

## I AM: I Am The Light of the World<sup>i</sup> John 8:12

### INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is so good to see you today. My name is Chris Wigley, I'm one of the pastors here at Trinity. If you are a first-time guest, we are just thrilled to have you with us today. We'd love the opportunity to get to know you a little bit. You can provide information to us by texting the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mount Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you send that keyword, a link will be sent back to you and that will take you to a form that is less than a minute to fill out. When you click "submit," it notifies me, and I always look forward to following up with our guests each week.

If text messaging isn't your thing, please swing by our information center located in the fellowship area, right out these doors in the lobby. We have a gift there for you just as a way of saying thank you for being our guest today. Again, we are thrilled you have chosen to worship with us today.

### SERIES OVERVIEW:

Today we are continuing in a new teaching series that we began last week called, "I AM." We are looking at 7 statements of Jesus, all beginning with the phrase, "I Am." And in each of these statements we learn something significant about Jesus. Who He is and what He came to accomplish. Last week we saw how Jesus is the bread of life. The source of true, satisfying, peaceful, joyous, fulfilling life. Today we will look at the second "I Am" statement. Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. So, I want to invite you to grab your bibles and turn with me to the gospel of John, chapter 8. We are going to look at verse 12 this morning.

### **OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Super Bowl 47**

How many of you remember Super Bowl 47? I don't know about you, but I can't even remember the Super Bowl this past year. What if I asked, "How many of you remember the Super Bowl in 2013?" You're like, that's like a decade ago. Nobody remembers that. What if I asked, "How many of you remember the Super Bowl where the lights went out in the middle of the game?" Now you're like, "Oh yeah! I remember that."

Now, you might not remember that it was the Ravens and the 49ers playing that game. But we are more apt to remember the fact that the lights went out in the middle of football's most significant game.

There's something about the dark that is unsettling to all of us. When we were kids, we all were afraid of the dark. It was in the dark that the monsters would come out of our closets or out from under our beds. As adults, we still fear the dark. My parents used to say, nothing good happens after 10pm. Criminals often act in the darkness of night.<sup>ii</sup> Maybe you hate driving at night because you can't see all the details you need to see. We don't like darkness. And Jesus says that He has come to be the light of the world.

Now, there is so much wrapped up in this claim that Jesus makes. And we are going to address it this morning in the way Jesus lays it out for us. We are going to look at the Source, the Scattering, and then the Sharing. That's our outline this morning.

### BACKGROUND:

But, before we dive into this I Am statement, I want to set the scene for us as it gives us a greater understanding of exactly what Jesus is saying here. In John 8, Jesus is at the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>iii</sup> It is also known as the Feast of booths. This celebration was, in part, commemorating the way in which God provided for the Israelites while they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. That's back in Moses' time. If you remember, God led them by a pillar of cloud by day, that is shielding them. And then by a pillar of fire at night, that is illuminated their direction.

The Feast of Tabernacles lasted a week. The people stayed in tents so that they would be reminded of the time of wandering in the wilderness. When the Feast began, they would take 4 huge candelabras and place them in the court of women in the temple. [\[Show picture of Temple courts\]](#)<sup>iv</sup> Here is a layout of the Jewish Temple. You can see the different courts, or areas of the temple. The largest court is the Court of Women. That's over here on the right side of this picture. Everyone could come into the Court of Women.

The 4 candelabras were placed in the this Court and they were massive. They would hold 65 gallons of oil. To give you a visual, the priest would take their old priestly robes, tie them together, twist them, and place them in the oil. Those would become the wicks by which the candelabras were lit. The oil vats were

lifted up to be as tall as the walls of the temple. Young priests would climb ladders to light them. When they were lit, everything lit up. In fact, it was said that all of Jerusalem reflected the glory of the temple. It was the display the shekinah glory of God that was the pillar of fire at night. The men of Israel would dance the night away and the women would sing hymns all night.<sup>v</sup>

One week following that event, Jesus is standing in the location of where the candelabras were lit and he says, John 8:12. ***12**Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "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 essentially saying is, "You just celebrated the great event of God being a light to the people in the wilderness. Well, I am that light." Remember from last week we talked about how God gave Moses His name. Exodus 3:14. ***14**God said to Moses, "I am who I am." [Yahweh] And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I am has sent me to you.'"* So, here again, Jesus, using the phrase, "I Am," is tying it to God's name. But in making the statement that He is the light of the world, Jesus is saying, "I am God."

Now, this will draw all kinds of hatred and skepticism from the religious leaders. But for us, followers of Jesus, this if filled will all kinds of awesome promises.

### **MESSAGE:**

So, let's begin in by looking at...

#### **1) The Source.**

Jesus says that He is the light. That is that He is the source. Now, light has all kinds of connotations in the Scriptures. And there are over 200 references to light in the Bible. I want to mention a few of those for us this morning so that we can get a handle on what Jesus is driving at.<sup>vi</sup>

First, light is a creation of God. Genesis 1:3, ***3**And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.* So, light was created by God. Then in verse 4 of Genesis 1 we learn, ***4** And God saw that the light was **good**. And God separated the light from the darkness."* So, after calling light good, God separated it from that which is dark.

Another way light is used in the bible is to describe God Himself. 1 John 1:5 says, ***5**This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you,*

*that **God is light**, and in him is no darkness at all."* Now, when you take that and turn to Revelation, chapter 21, we have a description of the New Heaven and the New Earth. Verse 23 says, ***23**And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it [why?], for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp [the source of the light] is the Lamb."*

So, you see here where Jesus' claim to be the very source of light is quite literal. God is light, Jesus is God, so Jesus is the light of the world.

Now another connotation of light in the bible is the symbolism of light. And we've already seen that in the verses we've read. For example, there is a contrast between light and darkness. When you see light in the Scriptures, it refers to holiness, goodness, knowledge, wisdom, grace, hope and God's revelation. But on the other hand, darkness often refers to evil, sin, and despair.

Look at James 1:17. ***17**Every good gift [that which is good] and every perfect gift [that which is better than good] is from above, coming down from the Father of [what?] **lights**, with whom there is no variation or **shadow** [in other words, no indication of darkness] due to change.* God is good and light represents all that is good.

Darkness on the other hand is the opposite of good, the opposite of light. John 3:19. ***19**And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the **darkness** rather than the light [why?] because their works were **evil**."*

So, we have the fact that light was created by God, God is light, and there is a differentiation between light and darkness. Another thing that is said of light in the Biblical text is that it is a guide. Psalm 119:105 says, ***105**Your word is a lamp to my feet and a **light to my path**."* So, God's Word is a light guides us in what is true and good.

What about from a biological perspective? Light is absolutely necessary. Without light, there is no life.<sup>vii</sup> The effect on earth with no light would be catastrophic. Without light, the earth would be completely dark. Think about the animals that depend on plants directly or humanity that depends on animal that depend on plants. Without light, photosynthesis would cease and living beings on the earth would be without food. If the sun were to never shine again, all life would eventually be lost. Therefore, light is absolutely vital to life.

So, in Jesus saying that He is the light of the world, He is saying that He is the source by which all the things we just discussed are provided. I am the light of the world. He is God, He is good, and He sustains life and provides eternal life.

We've looked at the source, now let's look at...

## 2) The Scattering.

Following the statement that Jesus is the light of the world, He says, "*Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness.*" I think there are a couple parts to this portion of Jesus' statement that we need to press into.

First, is the need to define the words, "follows me." What does it mean to follow Jesus? Well, to follow Jesus is to express trust in Him. It means to come into the faith, to become a Christian.<sup>viii</sup> Those that have trusted Jesus follow Him and have the promise of eternal life in Heaven. The Bible says that because of the finished work of the cross, the righteousness of Jesus has been imputed, or credited, to those that express faith in Him. In essence, if you are following Jesus, you have done so because the Light of the World has illumined and exposed your sin and disobedience, and has convicted you of your need for a Savior. You have, then, in turn, responded to Jesus, by faith, as Lord.

Now, it is important to say here that we do not "follow Jesus" just because we grew up in a Christian home. I have heard many people say, over the course of years in ministry, "I've always been a Christian. I've just always believed." The problem with that is, theologically, no one has always been a Christian. Jesus taught us, in His exchange with Nicodemus in John 3, that there is a moment in our lives where we were imputed the righteousness of Christ. A point at which you were justified. A moment in which you moved from death to life.

Now, I'm NOT saying that you have to remember the date that happened. But you do need to know that's what happened. A moment in your life that you acknowledged God saved you through the works of Jesus. It is at that point that you began following Jesus. You trusted Him as the Lord and Savior of your life. Ephesians 2:8, "*For by grace you have been saved* [that's an event] *through faith* [by way of faith]. *And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.* And in that moment things changed for you. You no longer saw things through your own views, but through the lens of Jesus. You began following Him.

So, when Jesus says, "Whoever follows me," that is what He is talking about. But what happens to those that follow Him? What does Jesus say? "*Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness.*" Followers of Jesus do not walk in darkness.

When we are saved, we begin the process of being sanctified. That is the process of becoming like Jesus. And as we become more like Christ, we scatter the darkness in our lives. That's what I mean when I say point number 2 is the scattering. Jesus is the source, when we follow Him, darkness is scattered from our lives.

One of the greatest evidences of salvation is the desire to turn from sin and pursue Jesus. Now, I'm not saying you are perfect once you begin following Jesus. But I am saying that the desire of the saved is hatred toward sin and pursuit of becoming like Jesus.

We engage in the sanctification process by way of discipleship. James 1:21-25 paints the perfect picture of what we are talking about. *<sup>21</sup>Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness* [that is what people who live in darkness participate in. Put that away,] *and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.* *<sup>22</sup>But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.* *<sup>23</sup>For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.* *<sup>24</sup>For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.* [In other words, the Word of God, the Bible, reveals, it illumines the darkness in our lives. Like a mirror reveals things about us, so does Jesus, the light of the world. Verse 25.] *<sup>25</sup>But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty,* [The Word of God] *and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.* That's what it means to not walk in darkness.

Now, Sanctification is sometimes a painful process. Right? Like no one wants to be exposed. That's not fun. But I also thank God for those moments in my life. In a world that wants to reject the conviction of the Holy Spirit, followers of Jesus look intently so that wicked ways can be exposed and surrendered. In saying that He is the Light of the World, Jesus is saying that he exposes our true spiritual need and guides us in the way of truth. Therefore, whoever follows Jesus does not walk in darkness but rather walks in light, in truth.

So, we've talked about the source and the scattering. Now, let's turn to...

### 3) The Sharing.

Back to John 8:12, Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but **will have the light of life.**"*

A couple things here as well. Last week we talked about Jesus being the bread of life. That there were three different words for life in the original language. We discovered that the word Jesus used then was the word to mean true life, spiritual life, eternal life. He uses the same word here when He says that followers will have the light of life.

That means that in Christ, when we follow Jesus, we are given eternal life. I think we think that eternal life begins when we die, when we pass from this life into eternity. But that's not the case. Eternal life begins for the believer at the moment of belief. That even though we die, yet shall we live. That is certainly what Jesus is talking about when He says we will have the light of life.

But I think there is more here. Remember in the Sermon on the Mount what Jesus taught about His followers? Matthew 5, beginning in verse 14. *<sup>14</sup>"You are the light of the world.* [That is the say that when you become a follower of Jesus, the Holy Spirit indwells, and as a result, you and I actually become lights to the world. Jesus goes on to say...] *A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.* <sup>15</sup>*Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.* <sup>16</sup>*In the same way, let your light shine before others [put it on display], so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

So, when Jesus says His followers have the light of life, we are given that for a very specific purpose. We are to shine that light that all who see it, then see Jesus. And when others see Jesus in us, they too, follow Him.

Listen, I think we all realize that we live in a dark world. Right? Darkness is all around us and we see it. We see it in mass shootings, hate crimes, racism, drug use, addiction, broken homes, and we could go on and on. But what do we tend to say to the news of those things? "Come, Lord Jesus, come! Do away with all this darkness." But here's the deal, I feel like He has said, "I already have."

In my followers I have given them the light of life that they might reflect Me in a very dark world. You and I, as believers in Jesus Christ, are called to be light everywhere we go.

Oh, but Pastor Chris, you don't know the darkness in my workplace. I don't, but be the light. Our schools are filled with such turmoil. We need students to be the light. Our community is reeling from the effects of so much brokenness. Let's be the light!

And here's a truth I want you to hold onto. Light expels darkness. Darkness does dispel light. Like if we were to turn off all the lights in this room and black out the windows so as to make it completely dark, 1 flashlight would light up the entire room. That's because light expels darkness. But truth be told, we as believers live like the darkness is crowding out our light. It can't! Light expels darkness. Darkness doesn't dispel light.

Whoever has the light of life shares it. And the world gets brighter when all believers shine their light.

How do you shine your light? Instead of walking in darkness, walk in the ways of Jesus.<sup>ix</sup> Instead of participating in corruption, live lives of integrity. Instead of participating in immorality, let's reflect the life of Jesus. Where there is hurt, shine your light by loving others and ministering to their needs. Look for opportunities to show kindness to others. Live lives of joy. Christianity is no hoe hum. It's life in Christ! Love one another. Give of yourself. Invest in the Kingdom. There are countless ways for us to let our lights shine. Listen to The Holy Spirit and ask Him to guide you in these ways.

Jesus is the source of light, we use the light to scatter darkness in our lives, and we are to share the light with the world.

### **CONCLUSION:**

As we close, I want to ask you a couple questions. First, do you have the light? Are you a follower of Jesus? Have you had that moment by which you have moved from dark to light, death to life? If not, today can be that day. [Share gospel]

For the followers of Jesus in the room, where do you need to be light? Where is Jesus calling you to shine your light. [Instructions and prayer].

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation for this message: John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 1-11*, Moody Press: Chicago, 2006; Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2000; Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *The Communicator's Commentary: John*, Word Books: Waco, 1985; Jonathan Pokluda, "I AM: The Light of the World," sermon preached at Harris Creek Baptist Church, Waco, TX, March 5, 2023, accessed online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsNRsT7MLF0>; Esteban Shedd, "The 'I AM' Statements of Jesus Course," published by The Gospel Coalition; accessed online: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/the-i-am-statements-of-jesus/#course-introduction>; Michael Youssef, "There is an I in I Am: The Light of the World," sermon preached at The Apostle's Church, accessed online: <https://www.ltw.org/watch/teaching/series/there-is-an-i-in-the-i-am/part-2>; Christian B. Creyer, "The I AM Saying of Jesus: I AM the Light of the World," sermon published by Faithlife, Fall of 2020, accessed online: <https://sermons.faithlife.com/sermons/638199-the-%22i-am%22-statements-of-jesus-i-am-the-light-of-the-world>; Christian Answers, "About Light in the Bible," accessed online: <https://christiananswers.net/dictionary/light.html>; Brandon Clay, "God is Light and How Christians Walk in a Dark World," published by Answers in Genesis, accessed online: <https://answersingenesis.org/god/god-light-christians-walk-world/>; Matt Chandler, "I AM: The Bread of Life," sermon preached at The Village Church, February 7, 2016, accessed online: <https://www.thevillagechurch.net/resources/sermons/the-bread-of-life-flower-mound?mode=watch>; Matt Chandler, "I Am The Light of the World," sermon preached at The Village Church, February 14, 2016, accessed online: [https://rockassetuploads.blob.core.windows.net/tvresources/2020/04/201602141115FMWC21ASAAA\\_MattChandler\\_IAmPt3-TheLightOfTheWorld.pdf](https://rockassetuploads.blob.core.windows.net/tvresources/2020/04/201602141115FMWC21ASAAA_MattChandler_IAmPt3-TheLightOfTheWorld.pdf); Skip Heitzig, "Blinded by the Light," sermon preached at Calvary Albuquerque, July 18, 2010, accessed online: <https://apps.calvary-abq.apps.blackpulp.com/api/sermons/1197/Transcription/print>.

<sup>ii</sup> Illustration adapted from Rev. Christian B Creyer's message.

<sup>iii</sup> John MacArthur Commentary.

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/place-women-first-century-synagogues/>

<sup>v</sup> Detail pointed out by Skip Heitzig.

<sup>vi</sup> Many of these examples were taken from the article on Christian Answers.

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.embibe.com/questions/What-will-happen-if-there-is-no-light%3FEM2254681#>.

<sup>viii</sup> J.P. Pokluda did a great job of explaining this. I adapted much of this section from his message.

<sup>ix</sup> Examples here taken from Brandon Clay's article.