

Introduction: Pg. ____

PIC: SUN

One of the most under appreciated commodities we enjoy every day is the commodity of LIGHT...

- "Light is an indispensable prerequisite for life." It is essential.
- People in every culture understand this because we all experience light. The sun rises on every person on the planet, every day.
- Consider the usefulness of light: The gift of sight depends on the gift of light. Without light, you can't see.
- Photographers & Videographers understand light is fundamental to capturing a clear picture.
- Light helps us pick out socks that match when we open the drawer in the am... (Sometimes I gotta go flashlight on em; like I'm some kind of explorer)
- Here's an interesting experiment for you: Count how many times you turn lights on and off in a day? If you include your mobile device, the number probably skyrockets.
- The phenomenon of light is ubiquitous even when we are in darkness we are aware of the absence of light.

We all need light. This is true in the physical realm (what we can see) and this is true in the metaphysical realm (what we can't see)

- Light illuminates our path and enables us to live.
- Light brightens our spirit...
 - Seasonal Depression...
 - But, be encouraged, the days are getting longer! Sunset at 5:23 today... :)
 - At least we do not live in Barrow, Alaska, the northernmost town in America, home to 4,000 people. They experience 65 consecutive days of darkness. That must be 4,000 very sad people. Maybe we should write them notes of encouragement next winter.
- Light awakens us and invigorates us.
- Light is inherently powerful. "Every other object in the world requires light in order to be "known." Light always illuminates, is never illuminated."

Two questions for your consideration this am:

- How much light is shining on your life? We all need light to navigate life. How clearly do you see what is in front of you? BUT here's the second question
- How much light is shining from your life? How intense is the brilliance of your life?

"Light." John 8:12-30

The Vision: Follow Jesus and experience the light of life.

We could say: [Follow Jesus, the light, and get lit!] but I knew that could be handled irresponsibly. It's not a bad thing to redeem a phrase though. :)

I. Jesus is the light of the world (8:12a)

Thesis: *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

- Every time we see an "I am statement" It takes us back to Exodus 3:14 - when Moses asked God, "what's your name?" And God answered: "I am. I am who I am."

John 8.12-30. What is the Usefulness of Light

- If you are new to Christianity, it is really important to understand that Jesus is intentionally echoing the divine name through this book in order to point to his own divinity.
- This is the 2nd of Seven “I am” statements in the Gospel of John.
 - John 6:35: “I am the bread of life.” John 8:12

Why would he say this?

- Remember, Jesus is in Jerusalem for the Festival of Booths, a time the Israelites celebrated their Exodus out of slavery in Egypt.
- Jesus is speaking next to the treasury (verse 20), and what was next to the treasury? The “Court of Women”
- What is so special about the Court of Women?
 - At the beginning of the Feast (and most believe - each successive night), those presiding over the festival lit large candles that were so bright that it is said: “[e]very courtyard in Jerusalem that was illuminated by its light.” - The Mishnah
 - At the Close of the Feast, the lights were put out. And it’s after this moment, Jesus stands and says: “I am the light of the world”
- Once again, Jesus’ says: I am the fulfillment of everything you long for. I am the water that will quench your thirst, and I am the light that will illuminate your life forever.
- Just as God led the people of Israel through the wilderness by a pillar of fire, Jesus says: I lead my people on a true and greater Exodus as the true and greater Light.

For Jesus to say: “I am the light of the world” is a mammoth claim.

1. Light takes us back to the creation account of Genesis.
 - God’s first act of creation was to fling stars into the universe when he uttered the words: “Let there be light.”
 - John sees Jesus bringing the new creation we all need because of the ill-effects of our turning away from God.
2. Additionally, Jesus is saying: “I am the long hoped for Messiah.”
 - You know the one promised 700 years before my birth in the prophet Isaiah: **“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.”**
3. Finally, it is another signal of his claim to divinity.
 - Jesus is saying: “I am God.” Light is an attribute of God himself.
 - Psalm 27:1 - “The Lord is my light and my salvation.”
 - Psalm 36:9 - “With you is the fountain of life, in your light we see light.”
 - 1 John 1:5 - “God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.”

One of the standard measurements for measuring the power of a light is the watt... **60 Watts bulb... kilowatts (1k, W)... megawatts (1M, W)... gigawatts (1B, W; large power plants or power grids) or terawatts (which is equal to *one trillion* watts; and is used to measure the power used by humans worldwide.)**

Now consider this: Jesus’ power is off the chart; it is immeasurable. The light of Christ has infinite power.

How does Jesus shine light?

His words radiate light.

- The words of Jesus in verse 12, trigger the discussion that follows in vv 13-59...
- The religious leaders would have been upset if he would have said “My teaching is light for you...” They would have been more upset if he would have said, “I am the light of Jerusalem,” but for him to say: “I am the light of the world.” Oh, no ,no, no...

John 8.12-30. What is the Usefulness of Light

- They immediately move to discredit Jesus... “You are bearing witness about yourself...” Anyone can say anything, but there has to be validation... One witness was not enough in the legal culture of Judaism.
- But Jesus points out that the religious leaders are judging by “human standards.” (V 15), which means their judgment would necessarily be characterized by partiality and imperfection.
 - Not so with Jesus. His judgment is true.
 - The ones who thought they knew God so well did not really know him at all.
- Jesus replies: “I am not out on an island here... my origin and my destination and my Father validate me. I speak words of truth”
- The metaphor of light is closely connected to the idea of truth.
 - Truth is that which corresponds to reality.
 - Light exposes what is there. Light exposes reality. Light reveals truth.
- Do you receive the teaching of Jesus? It’s one thing to conclude the Bible is trustworthy. It’s a different thing to receive it as absolute reality and live by it.

App: Whenever we open the pages of the Bible, it is like a bright light (terawatts times terawatts).

- Psalm 119:130 says: “The unfolding of your words gives light.”
- That is why one of my habits when I read the Bible is simply to offer a little prayer: God, open my eyes to see what you want me to see. Help me understand. Give light.

T: The words of Jesus radiate light, and... the life of Jesus...

His life radiates light.

- Light also has a moral dimension...
 - While darkness is the realm of sin and separation from God (who is light), light is the sphere of moral purity and fellowship with God.
 - Not only did Jesus always speak light-giving words, he also reflected the perfect light of God in every action and intention of his heart.
- *Verse 29* is one to know!
 - Though Jesus forever enjoyed equality in essence with God the Father, there is distinction in role. Jesus followed the Father’s lead. His aim was to please to...
 - “Always do the things that are pleasing to him” - That is a radical statement.
 - But he accomplished it through a radical power: “He who sent me is with me.”
 - There’s the Power... Same is true for us!

T: How does this impact us?

II. Whoever follows Jesus possesses light for life. (8:12b)

“I am the light of the world. *Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*”

How is Jesus the light of the world? Let’s zoom out big picture:

1. Jesus is the source of light, in a general sense, for every person in the world.
 - Arg: Some of you are thinking? Well, I don’t really follow Jesus and I’m doing alright. Why? Because Jesus makes his light shine on everyone (to a degree, but not in it’s fullness),
 - Through common grace...
 - Everyone has a moral compass; we call that a conscience.
 - Everyone has the capacity to recognize the inherent dignity of another person, because we are made in God’s image.

John 8.12-30. What is the Usefulness of Light

- Not only that, all truth, wherever it is found, finds its source in God. [All truth is God's truth.] So, whatever we find in education, science, government, medicine, the arts that is true, beautiful, and good, it all flows from him.
 - *But only those who follow him will escape darkness and experience "the light of life" in its fullness*
2. Jesus is the source of light, in a specific sense, for every person in the world who follows him.
- When Jesus says, "Follow me," he invites everyone. He shows no partiality. Young & Old. Rich & Poor. Black & White and all colors in between, everyone is welcomed.

To follow Jesus is to escape darkness.

- Whether we experience the gloom of darkness or the gladness of light all hinge on our response to Jesus .
- To fail to follow Christ is to "walk in darkness." Look at the grave consequences for continuing in darkness and not receiving Jesus' light. (vv. 21-24)
 - I love how Jesus could be so gentle and patient but also so strong and convicting.
 - He is the King of Mercy & the King of Truth.
 - Sometimes we need truth to console us and sometimes we need truth to jolt us. These words should have jolted them. There is actually kindness in strong words.
 - Pic: Think about it this way: What boss perpetually applauds those under their supervision? What supervisor only gives pats on the backs?
 - The consequence of that would be a company that crumbles!
 - We need to see where we can improve. We need to be critiqued: at times, jolted into action.
 - To live your life (and especially to finish your life) without the provision of Christ's death is life's greatest and most costly mistake.
 - We all will die, but there are two ways of dying: 1) under the weight of our sin; 2) under the freedom of the cross
- The Cross is the crux for all of mankind (*verse 28*)
 - Leon Morris says: "There is a revelatory aspect to the cross, and after the crucifixion those who reflect on it will be in a position to appreciate that Jesus is indeed more than man."
 - AND we look back from this side of history. The advantage is ours. We can see Jesus is more than a man. He is the divine Savior of the World.
 - The story adds up. He is light. He brings light. He speaks light. He died as the light. He rose again as the light, forever gaining the victory over darkness and death.
- And look at *verse 30* - Many believed.
 - What about you?
 - I was just sharing with a friend last week... God offers Jesus to every person in the world as a gift, but a gift is not really a gift at all until it is received.
- But when Jesus says, "Follow me," he means follow him comprehensively.
- This is wholehearted commitment, not casual involvement.
 - Every aspect of our lives is given over gladly to him.
 - And when we do, we become light and everything changes.
- Those who follow Jesus "have the light of life." "Light equals Life" And Jesus invigorates and guides our lives in 1,000s of ways! Let me highlight two...
 1. Decision-Making
 - So many of you have huge decisions you are making now. Life is one gigantic sequence of decision-making...
 - In every case, Jesus offers us light.
 - He gives us his truth, and we ask: Does this align with biblical wisdom?

John 8.12-30. What is the Usefulness of Light

- He gives us new motivations, so we ask: Will this point to God's greatness? Will this help me love other people?
 - He gives us new support, so we ask trusted friends (who also have the light of Christ): What do you think about these possibilities?
 - Please do not make important decisions in isolation.
2. Difficulty in life
- How do you navigate disappointment?
 - How do you navigate rough relationships?
 - How do you navigate frustration at work?
 - "God, help me here. I thought I knew what to do but I do have a clue."
 - Would you do that this week? There will come a time with

The light of Christ not only helps us with life's challenges, it helps us seize life's opportunities *and* shine.

To follow Jesus is to radiate light.

- To those who follow him, Jesus says: **"You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:16)**
- If you become light, you shine light. Influencing others for the better should be the natural consequence of following Jesus.
- And this is a thing of proportions.
 - The more we come to Jesus, the more his light permeates us.
 - The more his light permeates us, the brighter we shine.
 - The more we fill our mind with his light-giving words; the more our actions reflect his light-giving life, the greater the intensity our light will shine.
- Just as his actions radiate light (SEE PT 1), so we also want to "always do the things that are pleasing to him."
- App: It's not easy being light, when so many people around us choose not to walk in God's light, but think about this: Where is it easier to see the stars?
 - On Bolyston St. under the glow of city lights, or
 - By driving 2 hours north into NH on that same night? There you can count every star in the sky.
 - If your family situation is dark, if your work situation is dark, just now that you have the opportunity to shine all the brighter in hopes that other people will see your light and you can point them to the greater light, the one who is the Light of the World.

Conclusion:

- In two of the rooms in our house, we have dimmer switches for the lights. You turn the knob to the left and the lights go dim. You turn the knob to the right and the lights get bright.
- Here's what I'm saying: there is no need for those in the Christian life. Turn up your light to its brightest setting and leave it there. Get your shine on and point others to Jesus.

Pray.