "I Am" statements...the first one was in John chapter 6 where Jesus said "I Am the Bread of Life"

Now here in John 8...Jesus says "I Am the Light of the World"

Here in NYC we get around 265 sunny days per year...that's not bad...I'm from Syracuse NY do you know how many Sunny days they get up there? About 160...

Central NY is cloudy...Did you know that a lack of sun can mess with your mood? People get grumpy...even depressed when it's cloudy day after day after day...

It gets really bad in the winter months up there because not only is it mostly cloudy every day...but it gets dark so early in the winter...

In fact, when PC was working as a nurse up in the Cuse...she used to see a lot of patients who were diagnosed with something known as Seasonal Affective Disorder...S.A.D. for short...

For some people this disorder is so bad that they have to bring special lighting into their home to mimic sunlight...

The bottom line is we physically and emotionally need light...This makes sense to me because I'm a sun bum...

My favorite place is on a beach swimming in the ocean and laying out in the sun...

When we go on vacation... we want to go to a place where we can get some sun...

How many of you love the sunshine?
We can't survive physically or emotionally without it...

Now the same is true spiritually...
Just like the S.U.N. gives life that helps us thrive...We can't survive spiritually without the SON...

Jesus is the Light that leads to **LIFE**

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."-Jn

8:12 (NIV)

Now let me give you some context here...In John 7 Jesus goes up to Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles...

The Feast of Tabernacles was a Holiday to remember when God led His people out of slavery and bondage into the promised land...

God led them...He led them with fire at night that would illuminate their path...

To follow the light was to follow the Lord...So now by the time of Jesus, The Feast of Tabernacles was one of their high holy days...

The Jewish people would travel up to Jerusalem, they would build tabernacles or booths to sleep in...(kind of like camping today) and they would gather everyday in the Temple to worship God...

Now to kick off The Feast of Tabernacles the religious leaders would bring out these huge candelabras and light them...illuminating the Temple court once the sun went down...

Think about Christmas time, when we have our candlelight service...how all of our candles light up this room...it's awesome!

That's how it was on an even greater scale...

These huge candelabras would light things up with such a glow that you can see the Temple from a long distance away...

In our text...The Feast of Tabernacles has just ended...Jesus is sitting and teaching in the same place that these candelabras are located...

It's in this setting that Jesus declares

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

What's Jesus saying?

He's saying...you guys lit these lights for one night...Follow Me and I will light up your whole life!

Notice that Jesus doesn't say...I am the light of the world, and whoever lets me follow them will never walk in darkness...

That's not how this works...

You see some people want Jesus to follow them...

“Hey Jesus, I'm going to do this...join me...”

Hey Jesus, I want to do this...agree with me...”

“Hey Jesus, Here's my plan...obey my will...”

Jesus leads, we follow...

This means we have a humble heart...

This means that we have a repentant heart...

This means that we have a surrendered heart...

Before God!

Following Jesus isn't a one time decision...It's a daily decision...The day you got saved was just the beginning...Now you choose to follow Him everyday until the day He comes back or takes you home...

Believing in Jesus was the starting line...now we follow Him to the finish line...

Maybe you decided to follow Jesus and you prayed a prayer, but you haven't been following Jesus...It's time to start following Him...

This is what it means to have a relationship with Jesus...He leads...I follow...He takes a step...I take a step...

This is why we're always talking about your next step here at Newsong Church...

Know God, Find Freedom, Discover Purpose, Make a Difference....

Each one has a step...Salvation, Water Baptism, Prayer, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Fresh Start, Growth Track, Bible Study, Life Groups, Dream Team, Leadership...and on and on...

We never stop taking our next steps...He leads, we follow...

Notice the contrast here...Jesus says He is the Light if we follow Him we won't walk in darkness...

He's saying that He has come to bring light into a spiritually dark world...

Jesus is pure, holy, righteous and good...
The world is impure, unholy, unrighteous and evil...

Our world is morally and spiritually dark...
It calls right, wrong and wrong right...

It celebrates things that we should be mourning... and mourns things that we should be celebrating!

Have you ever noticed that we often use light and darkness to describe things like, Good vs. Evil...Right vs. Wrong...

You could say that Light is overt and Darkness is covert...

Things that are overt come out into the light...
They are visible, they are vulnerable...they are transparent...

Covert is secretive...it's not visible...it wants to stay hidden...

Think about nature...we have overt animals and we have covert animals...

Covert animals come out at night...they're nocturnal...Bats...Rats...Cats...all dark and demonic...

Did you ever notice that it's the creepy creatures that thrive in the dark...like the waterbug...that's a covert bug...

Now think about overt animals...

The birds come out and start singing...It's a good morning! The rooster crows...look it's day time! Come on girls, let's get out into the light!

Have you ever noticed that some people are overt people?

They just tell you everything...whether you want to hear it or not...We don't have to guess what they're thinking or feeling...we already know!

PC and I have five children...Three of them were more of the overt kid...We would come home from a date night...the house would be a wreck...an obvious fight had broken out...kids are all trying to be covert...

I'd say what happened? Immediately my oldest daughter Mecaila would start her report...If she was involved and did something wrong...she would start confessing...and crying...asking for forgiveness...

My youngest daughter Maria actually washed her own mouth out with soap one time...that's covert...that's bringing it out into the light...

Jacob wanted to be covert, but he was easy to break...so he fell into the overt crowd rather quickly...

But my two boys Derik and Michael...They were covert...poker-faces...holding their cards close to their chest... "Boys, did you lock your sisters in the basement?"

All of a sudden they become little attorneys...Well it depends on what you mean by lock...We can't confirm or deny the accusations your honor...

People who are overt come clean...

People who are covert need to get caught...

Those who are overt fully confess...

Those who are covert partially confess...

Think of Jesus' disciples...

Peter was overt...you knew what he was thinking...he usually talked too much...

Judas was covert...he was secretive, plotting and scheming, stealing money...

The more we walk with Jesus, the more overt we will become...

5 This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. 6 So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. 7 But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.-1 Jn 1:5-7 (NLT)

People don't want to come into the light because they don't want their darkness to get exposed...

Now just in case you yourself are kind of the "attorney" type and you're wondering what exactly constitutes as "darkness"

The Bible actually talks about different kinds of darkness...

We've been talking about our spiritually **dark world**...sin is rampant and we see it all around us...

Murder, Theft, Corruption, Sexual Immorality, Racism, Adultery, Abortion...

The mistreatment and neglect of the elderly and the poor...These are just a few of the many things that go on in our dark world...

The Apostle Paul tells us that these things are influenced, and sometimes even controlled by demonic forces...

12 For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places-Eph 6:12 (NLT)

We live in a very dark world...full of terrible wicked things...

The Bible also speaks of **dark hearts**

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened-Ro 1:21 (NIV)

It's easy for us to identify the sins of this world...it's not as easy to identify the sins of our own hearts...

We tend to think that bad people commit bad sins...but we don't include ourselves as bad people...

We have to remember that our hearts are deceitful...and we need the light of Jesus to illuminate our hearts...

The Bible also speaks of **dark deeds**...

8 For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! 9 For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. 10 Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. 11 Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them-Eph 5:8–11 (NLT)

What we have to understand is that when we have secret sin, we are in bondage to that sin...but when you're vulnerable enough to confess it to God (Which by the way He already knows about)

When you're willing to bring it into the light...and I'll go a step further...when you're willing to confess it to a trusted friend...

When you bring your secret sin into the light...it's amazing how the power of that sin no longer has a stronghold on you!

When we keep our sin private, hidden and covert...it has more power over us...That's why we have to expose it...bring it into the light!

The Bible talks about our dark world, dark hearts, dark deeds...

Dark Minds

3 If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. 4 Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. 5 You see, we don't go around preaching about ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

-2 Co 4:3–6 (NLT)

The devil has blinded the minds of unbelievers but just like God shined the light into the darkness at creation...He can illuminate the minds of people walking in darkness...

So we should pray for people who are far away from God!

Jesus wants us to bring our dark hearts, deeds and mind into His light...Jesus, this is who I am, this is what I've done...This is what I've said...this is what I've thought...

And you know what He does?

He forgives us...He removes the darkness and allows us to have a relationship with Him!

Now we have a church family...Where we are learning how to be overt...we're learning how to be honest and vulnerable...

We're learning to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit...to follow His directions, to surrender to His convictions...

We're learning how to forgive one another and pray for one another and encourage one another to keep stepping with Jesus...

Then what happens is Jesus uses us to shine His light into this dark world!

Jesus doesn't just give light...He is the Light...

You can be **RELIGIOUS** and still live in **DARKNESS**

13 The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid." 14 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. 16 But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the

Father, who sent me. 17 In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. 18 I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.” 19 Then they asked him, “Where is your father?” “You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” 20 He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.-Jn 8:13–20 (NIV)

So Jesus makes this huge declaration... “I am the Light of the World” and notice how quickly the religious leaders get bent out of shape?

What’s up with that? What’s the big deal?

The religious leaders were getting upset because Jesus was using language that only

God can use....In other words, He's claiming to be God...

The religious leaders had scripture memorized and they knew that any reference to light was reserved for God alone...

Here's a few...

1 The LORD (speaking about God) **is my light and my salvation— so why should I be afraid?...Ps 27:1 (NLT)**

19 “No longer will you need the sun to shine by day, nor the moon to give its light by night, for the LORD your God will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.-Is 60:19 (NLT)

2 “I long for the years gone by when God took care of me, 3 when he lit up the way before me and I walked safely through the darkness.-Job 29:2–3 (NLT)

Do not gloat over me, my enemies! For though I fall, I will rise again. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light.

-Mic 7:8 (NLT)

We'll talk more about this next week...but here's Jesus...teaching next to the giant candelabra's...which illustrated the Shekinah Glory of God...lighting up the way for the Israelites so that they could see at night...

Jesus is saying that He is the same Light...

He's saying just like God illuminated the way for their ancestors and they went from slavery to the promised land...

I will illuminate your way from the slavery of sin to the promise of salvation....

And it won't just be for the Jewish people but for the whole world!

This is why Peter writes this in his letter to the church...

9 But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light-1 Pe 2:9 (NLT)

The religious people hear that and they know what He's saying...it's obvious to them...He's not just claiming to be a teacher...

He's claiming to be God! And this is what ultimately sends Jesus to the cross...

Now that we're eight chapters into John's Gospel I hope that you're seeing His theme...John wants us to know that Jesus claimed to be God in the flesh...

What I want you to see is that you can be religious and still not know Who Jesus is...

Jesus says "I am the Light of the World" and they oppose Him in the name of religion...

They're like... "Well we represent God and we oppose you"...Jesus is like I am God...so you are misrepresenting Me...

He's saying... "You think you know God but you don't"...

You have a religion...

You have scripture memorized...

You go to church every Sabbath...

You tithe...

You celebrate all of the festivals...

You have a religion but you don't have a relationship...with God...

Please hear me..

You can be a good moral person and not know God...

You can be a spiritual person and not know God...

These are the religious leaders...they tried so hard to follow all of the laws...and all of the rules...and they were so far away from God that Jesus said

“You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”

They had the Light of the World standing in front of them and they were so blinded by the darkness that they couldn't see Him!

Have you ever been sleeping in a really dark room?

You know the ones with the blackout curtains?
Then someone decides to pull those curtains
open...ahhh!

The sudden beam of light is too much for eyes
that have adjusted to the darkness...

Here me...The longer you walk in darkness, the
more you will begin to hate the light...These
religious leaders hated Jesus, because they
were living in the dark!

Jesus mentions this idea in chapter 3...

**19 And the judgment is based on this fact:
God's light came into the world, but people
loved the darkness more than the light, for
their actions were evil. 20 All who do evil
hate the light and refuse to go near it for
fear their sins will be exposed.**

21 But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.” -Jn 3:19–21 (NLT)

Jesus tells us that some people...they actually love the darkness...what about you? If there's areas of your life where you know that you're living in the dark...Don't let your eyes adjust to the darkness...Don't get used to it!

I want you to know that you don't have to stay there...You can step out into the light!

We're called to be children of the light

5 This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. 6 So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth.

7 But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin-1 Jn 1:5–7 (NLT)

Let's continue...

21 Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come." 22 This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?" 23 But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins." 25 "Who are you?" they asked. "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning," Jesus replied. 26 "I have much to say in judgment of you. But

he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.” 27 They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. 28 So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. 29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” 30 Even as he spoke, many believed in him-Jn 8:21–30 (NIV)

Rejecting the **LIGHT** has **ETERNAL** consequences

As we close, I want you to see how clearly Jesus tells them that if they continue to reject Him, they will die in their sins...

He's saying...

Please listen to Me...You are going the wrong way...You are on the road to destruction and your days are numbered!

Now is the time to open your eyes...

Now is the time to come into the Light...

If you continue to reject Me...

Your destiny is set...

Here again we see Jesus having an uncomfortable conversation...He's speaking the truth in love...

24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins."

Jesus cares about where they will spend eternity...And He cares about where you and I will spend eternity!

The bottom line is we all have a choice to make...

We can die in Christ...

Or

We can die in our sins...

All through the Bible we see this idea that when we belong to Jesus, death isn't something we have to fear...

When we die in Christ, we go from this life into eternity with Jesus...

15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants-Ps 116:15 (NIV)

8 Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord.-2 Co 5:8 (NLT)

21 For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better. 22 But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So I really don't know which is better. 23 I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be

with Christ, which would be far better for me-Php 1:21–23 (NLT)

Isn't that awesome? We don't have to fear death as believers...Why? Because Jesus paid for our sin...we don't carry them into eternity...

If we're in Christ we pass from death to life in an instant!

But if you reject Jesus...

If you choose the darkness...

Jesus is saying that you will die in your sins...

In other words you will carry your sin with you into hell...because you chose to pay for them yourself...

The religious leaders couldn't get it...

They were too adjusted to the darkness...

Jesus said when I am lifted up...in other words when I go to the cross, and rise from the dead...you'll see...and some of you will believe!

And John tells us that many people heard these words of Jesus and believed in Him!

The Light of the World was shining and many stepped out of the dark and into the light...

I hope that you're one of the many...
I hope that you've put your faith in Jesus...

Maybe you're here and you've been following the darkness...it's not too late to step into the Light...and follow the Light every day!

What's the Holy Spirit Saying To You?

Altar Time

“Jesus, shine Your light into every dark place of my life.”

Pray for those far from God...to receive salvation...

Pray for those who are saved but need a spiritual breakthrough, deliverance, a renewed hunger, fresh filling of the Holy Spirit