

I AM the Light of the World

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[0:00] Take your Bibles this morning and open them to John chapter 8 and I'm going to read here just a moment our focal passage the focal verse verse 12 John chapter 8 verse 12 though the entire message is going to come from a larger portion of John chapter 8 but verse 12 if you have found it John chapter 8 verse 12 Jesus spoke to them again saying I am the light of the world he literally anyone whoever follows me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life tremendous statement now of course in this series of messages that I've been preaching we are considering seven of the twelve great I am statements recorded in the gospel of John of course Jesus is the one making the statements there are twelve of them this is a continuation of that series now to set this up just a little so that we understand what is happening here prior to this great statement kind of get it in our minds in its context

John tells us in in chapter 7 that it was in the temple where Jesus made this very profound declaration concerning himself he was in the temple when he said this and that is significant for us in fact if you would just look back there at chapter 7 so that I can kind of substantiate what I've said here and if you look at verse 1 in chapter 7 we have kind of and now the Jews feast of tabernacle and now the Jews feast of tabernacles now it's important that you get that that's what's occurring at the time when Jesus makes this statement the feast of tabernacles was at hand and his brothers therefore said to him depart from here and go into Judea that your disciples also may see the works that you are doing for no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly if you do these things show yourself to the world for even his brothers did not believe in him look over verse 14 now about the middle of the feast the feast of tabernacles we understand that from verse 2 Jesus went up into the temple and taught so he did go to Judea did go into Jerusalem did go into the temple look over chapter 8 verse 1 but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives so he took a little break and then he came back now early in the morning he came again into the temple and all the people came to him and he sat down and taught them then the scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman caught in adultery now I read that passage because I want to identify for you where he was in the temple since they brought a woman to him he was in the court of women all right now that's key keep that in your mind so he's in the court of women he's in the temple it's the eighth day and Jesus is teaching so we can kind of get the context here it's the feast of tabernacles that's what's going on that's the celebration and with that in mind I would say to you that if it were not for one very fatal flaw that is rejection of Jesus Christ it might be interesting to be an orthodox Jew and I say that because the Jews the Jewish religion is so full of celebration and we might be able to learn something from them now we do celebrate as well and we do have some feasts we call them potlucks but as a matter of fact we're going to be having one of those tonight after our evening worship service and we do have celebrations and such but nothing on the level of the Jews the Jewish religion and they were just always celebrating through some kind of feast or festival for example they had Passover they had Passover very interesting seven day celebration that I'm sure you remember commemorates the tenth and final plague that God used to deliver Israel out of the bondage of Egypt and so they had Passover seven day celebration they had the feast of Pentecost also called the feast or the feast of weeks rather which was basically you might call it a harvest celebration kind of like our Thanksgiving celebration they had the feast of trumpets which was a kind of New Year's Day celebration they also had the feast of Purim if you know your Old Testament it was a celebration that commemorated the deliverance of the Jewish nation from mass mass genocide and they were delivered through the intercession of one Queen Esther if you want to read about that then you can go to the Old Testament and read that book by her name the book of Esther and it was a great celebration the feast of Purim then they had Hanukkah of course and we're familiar with that one a celebration that really began in between the Testaments in the

intertestamental period of Jewish history that time that period of time in their history between the Old and New Testament and it was a feast or celebration that commemorated the victories of one Judas Maccabeus and the restoration of temple worship the reinstitution of temple worship a great and glorious celebration of the Jews and then the festival that was taking place at the time when Jesus made this great statement and it was the feast of tabernacles or also known as the feast of booths or booths however you want to pronounce it now it's important I think for us to understand just a little bit about this feast this feast of the Jews the feast of tabernacles or the feast of booths and it was a very interesting celebration it had several facets to it and at least one of them very clearly plays into Jesus' great statement that I read just a moment ago this great I am statement I am the light of the world the feast of tabernacles was held to commemorate God's protection and God's provision for Israel when they were wandering in the wilderness for 40 years prior to God bringing them into the promised land and you remember what happened there you remember that Moses sent in the spies into the land the promised land and two of them came back with a positive report and the remainder came back with a negative report and God's people chose to distrust God and believe the report the negative report and they said we can't go in there because there are giants in the land and God punished them for that and that entire generation wandered in the wilderness and did not see the promised land but God did not just leave his people Israel there in the wilderness for 40 years without protection without provision and without guidance God provided all of that for them and so the feast of tabernacles is a celebration of them God brought them protection and provision and for 40 long years Israel lived without a country without a place to call their home Israel lived a nomadic life literally that is for 40 long years Israel the entire nation of Israel some 2 to 3 million Israelites lived basically in tents for 40 years and traveled about they lived in what is called what's called earthen tabernacles that's what the word tabernacle means kind of a tent a dwelling place or booths would be the other word and so hence the name of the feast feast of tabernacles or the feast of booths and of course it was to commemorate [9:45] God's provision and God's protection throughout the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness and so to commemorate this for 7 days the 7 days of this festival the feast of tabernacles every Jewish family would basically set up a tent in their backyard and go camping that would be kind of a rough way of putting it but that's basically what they did so that they could kind of you know experience something of what God's people Israel their forefathers had experienced during the 40 long years of wandering in the wilderness and so they would get the full effect of that and so they built these booths these tents there in their courtyards or in their backyards if they had backyard they're there at their home now let's fast forward just a little bit and understand that during the feast of tabernacles in Jesus day that's exactly what God's people would do they would set up these tents and they would camp out so to speak there on their property they did something else as well because the feast of tabernacles or booths was not only something that commemorated God's provision and protection throughout the 40 years of wilderness wandering but also it commemorated his guidance it commemorated his guidance because God did guide them as they traveled they didn't just randomly go here and there God guided them eventually would guide them to the very brink of the promised land itself and so the feast commemorated that and if you remember God guided Israel back in those days with a pillar of fire and a pillar of smoke and Israel would follow that pillar it would guide them and it was apparently something very awesome very visible and all two to three million however many there were Israelites they could all see it and so they would be all following that that light that pillar of fire and pillar of smoke and it of course represented the visible presence of Yahweh God it was the Shekinah glory of God and when they would be encamped and have all of their tents set up there you know at night or for certain periods of time the pillar of fire and smoke would rest upon the wilderness tabernacle that would be set there in the middle of the camp the place of meeting it would be the place where man met with God and it would be in the center of the camp all right now again then let's fast forward to the days of Jesus and to Israel in those days and the Jews in Jesus day commemorated this time in their history and they did it in a very exciting way on the first day of the celebration they would light four giant menorahs kind of like candelabras you've seen pictures of Jewish menorahs it is certainly a symbol of Judaism a menorah and these were giant ones that would be erected there in the court of women remember I mentioned a moment ago that that's

where Jesus was teaching and these were huge these menorahs and their seven extensions or branches to the menorah huge in fact they say historians tell us they were so large that the priests that were given the task of lighting these menorahs for the feast for the seven day feast they would have to have a ladder to get to the top to light the oil in the bowls at the top of each branch of these giant menorahs and they had four of them that were erected there on the temple mount in the court of women and when they would be lit the light from these menorahs would illuminate the entire temple mound and not only that but as a part of the celebration in every courtroom of every home every Jewish home they would also courtyard rather they would also have lights it would be brightly lit and not only that but the streets would also be flooded with light during this this festival this feast and there would be parades where they would be carrying torches and there would be dancing in the streets

I know that hurts our sensibility as Baptists but they were dancing in the street great celebration it was an exciting time the feast of tabernacle now then and this is all leading somewhere so stick with me most certainly Jesus took part in this celebration he was a Jew he was a Jew he took part in this celebration to some extent and I want you to notice that Jesus not only in this instance but but so many times Jesus was a master of the moment a master who took advantage of the moment and he used that moment the feast of tabernacles and how it was commemorated how it was celebrated he used that moment to make a profound statement about himself they say that on the eighth day of this celebration these giant menorahs would be extinguished the lights would be put out and it was on that day the eighth day we know that from chapter seven verse thirty seven and chapter eight verse two we'll not go back and look at that again we know it was the eighth day and [16:29] Jesus was standing in the court of women how do we know that chapter eight verse three he was in the temple and they brought a woman to him and there's only one place where a woman would have been allowed the court of women and it was in the court of women where the menorahs were placed so he's standing there in the temple on the eighth day there in the court of women or at!

entrance to it and he was standing so to speak in some very close proximity to these giant menorahs that were used for the celebration we know that because they were placed in the court of women and though I don't know this possibly as the priests were preparing to extinguish the light from these giant menorahs because they did that on the eighth day Jesus picked that time to make this statement I am the light of the world I am he said that is I always was always am always will be the light of the world

I tell you he picked the right moment perfect as the menorahs serving as some some very profound visual for this great statement that he's making about himself now aside from the fact that what Jesus says here is tantamount to saying that he is God and we've already covered that ground as I introduced these I am statements he is saying that clearly I am God what else is he saying because in this instance he is attaching to this I am this reference to himself as in fact Yahweh God to this reference of himself he is attaching a metaphor light of the world I am the light of the world what does he say what does that mean to us what is the significance to us that Jesus is the light of the world well from the text and the larger text the context and we're going to kind of bring all this into play here

I would suggest to you that he means at least three things like a good good thing for a sermon to have three points and here they are number one as the light of the world Jesus brings revelation to man get that down as the light of the world he said I am the light of the world Jesus brings revelation to man revelation to man who really knows what light is by the way he said well light is something that comes from some source we have several of them here one of them is blinding me right up here in front of me well but what is it the Bible says in in on the first day that God created light he said let there be light is light something to be created apparently so that's what the Bible says and so then I would ask the question does light is light some kind of substance matter fact scientists speak of particles of light did you know that particles of light and so I would ask does that mean that light has matter or light is matter like this pulpit like my body like the pews like trees like things does it is it matter we talk about a room being filled with light does that mean that the room weighs more now that it's lit rather than being dark I don't have any idea is light light light the absence of darkness or is darkness the absence of light anybody know now we do know this don't we that a beautiful red rose is red because of light in fact it would have no color whatsoever if it were not for light we know that don't we not just because it would be too dark to see it but!

[21:16] light is what reflects color and so there a rose is red because the pigment of that rose absorbs every other color other than light and it reflects red and that's why it's red it's rather interesting and so white is white because it reflects all light and black is black because it absorbs all light I'm not trying to give a science lesson here in fact I'm speaking really way above my knowledge light is an interesting thing and I'm telling you that scientists don't really know even today what it is how does it work and why does it work in a way that it works I don't have any idea but I do know this I am blind without light aren't you blind without it because what does light do it illuminates just like it's illuminating this sanctuary here this morning the lights are turned on and it illuminates the light reveals it reveals things it brings to light if I put it that way it brings to light the truth about things

I will never forget several years ago when we moved to South Haven Mississippi where I pastored there and we bought a house and I guess the first few weeks that we were there we kept having these giant roaches in our house ever seen these things and they fly we're talking about gargantuan roaches I'm talking about science fiction size roaches and they're of the devil because they fly and they fly at you and we kept finding these things in our house they would be crawling across the floor we'd come home after being out we'd come home and there'd be one sitting on the top of the couch or crawling on the wall and just as soon as you look at it's flying at you and I wonder where did these things come from and people told me they were tree roaches and said they were wood roaches and different things like that and one night I had to get something out of the garage and the garage was detached from the house thankfully and so when I went out to the garage and I turned on the light there were literally thousands of light until I turned the light on there they were light reveals sometimes some disturbing things but light illuminates it reveals it brings to light the truth about things light reveals and Jesus is the light of the world and so Jesus reveals the truth about things and from this text I think we can discover two things that Jesus reveals two I guess we would call them broad categories of things that Jesus reveals one he reveals the truth about man number two he reveals the truth about God those two things and we can see this in our text here first of all the truth about man and honestly brutally honest we must say that what the light of

Jesus reveals about man is not very good not good at all and that's why many will not come to Jesus because our flesh is opposed to the truth being revealed about us and so he reveals the truth about man and what does he reveal he reveals that man is a sinner plain and simple that we're sinning and Jesus masterfully reveals this in the first part of this chapter and in the first part of this chapter by the way this goes together because he's in this place and he's teaching and they bring this woman to him a familiar story a woman that has been caught in the very act of adultery they bring this woman to Jesus and we can just kind of picture this scene can't we here's Jesus in the court of women he's teaching a multitude of people by the way the court of women was not just exclusive to women it was a part of the temple where women were allowed so there were men there too and so he's teaching there and the Jewish leadership they seized the opportunity to disgrace Jesus to embarrass Jesus or to discredit him in some way and so they bring this woman this adulterous woman and look there at verse four they said to him teacher this woman was caught in adultery in the very act terrible so there was no question as to her guilt but do they care about this woman you think no they don't really care about the woman they're just simply baiting Jesus and they were baiting Jesus with the law of Moses look at verse five now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned and they notice what they ask what but what do you say it's just so snide isn't it get the flavor of this what do you say and they are obviously trying to trap

[27:19] Jesus into either breaking the law of Moses or reinterpreting the law of Moses which is something they did regularly or maybe putting his teaching above the law of Moses and hence putting himself above Moses and so they are trying to trap him and the Bible tells us very plainly that this is the case verse six this they said testing him you see that they're testing they don't care anything about the woman don't care anything about her sin they really don't care about about Moses so much they just want to test Jesus here they want to catch him they did it to test him that they might have something of which to accuse him and so what does Jesus do you remember he did the only sensible!

thing really he stooped down and started doodling in the sand verse 6 says as though he did not hear good move Jesus what what a strategy stoops down and doodles in the sand you know I'd give about anything to know what he wrote there in the sand I'd just like to know the Bible doesn't

tell us does it I mean I didn't read the text but I think you remember the story the Bible doesn't say anything about what he wrote it's very likely he didn't write anything I mean just honestly got to say it's likely he didn't write a thing but I kind of like to use my!

sanctified! imagination and make a point here and we'll get to the point in a minute by the way the point is not dependent upon my sanctified imagination so don't worry about it but I'd like to just kind of imagine and some have put forth this theory that when Jesus stooped down there and wrote in the sand he might have been writing the names of this woman's accusers let's just say he stooped down there and wrote down some names and we'll just pick some there's Pharisee Tobias and he just writes his name down and Zacharias and then there's Josiah and he's just scribbling their names in the sand one by one he writes their names and really that wouldn't matter much I mean so what he knows their names and so these men they keep asking they say what do you say Jesus it's like he didn't even hear them and and say he's writing their names well so what well what do you say Jesus should she be stoned and so Jesus stands to his feet and he says to these guys verse seven look at it because this is key if any one of you is without sin that is literally without any active ongoing sin let him be the first to throw the stone to stone her let him be the first one any of you any of you here without active ongoing unrepentant of sin then you throw the first stone that's what he said and again in verse eight it says he stooped down and wrote on the ground this is just intriguing is it not he doesn't just kind of kind of wet wet your appetites you know

I just I gotta know what he wrote let's just say this time that when Jesus stooped down the second time maybe he wrote some other names while we're just using our imagination just wrote some other names some names these accusers would know and maybe right beside Tobias his name I'm just pulling Tobias out of thin air we don't know their names maybe right beside his name Jesus writes the name of a woman in Ephesus a city known for its harlotry and maybe right away old pharisee Tobias turns a little pale in his face how did he know her name he said so he drops the stone and the sand walks off and maybe he does the same thing with say scribe

[32:23] Zacharias and maybe Rabbi Josiah and maybe Jesus writes the name of a family that Zacharias had cheated in a land deal and he thought nobody knew and nobody cared but Jesus knows and he drops his stone in the sand and quietly walks away and then we get to maybe Rabbi Josiah he's the youngest of the bunch and he sees the name of a woman in Galilee that he had been seeing secretly while on business in that city a name his wife did not know but Jesus knows and he drops his stone in the sand and walks off and the Bible says in verse 9 then those who heard it being convicted by their conscience convicted of sin see their consciences were not clear and so the

Bible says each one one by one when they convicted in their conscience went out one by one beginning with the eldest the oldest even to the last and Jesus was left alone because you see his conscience was clear Jesus had no sin he was the only one there qualified to cast the stone by the way that he did not cast the stone rather he took the stone on himself took this woman's judgment and he would do that at the cross and so he said to the woman neither do I condemn you go and sin no more is that what Jesus did when he stooped down and wrote in the sand I don't have any idea probably not honestly but I use that imagination that imaginary what if to make a point because what

Jesus did in the sand doesn't really matter doesn't matter doesn't matter what he wrote in the sand whatever Jesus did there in the sand even if he all he did was just make chicken scratches that may be what he did even if that were the case one thing is for sure and this is what we need to get from this story this event in Jesus life one thing is for sure the light of his righteousness and holiness pierced the hearts of the those those accusers all the way to the very core and open them up before themselves and before the Lord and suddenly their very lives had become transparent before the Lord Jesus Christ and they as it were stood naked before him the Lord of glory and that's the point you cannot hide sin from

Jesus can't hide it you might be able to hide it from everyone else cannot you might be able to hide it from yourself we're even capable of that but you cannot hide it from Jesus he's the light of the world and I say to you again that is one reason why many will not come to him that's the reason why many even in the church do not want Jesus present now people don't conceptualize it that way they don't think well you know I don't really want Jesus to show up at our worship service this morning nobody is going to think in those terms but we really don't want him to be here because his presence reveals the truth about us and everything in our flesh stands against that and opposes

that we do not want to know the truth but when you come into the presence of the Lord of glory the truth is revealed just like this woman's accusers it was revealed and one by one from the eldest down to the youngest they left they moved away walked off Jesus reveals the truth about man but he also has the light of the world Jesus reveals the truth about God he reveals the truth about God Jesus told these Pharisees in John chapter 8 we've not read this text but I'll read a portion of it here in just a minute Jesus told these Pharisees here that he had come to reveal God the father among other things he had come to do that but these Pharisees in their self righteousness thought they already knew him knew God in fact they really in a sense thought they had exclusive rights on

[37 : 45] God in fact they thought that they had the corner on the market when it came to worshiping God and so here is this Jesus from Nazareth this carpenter son and he's there telling these Pharisees I've come to reveal God the father to you and they thought they already knew him but Jesus said in verse 19 look at it you you know neither me nor my father you don't know the father if you had known me you would have known my father also do you understand what he saying he's saying listen listen Pharisees listen to know me is to know the father to know

Jesus is to know God the father Jesus reveals the father and the truth of the matter is you cannot know God the father apart from knowing Jesus the son you can't know him apart from Jesus John said in John 1 and verse 18 no one has seen God at any time the only begotten son that's Jesus John writes here the only begotten son who is in the bosom of the father he has declared him declared that's the word English word here in this version we could insert the word revealed him or made him known that's what

Jesus did made God the father known you know a lot of people like to talk about God notice that most people don't mind talking about God they speak of their God and maybe they speak of the God maybe they speak of their God and this God and that God and people like talk about God and when a person starts talking or speaking about believing in God we ought to want to know what they believe about Jesus because what a person believes about Jesus reveals a whole lot about the God they say they believe in because Jesus is the full complete revelation of God of the one true

God and so he as the light of the world Jesus brings revelation to man secondly as the light of the world Jesus brings redemption to man Jesus brings redemption to man look at verse 12 again 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 and who is the light he just said I'm the light and anyone whoever will follow me will not walk in darkness not be lost but will have me the light of life will have life eternal life salvation that's what he's saying in this passage now

I would say to you have you noticed here that Jesus is being dogmatically narrow here he's being very exclusive in what way he said I I myself literally you could translate it I and no one else am the light of the world and if you'll follow me me me only you will not walk in darkness but you will have the light of life he is being utterly totally narrow exclusive!

[42 : 42] in fact in John 14 he's going to later and we're going to look at this! text eventually he's going to declare I am the way the truth the life and no one comes to the father but by me I can't think of a more exclusive statement than that so he's being very narrow very exclusive dogmatically and yet I would say to you that at the same time he's being graciously inclusive folks

I as your pastor I believe in the sovereign grace of God and salvation I can't read scripture and come to any other conclusion the sovereign grace of God and salvation John 1 13 says that we are born again not of the will of flesh not of man the will of man but of God salvation is all God all him start to finish I believe in the sovereign grace of God and salvation but when it comes to the great commission work of the church you and I can and ought to shout it from the mountaintops turn to Jesus and be saved all the ends of the earth for he is God and there is no other we ought to proclaim that from the mountaintops that very inclusive statement and Jesus is saying no less if anyone anyone whosoever will follow me you will not walk in darkness but have the light of life you will be saved now remember

Jesus is speaking to an unsaved audience he's not trying to teach the doctrines of grace to the body of Christ here he is highlighting the exclusive plea that we issue to all people of all colors and all nations and all the world the plea turn to Jesus and be saved follow Jesus and you'll not walk in darkness but have the light of life what a good news what good news we have for the world you see God alone has the sovereign right to be exclusive in salvation not you or me we don't have that right

that's his business we don't tread where eagles dare not fly but when it comes to the gospel witness of the church that's that's you me that's us we have no right to no authority to package our message to the lost world with any kind of exclusion we we we we have not been given any measure of sovereignty dear people

I tell you God does not need us to protect his sovereign right to save whom he will he doesn't need us to do that he has rather called us to declare to every human creature turn to Jesus and be saved turn to him and be saved all the ends of the earth and by the way it was at the end of the feast of the tabernacles as I've said that Jesus boldly said I am the light of the world and again as I've already said that the Jews celebrated the light the pillar of fire that led their forefathers out of the wilderness and eventually to the promised land and now Jesus says I am that light and anyone who will follow me I will lead him or her to the promised land of God's salvation the light of Jesus brings revelation to man the light of Jesus brings redemption to man and finally this morning the light and I'm afraid to admit and say but it's true that the light as light of the world Jesus brings rejection from man he does verse 13 this kind of little blurb in the midst of all of this verse 13 the Pharisees therefore said to him you're not telling the truth that's paraphrase you bear witness of yourself your witness is not true the pharisaical way of saying you are a liar we do not believe you we reject you and they did didn't they and most of the

[48:21] Jewish nation then and still today for all of its excitement the feast of tabernacles was merely a celebration of shadows did you know that it shadows with all the excitement of it all the various elements of the feast and really all of the Jewish feasts and festivals were celebrations of shadows shadows see it remembered this particular feast remembered the pillar of fire and smoke that led Israel through the wilderness of sin that's what it commemorated but it was just a shadow shadow of the coming of Messiah as a matter of fact the pillar of fire was a type a picture vivid picture of Messiah and now their

Messiah had come he was standing right before them his name was Jesus of Nazareth and they rejected him how sad that even still today the Jews receive the symbol and reject the substance that Jews even still today the Orthodox Jews embrace the ritual and they expel the reality the Jews still today celebrate the shadow but spurn the Savior for many Jew and Gentile alike for many the light of Jesus brings rejection rejection John chapter 3 verse 19 listen to and this let me start in verse 17 for God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved he who believes in him is not condemned but he who does not believe in him is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God and then this verse and this is the condemnation that the light has come into the world and men love darkness rather than light why because their deeds were evil because of sin for everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed and we don't want that John the apostle John the beginning of his gospel in the what's known as the prologue the introduction he says some very profound things about Jesus and how men receive him so the prologue we could say that the prologue to

John's gospel represents for many a I'm afraid to say a post script a conclusion in life in verse 10 of chapter 1 he says about Jesus he says he was in the world as redeemer and the world the world was made through him creator and here's the sad post script to many many lives today and the world did not know him he came to his own and his own did not receive him specifically speaking of the Jews of course but in the broad sense the implication is because you and I were created by him we belong to him he came to his own and his own rejected him that's the post script in the life of many today but verse 12 but as many as received him to them he gave the right to become children of

God to those who believe in his name to so which one are you are you rejecting him or receiving him which way is it for you to!

[54:01] to