

Christ The Light Of The World.

Text: John 8:12

1) Jesus is the light of the world

Suggested Hymns:

2) Those who follow Jesus have the light of life

500, 232, 217, 839, 528

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is John 8:12, ¹² *Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Jesus spoke the words of our text on the day following the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, which lasted for a week. He was standing in that part of the Temple called the Treasury, or the Court of the Women, so called, not because it was appropriated to the worship of women exclusively, but because they were not allowed to proceed further, except when they had some sacrifice to offer at the altar.

Within this court were the thirteen trumpet-shaped chests into which offerings were placed, also four golden candelabra, each with four golden bowls, filled with a pitcher of oil by a youth of priestly descent.

These were lighted on the first night of the Feast of Tabernacles. Furthermore, the children of Israel carried torches on that same night. It was after the ceremony of the offering (libation) of water, that Christ said on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles: *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink."*¹ Likewise, it was after the lighting of the four candelabra and the bearing of torches that our Saviour spoke the words of our text: *"I am the light of the world."*

Let us give our attention to, and study, this blessed truth - *Christ the Light of the World*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Jesus Is The Light Of The World

On its journey of forty years through the wilderness Israel was guided by a pillar of fire, which illumined its path as often as it travelled by night. The cloud hovering over the Tabernacle gave Israel the signal of departure from a certain camping-ground, or indicated where it was to pitch its tents once more.

Whenever this cloud rose by night, the miraculous pillar of fire appeared. And as a great bonfire dispels the shades of the darkest night, so this pillar of fire enabled Israel to find its way through the hills, narrow valleys, and sandy wastes of the Peninsula of Sinai.

This pillar of fire was the light to guide Israel, some 600,000 men — women and children not counted — and about 22,000 Levites. It must have been a powerful light because it served to light the path for so many people.

But Jesus announces the appearance of an even greater light, ***“I am the Light of the world.”*** When the Jews proudly pointed to the fact that Moses had given their fathers bread from heaven, Jesus answered them that He is the Giver of a greater gift, the Bread of Life, which He is Himself.

And whereas Moses gave manna to the seed of Abraham alone, Jesus, the Bread of Life, is prepared to satisfy the hunger of every member of the human family. And so in our text Jesus declares that He is more than a pillar of light for Israel alone, He is the Light of the world.

Various prophets of old had distinctly declared that the coming Messiah was to be more than a light for Israel alone. In the name of the Holy One of Israel, Isaiah among other prophets, says in Isaiah 49:6, ***I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.***

Jesus, the Light of the world, fills the whole world with brightness. Even though darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people, yet ***The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.***² We read in Isaiah 60:3, ³ ***The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.***

Jesus is more than the great luminary rising in the east and setting in the west. Only one half of mankind is blessed with the lustrous rays of this created light at the same hour, and not infrequently it hides behind darkening clouds.

Jesus is more than John the Baptist. Jesus indeed calls him a bright and shining light, whose brightness attracted many people to the region of the Jordan; but the word Jesus used means a lamp, which has no light of itself, but is lighted from some other source.

John was not the light, the pristine original light. Jesus alone is the Source of all light, from which even John received his brightness. Accordingly the evangelist John testifies as the forerunner of Christ as we read in John 1:7-8, ⁷ *This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.* ⁸ *He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.*

And Jesus says of John the Baptist that the Jews enjoyed his light for a season only; for his course was cut short by his untimely death. Jesus is the Light of the world, and so the world must have Him for more than a season only. He must forever bless the world with His brightness.

If this Light was extinguished, nothing but darkness would cover the earth. That is why Jesus is the Light, beside whom there is no other. This Light cannot be snuffed out in death as the lamp-light John was.

Jesus proceeds from God, and *God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*³ Jesus is the eternal Light from eternal Light. He is brighter than the noon-day sun.

Peter, James, and John were startled when, in broad daylight, Jesus appeared to them in His heavenly glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Saul of Tarsus and his companions on the way to Damascus were hurled to the ground when Jesus appeared to them at midday as a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun.

Disease and death would spread over the earth at a terrific rate, and the whole world would be but a dismal place, if we did not enjoy the healing and life-giving rays of the sun.

Put a plant in a dark cellar and note how the leaves pale and its growth is stunted. Go to the frigid zones and see the barren wastes of snow and ice there. Traverse the tundras, the dreary plains of the arctic North, and note their scanty growths of dwarf willows and dwarf birch-trees, of mosses and lichens.

And yet, what a remarkable change takes place even there during the brief season of a few weeks before and after the summer solstice! How quickly nature is aroused from sleep, and how soon the fields become bright with poppies and many other flowering plants! But the beauty of vegetable life there can hardly be compared with the lush growth in the tropics. True, the sun is a great beautifier and resurrector.

What the sun is to plant life, Jesus Christ is, in an indescribably greater degree, to all mankind. Jesus pierces a shroud of gloom and spreads silvery light of life in the place of gloom where the powerful rays of the sun are powerless.

As the Light of the world Jesus imparts spiritual life, health, and growth to all mankind. He drives away all darkness of sin. He transports erring and sinful man from the kingdom of darkness, where the Prince of Darkness rules, into the kingdom of light.

He enlightens the eyes of the spiritually blind, to whom the wisdom of God, the salvation through the blood of Jesus, is abject foolishness and gross absurdity, so that He, the Saviour whom they despised, becomes the Joy of their soul and the Light of their life.

People who grope about and weary themselves trying to find the way to heaven by means of their own good works, seeking, but seeking in vain, learn by grace to walk the only way that leads to heaven when Jesus blazes the way.

And remember that Jesus excludes nobody from walking in the beauty of this light; in fact, no one is excluded, for He is the Light of the world. He shines with the same divine glory into the hearts of people today as He did of times past.

But do all people rejoice in this Light? Our text says: "***He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness.***" Jesus illuminates the world, but still people fail to be led by that Light, preferring to be blind, preferring darkness.

And therefore the evangelist laments: ⁴ ***In [Christ] was life, and the life was the light of men.*** ⁵ ***And the light shines in the darkness, [but] the darkness did not comprehend it.***⁴ What a sorry spectacle! Could you imagine a person so unreasonable as to prefer a life in a dark and dreary dungeon to a life of freedom, when liberty is offered to him without money and without price?

Could you imagine a person so silly and stubborn as to refuse to be removed from his cot of filth in a dark room in a stuffy building to an airy and sunlit room of a modern home with all its conveniences?

But, behold, all people by nature lie in deepest darkness shrouded, they are spiritually blind in every sense of the word. And yet they delight in their blindness and want to remain in spiritual darkness, even though Christ, the Light of the world, wants to enlighten them and cause them to walk in the beauty of His light.

These people whom sin is bringing them nearer and nearer to the pit of everlasting gloom, could be cured of that wasting disease of sin, if they would not bluntly and obstinately refuse to allow Christ to shine in their hearts.

Thus we are confronted with the startling truth that, even though the Light of the world has rays in abundance to revive and bring to life the spiritually dead heart of every person, thousands and tens of thousands remain unenlightened.

It would stun you if you were told that the great majority of people never see the rays of the sun although it shines over the whole earth every twenty-four hours. But it is far more shocking to hear that Christ wants to shine in the hearts of all people and make His brightness felt but still the majority of people go to eternal darkness. All persons rejecting Christ remain in darkness.

They may be proud of the light of their reason; they may boast of the lofty intelligence of our technological age; they may speak in the highest terms of the advancement which the human race is sending further and further into the darkest corners of the world, — it is all a vain boast.

Without Christ gross darkness fills the hearts of men, and sin, nothing but sin, controls their every action, word, thought, and motive, not only in the lowly and uneducated, living in the slums and environments of crime, but just as well in the most intelligent and learned men of this world, living in luxuriously equipped mansions and princely palaces.

Their righteousness is but skin-deep; their humility, a veneer; their good will, an excuse; their liberty, a sham. The Bible says in John 3:19, ***19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.***

2. Those Who Follow Jesus Have The Light Of Life

Jesus says in our text: *He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.* There is no difference among people by nature. *All we like sheep have gone astray.*⁵ By nature we are all in spiritual darkness and members of the kingdom of darkness.

Every unconverted person, in the folly and blindness of his heart, is walking the broad way to destruction, labouring under the fateful delusion that his works will suffice to gain eternal life, or madly rushing headlong to hell, serving the devil in terrible vices. No natural man can be his own saviour.

But in the Christian a mighty change has been effected. He has learned to embrace Christ in a living faith as his only hope and salvation, and the darkness in him has been changed into light. Jesus says in John 12:46, ***“I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.”***

By the word of the Gospel the Holy Spirit has enlightened the child of God with His gifts. And since Christ is the Alpha and Omega of the Gospel, Christ Himself has entered his heart in and with this message of his salvation, and Christ has become the Treasure of his heart. And now he does not only see the light, but he has it, as our text says.

Yes, he has not merely the light, he has the light of life. Where there is light, there is life. If the sun would not shine for a whole year, even the abundant vegetation of the tropics would wilt and perish, and torrents of rain would not save it.

But since the sun sends its penetrating rays over the world, even in the darkest caves the crystal grows and some forms of plant life are found, and even in the deepest depths of the ocean living animals move about and search for food.

Now, Christ is both God and the Light, and in Him His believers and followers have both light and have life, eternal life.

The story of the life of a Christian proves that Christians are the children of light. A light must shine. A Christian is endowed with the light of life in and through Christ, and so the excellency of his light must show itself before the eyes of all people.

His life must become Christ-like. He no longer walks in the darkness of scepticism and unbelief, of unrighteousness and iniquity, but in the broad daylight of good works and righteousness.

St. Paul says that Christians walk blameless and harmless, as children of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they shine as lights in the world.⁶ And our Saviour says in Matthew 5:14 & 16, ¹⁴ *“You are the light of the world* ¹⁶ *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Christ says: *“I am the Light of the world.”* Christ also says to all Christians: *“You are the light of the world.”* The Christians take the place of Christ on earth as the torch-bearers to the world. They may be small in number, they may appear as a hopeless minority; yet the only thing that can rescue the world from eternal death is the faith and hope of the Christians telling others about Christ.

Their knowledge of the affairs and of the wisdom of this world may be very limited, yet the saving knowledge which they have in Christ is of more value to every person than all the much-vaunted wisdom of this world. They are the light of the world. All other people are in darkness.

Never let the thought enter your heart that those who mock your faith are wise in the eyes of God. Look to Christ alone and remember that He, the despised and rejected of men, is the Light of the world.

And even though the unbelieving world regards us as fools worthy of contempt because we believe in Jesus Christ as our only Saviour, yet we are, because of our faith in Jesus, the light of the world. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ John 7:37

² Isaiah 9:2

³ 1 John 1:5

⁴ John 1:4-5

⁵ Isaiah 53:6

⁶ Philippians 2:14-16