

**John 8: 12-20; “I am the Light of the World”, Sermon # 51 in the series –
“That All May Honor the Son”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall,
on March 3rd, 2019, in the Morning Worship Service.**

Here in this passage we see that it was when the Lord Jesus gave some of His most straightforward words of truth to the unsaved people who heard Him, that He received His greatest opposition from the Pharisees. They were a certain very prominent sect of the Jews; a group of very outwardly religious men who professed that they knew God because they were supposedly keeping God’s law. But Jesus told them at many points that they had many sinful problems that they were not dealing with. They regularly read the Old Testament Scriptures, and they thought that they were being saved by their circumcision and their observance of the Old Testament ordinances. But, at the same time, they were stridently opposed to Christ being their Messiah. Here in this passage, the Lord Jesus has a conversation with them; a very important conversation, not only for them, but for all of us as well. In this conversation Jesus sets forth to them the truths of His Divine Personhood and His witness to all men everywhere which confirms that He is the Son of God. Many of them did not believe what He was saying to them, and because of it, they perished in their sins. If you will believe in these truths, you will be saved and become a true follower of Christ.

There are 3 truths set forth here by the Lord Jesus, concerning Himself, which will help you to see that He is unique among men, and thus you will be able to better live the Christian life, and you will be able to better share the gospel with people around you. The truths that I want to bring to your attention are these: 1st – The Lord Jesus is the Light of the World and He gives the light of life to those who follow Him. 2nd – The Lord Jesus’ witness concerning Himself was true, for He knew where He came from, and where He was going. 3rd – The Lord Jesus’ judgment was true, for He was not alone in it. Let us today receive these truths of the uniqueness of Christ, and pray to be able to communicate them in love, to the lost, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that they might be saved.

1st of all – The Lord Jesus is the Light of the World, and He gives the light of life to those who follow Him. (verse 12)

“I am the Light of the world.” “He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” Now, the kind of language that the Lord Jesus is using here is spiritual picture language once again. We heard Him say before, at the Feast, in John 7: 37 – “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.” He was saying – I am the Fountain of Living Waters. It is by drinking from Me that you will find eternal life. We heard Him say in John 6: 35 – “I am the Bread of Life” and that the one who comes to Him shall never hunger or thirst anymore.” He was not speaking of literal physical things of bread and water in those places, or even here, of physical light. He was speaking in purely spiritual terms. But the things which He was speaking of, were literal spiritual realities that He would bring to all those believing in Him. By the way, it is by these words which Jesus uses that we discover what all men truly need, and what they must have, if they are to know God and be saved from their sins. They need spiritual bread, spiritual water, and spiritual light. But it is even more than this. When we read of these things, we will come to understand what every Christian must have on a regular, on-going, and daily basis, if they are to know Christ better, and to grow up into Him, to be mature, as well.

All the essential and important spiritual truths that every believer needs to be saved, and to grow up into Christ, come from following Him according to the truth of His word and feeding upon Him by faith. It is by looking to Him to give you the bread of life in Himself and the bread of truth which you take into your mind, that is how you come to know that you have the reality of having Christ’s life in your life. He is the Bread of life, the Water of life, and He is the light of life. To follow Christ you must have this light shined on your path. “The path of the just is like the shining

sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.” “The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.” (Proverbs 4: 18 and 19) You must come to have real spiritual understanding. You must find the wisdom which leads to salvation. To be able to believe and to continue to believe, to be able to repent and to learn to do the right things, comes from having the light of life being shined into your mind and heart. That is, in that shining, you are given the ability to discern what the right thing to do is, in every situation of life, the thing that will glorify God, the thing that will be best for your spiritual strength and well-being is when Christ’s light shines upon your dark soul. You begin the Christian life by being made willing to follow Christ, and walk with Him. You are made willing in the day of His power to entrust your life to Him, so that He will continuously shine His light into your benighted soul.

Notice the way the sentence is worded. “He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness”, but have the light of life. The beginning of spiritual life comes by means of the truth being conveyed to your soul with the brightness of the glory of His imparted grace; that is, spiritual light and power accompany the preaching and sharing of the gospel concerning Jesus Christ. And this has a real effect upon your mind and heart. This is where following Christ begins. It is following Christ now, every day of your Christian life, which will give you the understanding that you will need not to walk in darkness, but to walk in the light. “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.” Darkness is the picture of sin and ignorance. This is what all people walk in by nature, from the time of their birth. Listen to what it says in Ephesians 5: 8 – “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.” “Walk as children of light.” A person, before they come to know Christ is walking in darkness. They are living their life according to the false and selfish and sinful principle of the flesh; walking according to the flesh. They assert things about God that are not true; that He is pleased with them as they are, that He is somehow pleased with them pursuing a life of denying the truth of His word and His commandments.

Perhaps they assert that God is love and that He accepts all people just as they are, in their sins, without their being changed by Christ’s grace, or without being reconciled to God by His saving work. It takes spiritual light to see the glory of Christ’s saving work. Perhaps a person says that they are an atheist, and they do not believe that God exists at all, and so they fight against the truth of God’s word that He is a God of justice and judgment as well as a God of goodness and love. But is it true that God is only and simply a God of love? No, His saving love is only communicated to blind and needy sinners based upon their recognizing the fulfillment of His just judgment against them fell upon Christ. God’s justice must needs be satisfied in Christ before God’s love can be communicated to the soul and the soul believe the love that God has for them.

Why did the Pharisees fight against Jesus and not want Him to rule over them in truth and righteousness. It was because they thought that they had the truth of the Scriptures but they didn’t. Why didn’t they understand the Scriptures that they were reading? It was because they had no light. As it says in Isaiah chapter 8, verse 2 – “To the law and to the testimony!” “If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” That is why the Pharisees fought against Christ. The greatness of His light was exposing the evil of their deeds. It is spiritual light that is needed to understand the meaning of life. It is spiritual light shined upon the word, and shined in the heart that gives any person the right perspective on how they ought to think. Without this, you walk in darkness and you do not have the light of life.

The person whom Christ commits Himself to, to shine His light into their heart, will want to follow Christ. They shall not walk in darkness, but they shall have the light of life. But you will ask – How came that person to commit themselves, or to give themselves to the daily on-going joyful task of following Christ? It was by exercising faith in Christ. And how does saving faith come to a soul sitting in darkness? Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. How was the woman caught in the act of adultery brought to exercise faith in Christ? It was when she perceived that the Lord Jesus was a Savior, and that He was willing to become her Savior and Lord; to bring her out of her darkness and into His marvelous light, to defend her from those representatives of

the law who had brought her to Him, to find out what He would do; whether He would say that she should be punished or not.

She knew that she was guilty. She knew that she was vile. She knew that she was helpless to do anything to change her situation of standing condemned in the sight of God and men. The Pharisees were testing Christ, and they sought for her punishment, which they knew according to the law, she so richly deserved. But Jesus stooped down on the ground and He wrote words which were not recorded for us. What was He saying? I believe that it must have been, that in writing upon the ground, He was declaring that He would not condemn her, but rather that He would pay the punishment of her sins, so that she would not be condemned; that she could not be condemned if He stood in her place of judgment. In the writing of Jesus that day, there must have been some way that He preached the gospel to her. And I think that in this case the gospel was written by the finger of Jesus. Jesus, who as God, was there with Moses on Mt. Sinai writing on the two tablets of stone with His finger. He knew, even then, that in His becoming man, He would undertake to fulfill all of God's holy law, and suffer the shameful death and the punishment due to sinners in His Person, so that all believing in Him would not be condemned.

I am saying that when Jesus was writing these words on the ground, that He was also shining light into this woman's heart and mind at the same time. This writing was accompanied by His shining His spiritual light into this guilty woman's mind and heart by the power of the Holy Spirit; so much so, that she believed in His word to her. "Woman, where are those accusers of yours?" "Has no one condemned you?" She says, "No one, Lord." "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." How could He say this? It was because He was the Light of the World. I want you to see this truth, which is so very important for each of us to remember, as we live our Christian life, attempting to see the salvation of the lost. There are spiritually blind people all around us, but some are more openly opposed to our Christ than others. All are great sinners, but in the hearts and minds of some, the spiritual light of Christ is shining. Some are open, to listening to us speak of Him. The only reason for this is grace, we know.

But grace, when it is saving grace that is being communicated to the sinner, has nothing in common with self-righteousness or self-assertiveness like you see in these Pharisees. Rather it has everything to do with the conviction of sin, and with the Holy Spirit's striving with them to behold the beauty of Christ. When He strives with a sinner unto salvation, He strives to cultivate the attitude of their being open to consider the truth of Christ who is the Essential word of God and the Lord of Life, and giver of eternal life. Even if the guilty sinner does not, at that time, really know how to respond to all the light that is shown to them, they still believe in Christ by the light that is shining there, in their mind. He says to them – "Awake, sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." This is how this sinful woman of John 8: 1-11 was saved. Christ had shined the light into her heart and mind, and by this means she was pulled out of the kingdom of darkness and into Christ's marvelous light.

2nd – The Lord Jesus' witness to Himself is true, for He knows where He came from, and where He is going. (verses 13 and 14)

In verse 13 it says – "The Pharisees therefore said to Him, 'You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.'" "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.'" Now, the Pharisees saying that Jesus' bearing witness of Himself was in reference to His having said that He was the Light of the world. They thought that this was simply too much; that He was way out of line when He asserted such a thing. They thought that He was merely a man. And surely, it is true, if any other person had made such a statement, it would be appropriate to address them in this same way that the Pharisees did, questioning the truthfulness of the statement. They thought that a statement like this one could not possibly be true. But in the case of the Lord Jesus it was eminently true, and it was essential

for these proud, self-righteous men to hear it as a witness to Himself, and to the fact that they did not understand Him in His essential being.

Jesus was bearing witness to the truth concerning Himself that He was both God and Man. This was the only way that He could have been the Light of the world then, and this is the only way that He can be the Light of the world now. This is the way that He will continue to be the Light of Life to all men in all generations to the end of the world, and throughout all eternity which has no end. In John chapter 1, verse 4, it says – “In Him was life, and life was the light of men.” “And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” Verse 9 says – “That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.” For just a few moments I want you to contemplate with me the implications of Jesus’ bearing witness to Himself, that He was the Light of the World. Was this the right thing for Him to do? I would assert to you that it was absolutely right. It was essential that Jesus bore witness to Himself, for how else could anyone be saved unless He was both God and man? It is absolutely essential to the salvation of sinners everywhere that they understand that Jesus is not a mere man, but that He is the Son of God; two natures in one blessed Person. This is what all true Christians confess, and really, you cannot be saved if you deny this truth. For where would be the merit and value of His death and sufferings? How can a mere man give a ransom for sinners which would have eternal value in the sight of God?

Do you remember back in John chapter 5 how Jesus healed a man who had been lame for 38 years? He saw that this man had been lying next to the pool at Siloam for a long time, and He asked him – “Do you want to be made well?” And the man said to Him – “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.” Now, if Jesus was a mere man, He could have said to him – Here, let me help you down at the right time; the time when the angel comes down to stir the waters of this pool. He would have said this out of kindness. He would have said this as one man helping another man according to His ability as a man, He would have said – I will help you with this problem of getting into the pool. But the power of healing would have only come through the angel stirring the waters, and the man helping. But the Lord Jesus is no mere man, and so He says to him – “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” By these words, and by this act, Jesus declared that He was the Son of God. He said these things as the God-Man, and He did them by His own inherent power.

Now, certainly, the Lord Jesus did all that He did in perfect submission to the Father’s will; as to who exactly should be miraculously healed, and their soul also be saved. He and the Father were always one in purpose. It goes on to say in verse 16 of chapter 5 – “For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.” Was the Lord Jesus breaking the Sabbath in healing this man? No, He was showing them, as the Son of God that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath; it was lawful to heal, and that the implication of His doing this on the Sabbath was to correct their man-made traditions which these Jews had imposed upon God’s law, and upon the people. Jesus did this because He was the Light of the World, and He was giving to all of His people the Jews, the opportunity to have the light of life by believing His witness to them.

He was saying to all of the Jews that He was like the physical sun in that He was the only light of this world, and that included, most especially at that time, their world, spiritually speaking. He was sent to lost sheep of the house of Israel. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He was the light to their world first, and all the world in breaking down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, so that the light could shine upon us, and bring certain and definite effects according to God’s power and purpose. The sun is the only light which brings the life to our planet and to our physical being. It warms us, illumines our darkness, and in shining with its powerful influences, all life on our planet is sustained. Even so, in an infinitely greater sense, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness arises every day with healing in His wings. Yes, He would be crucified by these, His own people, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Rulers of Israel. He was most certainly the spiritual Light of the World. But they would not receive His witness, and

so He would have to suffer and die for the sins of many, so that He could arise upon them with healing in His wings. This was the cost of His bearing witness to the truth of their sinfulness, and His being the only One who could save them from their sins.

It is the Lord Jesus, who by His power in connection with the Father and the Spirit, warms our hearts to the truth of God's word. He shines upon us so that our cold hearts thaw to the truth, if His purpose is to bring salvation to any person. You might think that these Pharisees had much common grace, but really, they had murder in their hearts toward the Lord of Glory. In verse 16 of John 5 it says, "For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath." "But Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.'" "Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."

You see, He was bearing witness to Himself, but His witness was true. He knew where He had come from, and where He was going. He was the Lord of glory who had been sent from heaven to earth by His Father. These men, Jesus said, did not know where He had come from or where He was going. They thought that He did not know the truth, but He was the truth personified. They thought that they knew God, and that He did not. But He was God made manifest in the flesh, and their God. How blind they really were. The only grace that they knew was the common grace of having been born a Jew, having been given the Scriptures, and thereby knowing the law of God. But this did not change their sinful hearts.

If a person has common grace, they may be a very moral person because they are outwardly restraining themselves from committing many sins, but still because they do not have the saving influences and working of light in their soul, they fight for all they are worth, against the truth of God's word. They do not have light, and so when you attempt to open the curtains of their mind to let in the light of God's word, they are upset with you. By nature they are darkness and in the darkness, and do not want the light shining upon them. They want to sleep the sleep of death. Like it says in John 3: 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." "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed." If you substitute the word "Christ" for the word "light" you will see what John is saying. This is the condemnation that Christ has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than Christ. Everyone practicing evil hates Christ, and does not come to Christ, lest his deeds should be exposed.

You see, this was why the only-begotten Son of God had been sent by the Father into this fallen world of sinful people. It was so that by becoming the Light of the World, men by beholding His power and glory to save them, would be brought out from under condemnation and be justified by faith in Christ. This is the glory of the gospel. God the Son had always, in eternity past, been in the bosom of the Father, one with the Father, equal in power and glory with the Him. He was begotten of the Father in eternity past, but this begetting was not like a man begetting a son; that is, someone being born and brought forth by their father's having had relations with their mother and the father and the mother then conceiving him, a son, and that son then being brought forth, outside of their beings and their bodies, and assuming an existence separate from theirs, even though related to them. No, as Francis Turretin says – He was brought forth in eternity past within the Godhead. The Son was always with the Father in eternity past, but in His being begotten of the Father, "He always emanated from the Father by an eternal and internal act (like the rays emanating simultaneously with the sun, only in a more eminent, inexplicable manner)." "In fine, by generation the divine essence is communicated to the begotten, not that it may exist, but *that it may* subsist." (Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Vol 1, Page 300, 301)

Jesus knew where He had come from; that is, from God the Father Himself begetting Him in eternity past, and then bringing Him forth as the Son in time and space in the womb of Mary, so that in His Incarnation He would become our glorious Savior; be fully God so as to be able to

redeem us to God, and fully Man so as to obey God's holy law in our place, and then having obeyed and loved us to the uttermost, that He would suffer in our place, and bear the punishment that we so richly deserved. This gospel was veiled to the Pharisees. They did not know where Christ came from and where He was going; through the cross and His resurrection, and ascension, to rule in highest station, at the right hand of the Father. But Christ's witness was true.

3rd – The Lord Jesus' judgment was true, for He was not alone in it. (verses 15-20)

"You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one." "And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me." "It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true." "I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me." "Then they said to Him, 'Where is Your Father?'" "Jesus answered, 'You know neither Me nor My Father.'" "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also." These Pharisees thought that they had the right to judge Jesus for bearing witness of Himself. But Jesus was saying that He, as the Son of God, had every Divine right to judge the things that they were saying about Him. They were trying to disqualify Him from being heard, and being believed, in regard to the things that He said about God, about Himself, and about the mission that He had been sent on by the Father; that is, to be the Light of salvation to all the World. His Father, He says, was with Him. He was saying to them that they should be able to hear His witness to them about who He was, but since they could not do that, He would still continue to insist upon the truth, that God the Father had sent Him, and that the Father was with Him in all that He was doing.

He reminds them that in their law, the testimony of two men was confirmation of the truth in any matter. And so He brings it to their attention, that He is the One who was bearing witness of Himself, but the Father who had sent Him was also bearing witness of Him. These two witnesses ought to have been enough, for they were not simply the witness of two human persons; they were the witness of two Divine Persons, and therefore they ought to have received His witness. When they questioned where His Father was, Jesus then answered them that they knew neither Him nor His Father, for if they had known Him, they would also have known His Father. This was a declaration of Christ the Son's being of one essence with His Father, and yet it was also a declaration of a distinction in terms of the Persons in the Godhead; in the Divine Trinity. Jesus' speaking in this straightforward way about His Divine nature only served to inflame the Pharisees against Him. They would never admit that He was God's Son because a veil of blindness lay upon their heart.

This is why the apostle Paul says in 2nd Corinthians 4, verses 3-6 – "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake." "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Jesus was telling these Pharisees that they did not know either Him or God the Father. And this made them very angry. Jesus spoke these words in the treasury, as He taught in the temple, and yet no one laid hands on Him. The reason? His time had not yet come, for the Father to deliver Him up to their hands.

Jesus knew that that His time would come, and He the Light of the World would hang upon the cross and the sky would grow dark over the whole land from the sixth hour to the ninth hour of the day. And He would cry out with a loud voice, - "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated - 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' When He said this, He was not saying that in His nature of being God, that He was forsaken by God, but that in His nature as a Man, that He was forsaken of God. His Light was, for a time, eclipsed by the darkness of the sufferings that He experienced, and this was a witness that He bore to all that stood there that day in whose hearts

God the Father and the Holy Spirit were working. The centurion and those with him , who were guarding Jesus, when they saw this, they feared greatly and said, “Truly this was the Son of God.”