



Blinded by the Light

Pastor Jon Duncan

Kick Start:

How did God speak to you through this message?

Main Point:

When Jesus declared “I am the light of the world,” it brought a contention between the truth and the lie; the light and the darkness. Whoever comes to Jesus would be set free, but those who were still living in darkness and under their own bondage to sin would find themselves still blinded by that. The only way to true freedom is to come to the Light.

Introduction:

Jesus uses everyday life situations to make connects between the physical and spiritual. He feed the 5000 to introduce Him as the Bread of life. At the Feast of Tabernacles when the priest was performing a water ceremony, Jesus yells out that He is the Living water. Now in chapter 8, Jesus introduces Himself as the Light of the world. Infuriated by His statement, the Pharisees counter in a heated debate as Jesus challenges them and exposes their darkness and unbelief.

Message Outline:

I. The Light of the World

During the festival evening, lamps were lit to remind worshipers of God's leading the people of Israel through the wilderness at night by a pillar of fire. Light for them was the ultimate representation of salvation, knowledge, and goodness. For Jesus to claim to be the “light of the world” was no small thing. It was a claim to equality with God. Jesus claims to be “the” light, not merely “a” light. Those who follow Christ, in truth, may stumble into darkness, but they will never perpetually “walk” in it. Light illuminates and uncovers; the only way to stay in darkness is to avoid the light entirely.

John 8:12-30

Talk About It:

1. What are the properties of light? How is Jesus the light in your life? Reflecting on darkened areas that remain in your life, how could you let more light into those areas?
2. What do Jesus' words in these verses teach you about dependence on the Father? How could you be more dependent on Him this week?
3. How is rejecting Christ similar to covering one's eyes when the light gets too bright? Can we do that as believers when it comes to specific truths found in Scripture?

II. The Truth Will Set You Free

Many had professed to believe on Him, so Jesus made the distinction that continuance in His Word was proof of true salvation. And, the promise to every true disciple — the Truth will bring freedom from bondage to sin. The Jews resented His statement and boasted of their descent from Abraham saying they had never been in bondage. Not true. Physically they had been in bondage to Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and now Rome. It is evident that Jesus was speaking spiritually about bondage to sin. Whoever practices sin is a slave to sin. The Jews pretended to be religious but the truth was they were soon to be murderers.

John 8:31-38

Talk About It:

1. Why do you think people are afraid to die? What about death is uncertain to you?
2. Do you think it's healthy for families to talk about death? Why or why not?
3. Heart Question: How much time do you spend preparing for the day (cleaning up, getting dressed, makeup, exercise)? How much time do you spend preparing in your earthly life (education, internships, continuing education, training)? How much time do you spend preparing for eternity (Getting right with God, reading His Word, talking to Him, being about His business, laying up treasures in heaven)?
4. How does Jesus differentiate between physical and spiritual bondage in His debate with the Jews? What do most people think freedom is? How does their view differ from what Jesus says true freedom is?
5. How does a hard heart keep people in bondage?
6. In what ways does Jesus make people free? What does Jesus' statement "the truth will set you free" mean to you personally?

III. You Are of Your Father the Devil

Claiming kinship again to their father Abraham, Jesus pointed out that although they were descendants, they were not his children, (who usually look and talk like their parents). If God is your Father, then you share God's nature, but if Satan is your father, then you share in his evil nature. Their lives were the opposite of Abraham's —morally they were children of the devil—evident by their plot to kill and accusation of illegitimate birth. Jesus spoke only words of truth and yet they would not believe Him. If someone really loves God, they will hear and obey God's words.

John 8:39-47

Talk About It:

1. What does it mean to be a true child of Abraham? (See Romans 2:28-29; Romans 9:6-8)
2. How do people's actions and interests reveal their true "father"?

3. How do you distinguish the devil's work from your own natural desires?

IV. Before Abraham Was, I Am

Once again the Jews resorted to abusive language saying Jesus was not a pure Jew, an enemy of Israel and that He was demon possessed. Evenly-tempered, Jesus denies their accusations and makes another remarkable claim: anyone who keeps His word would never see death. The Jews realized Jesus was claiming to be greater than their father Abraham and the prophets. Jesus was saying that He was the One to whom Abraham looked forward. Abraham's faith rested in the coming of Christ. They asked, "How could You know Abraham rejoiced in You? Were You there?" Jesus told them that He was the eternal God who existed not only during the time of Abraham but in eternity past. Jesus claimed to be the great I AM. They felt He was worthy of death and intended to carry it out at that moment.

John 8:48-59

Talk About It:

1. What does eternal life mean to you? How does your view of eternal life affect your view of physical death?
2. Why do you think the notion of absolute truth is so difficult for people to grasp?
3. What do you suppose it was like for Jesus, visiting the planet and people He formed and seeing the way people live?
4. Jesus endured strong rejection and hatred. How can His patient resilience inspire and encourage you when facing opposition in your life?

Conclusion:

Jesus patiently endured the Jewish leaders' debate, answering questions and making truth claims about Himself, because He wanted them to understand that unless they believed He was the Son of God they would die in their sins. They would not face the truth, and yet it was the truth alone that could set them free from their terrible spiritual bondage to sin and Satan. For us, it's an invitation to examine our faith and make sure you're all in—making sure that Jesus is the most important person in your life.

Make It Practical:

Living in the Light

The first words of God recorded in the Bible are rather simple. "Let there be light." Then God separated light from darkness, which was both a practical thing (so there could be day and night), but also a symbolic thing (because light and darkness are entirely opposite of each other). One of the first things humanity did was reject God-truth-light. They chose self-lies-darkness instead. (Genesis 3).

But God is light, and wanted light to expel darkness. “The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.” (Isaiah 9:2). Thousands of years after that second public service announcement, Jesus was born: “The true light, who gives light to everyone.” (John 1:9)

Light: The Essence of God

Light is the essence of who God is and what he does. Light gives radiance, warmth, clarity, direction, purpose, power, energy, and joy. All of those things describe God. All of those things are God.

- God is a fountain of light. (Psalm 36)
- He sends out light and truth. (Psalm 43)
- He is wrapped in a robe of light. (Psalm 104)
- God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. (1 John 1)

Light: The Actions of God

Think of practical ways light helps us. God does these very same things for us (and so much more). He helps us see truth. He guides us to wisdom and right choices. He helps us grow into the people he created us to be. He brings us joy that can't be found in anything else. (Psalms 43:3; Psalms 119:105; Psalms 56:13).

Light: Greater than Darkness

If light represents goodness and truth, and darkness represents evil and lies. Just look around you. Just listen to the news. The world is full of darkness. But God is light. And God is bigger and more powerful than the world. If you are following Jesus, his Spirit lives in you, and “the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.” (1 John 4:4)

The battle between light and darkness, between good and evil, between truth and lies, between God and our sinful desires, is real. We should never let down our guard and should never assume “we've got this.” That's how things went wrong in the first place. People assumed they had things under control, on their own. They were wrong. We need God's love, guidance, power, and presence to keep us safe and to keep us on track. We have been transferred from “the kingdom of darkness” into “the kingdom of his dear Son” - but the kingdom of darkness still lurks out there, tempting us into its shadows. (2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:12-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:5; 1 Peter 2:9). But we are no longer children of darkness. We are children of light, because we are children of God. So live in the light. Every day. All day. All the time.

Light: Reflected to Others

Because the world chose darkness over light, God sent Jesus to bring and be light to the world. Now we are called to live in the light by loving and following Jesus. We are called to actually be light ourselves. The only way we can be light is to stay so closely connected to Jesus that our lives begin to reflect him.

When Jesus says to his followers, “You are the light of the world,” he means, “Your job is to reflect me and my Father to other people. Reflect My light in a dark world.” We know the light, follow the light, love the light, have been saved by the light, are filled with the light - and so we can reflect that light all around us. (Matthew 5:14-16; John 3:19-21)

So go shine, reflecting him all around.

Prayer Points:

- Praise God for the forgiveness and grace offered through Jesus Christ.
- We ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance to walk in the light of Christ daily.
- We pray for a deeper hunger and commitment to studying and living out God's Word.
- Help us to worship and acknowledge Jesus as the eternal and divine Son of God, seeking to honor Him in all areas of our life.
- Pray for the needs of the group.