

I AM the Light of the World

February 28, 2010 - John 8:12-59

¹² When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

¹³ The Pharisees challenged him, *“Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”*

¹⁴ Jesus answered, *“Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. ¹⁶ But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. ¹⁷ In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. ¹⁸ I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.”*

¹⁹ Then they asked him, *“Where is your father?”*

“You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” ²⁰ He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come.

²¹ Once more Jesus said to them, *“I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come.”*

²² This made the Jews ask, *“Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, ‘Where I go, you cannot come’?”*

²³ But he continued, *“You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.”*

²⁵ *“Who are you?” they asked.*

“Just what I have been claiming all along,” Jesus replied. ²⁶ “I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.”

²⁷ They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. ²⁸ So Jesus said, *“When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. ²⁹ The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” ³⁰ Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him.*

The Children of Abraham

³¹ To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, *“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

³³ They answered him, *“We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?”*

³⁴ Jesus replied, *“I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵ Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ I know you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. ³⁸ I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you do what you have heard from your father.”*

³⁹ *“Abraham is our father,” they answered.*

“If you were Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then you would do the things Abraham did. ⁴⁰ As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. ⁴¹ You are doing the things your own father does.”

“We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.”

The Children of the Devil

⁴² Jesus said to them, *“If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. ⁴³ Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴ You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! ⁴⁶*

Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? ⁴⁷ He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

The Claims of Jesus about Himself

⁴⁸ The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"

⁴⁹ "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰ I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. ⁵¹ I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

⁵² At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death. ⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

⁵⁴ Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. ⁵⁵ Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

⁵⁷ "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"

⁵⁸ "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" ⁵⁹ At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds. 1

Sometimes God speaks in surprising ways. This week in my Bible reading, two passages came together that raised the same question. The first came from 2 Kings 17. The narrator summarizes why the northern kingdom of Israel fell to invaders. He writes "They forsook all the commands of the Lord their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry host and they worship Baal. They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sorcery and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the Lord." Here were the people of God involved in darkness. So I left 2 Kings 17 and turned to my New Testament reading – Acts 19. Paul is in Ephesus. Incredible miracles happen through him. Even handkerchiefs and aprons that touch him are taken to the sick. They experience healing.

Then some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over the demon-possessed. They would say "In the name of Jesus who Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Then one day 7 sons from one family are trying to drive out an evil spirit. But it answers them. "Jesus I know and I know about Paul but who are you?" Then this man who had the evil spirit in him jumps these seven guys and gives them a real beat down. In fact they run out of the house naked and bleeding.

Word about this spreads through the Jewish and Greek community in Ephesus. Seized with awe, they hold up Jesus' name in high honor. Then I came to Acts 19:18-19 – “Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas.” In other words here again were the people of God dabbling in darkness.

How do God's people get involved in darkness?

I knew this week's passage was Jesus, light of the world. So I asked, “Lord, do you want us as the people of God at Sturgeon Valley to look at our lives to see if we're dabbling in darkness, so we see our need for Jesus' light. I started to ask around. In what ways have you seen, experienced or heard about Christians dabbling in darkness? Where might Christians or people in general, mess with spiritual darkness?

Here are some of the answers I got back.

- Facebook horoscopes
- Video games where the "deeds of darkness" are readily accessible.
- I'd agree. Videogames and movies seem to be the top two I can think of.
- I know someone who likes to see hypnotists, horoscopes, tarot readers, I also think that video games are right up there and the Calgary Flames
- Infidelity, bitterness, lying to a spouse, domestic abuse, pornography, bullying and intimidation, stealing from work.
- I guess I'll add lottery tickets/gambling and inappropriate internet sites.

Another friend not from this city writes:

“I am amazed with how many friends I have who have gotten swept up in the vampire phenomenon of the "Twilight" books/movies series...one of those people is a key leader on our ladies ministry team who recommended the books to others. If that's the BEST book you have to recommend, I'm afraid!! It's also crazy how many "dark" things have entered into the kid realm. Primarily the newest Disney flick "The Princess and

the Frog" ...a very dark, voodoo premise in that one that leaves me shocked when I have my Grade 2's come back and report it was the best thing they've ever seen. Do parents not chat with their kids about this stuff? Or go on to Focus on the Family's Plugged In to see what's all involved with what their kids are reading and watching??!!

I do not want to be a parent like that. The sad thing is, you get judged by your friends as being too strict.

Wow, this has really stirred up a lot within. Yikes. And now, God's convicting me because I do like shows like The Bachelor, Survivor, etc. Are they best things to be watching? Probably not. (sigh...it's a never-ending battle)"

Our youth pastor writes - I think it is very easy for young people to get caught up in music and movies with darkness. Horror movies often use supernatural elements and storyline to invoke fear. Musicians often draw on dark things in their lyrics, or themselves dwell in that type of darkness. Those songs and artists become popular on the radio. Then the song or the artist's life becomes examples to listeners.

The other example was horoscopes (astrology), psychics, palm reading. . . . These are the entry level of the occult. Most people I know have never tried a Ouija board, but I know a lot who read their horoscopes or have been to a psychic (or "prophet"). A horoscope may not seem bad at first glance. It seems like just some words on a page that could likely apply to everyone. However, it teaches (or perhaps reveals the hearts of) people to distrust God and His promises. It may begin with a laugh, but sometimes these words can be powerful and convincing and can draw someone further into the darkness, trusting in something other than God."

Spiritual darkness is out there and around us. But we're not here today to focus on the darkness. We need to come to the One who deals with the darkness.

The Good News today - Jesus' light exposes the darkness in our hearts. He is the solution to get rid of it.

Today, you are going to see a side of Jesus you might never have seen before as He confronts darkness. I asked for some impressions of Jesus from the passage you just heard. One wrote "He's maybe a little forward, but He is Jesus, so knows best. Another wrote I consider John 8 the highest drama of Scripture. Enticement, name-calling, and smack down of theological beliefs...this is perhaps the greatest confrontation in the history of humanity...until the battle of Armageddon."

Last week, we began to look at Jesus' deeds and words from the Gospel of John. Remember John dropped that little clue in John 6:4 – the Passover feast was near so we would look at the passage with Passover-colored glasses. We saw Jesus provide real bread for the crowd of 5000. Then he claimed to be the bread of life, the source of our spiritual sustenance and nourishment. We were reminded of God's name from the burning bush – I AM. So when Jesus said “I am the bread of life” and “I am the bread that came down from heaven,” He was tying the divine name to His claim. We saw people respond in different ways. The crowd that he fed first demanded that he provide more. Many rejected Him. Some of His own disciples abandoned him. But the twelve remained.

As the Gospel continues, Jesus is about to make more claims about Himself. They will end with a physical threat on His life. But His claims do much more than stir up His opponents. They expose darkness in souls. Though we might not like to have the darkness in our lives exposed, we absolutely need it exposed. It is like a deadly cancer that will kill if not treated. Once exposed, we can then turn to the One who can deal with it.

So today, Jesus is right here with His soul penetrating flashlight found through His Word. I invite you to let His Word shine into your heart. To work through this passage, we're simply going to look at Jesus' claims and the darkness revealed by them.

What does Jesus' claim? What darkness does it reveal in our hearts?

- **Claim 1 – I am the light of the world (8:12-20)**

Jesus claims to be the light of the world. Jesus is the light who opens the eyes of our spiritual understanding. He guides us into the truth about ourselves and about what God has done to satisfy our most urgent needs. But why did Jesus pick this image?

John drops another reading clue in the previous chapter. John 7:2 tells us the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near. Every year, Jews gathered in Jerusalem to remember their wilderness wanderings during Moses' time. So residents of Jerusalem would literally move out of their homes into little tabernacles or tents. The family would live in that tent for 7 days to identify with and remember what their forefathers went through.

It would be like all of us pitching tents in our front or back yards and living there for a week. We'd have to cook there, eat there and sleep there. Not only did the residents of Jerusalem do this. Jews came from all over the country. This Feast transformed Jerusalem into one huge tent city.

During this festival there were special services at the Temple grounds. One of these was called the Festival of Lights. If you think of our Christmas Eve Candlelight service, multiply that by thousands. Each night of the feast there may have been a massive candle lighting ceremony.

But what did it mean? It reminded them of their people's experience in the wilderness. Exodus 13:21-22 tell us about how the Lord showed His people His presence. Known as the Shekinah cloud, the Lord led them with a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. It saved them from destroyers and guided them through the wilderness. The Lord was literally light for His people during that time.

Now Jesus claims to be the "Light of the World." So the Lord's light extended from the nation of Israel to the world.

But the Pharisees who listen to this claim are not impressed. They give us our first glimpse of the darkness that can linger in our hearts. I've called it **Darkness – Default Dismissal Clause** – "I'm not interested, and I want to get away from Jesus. So I'm going to look for a technicality to dismiss Him."

Did you notice that His opponents don't even comment on this claim? Instead they go after the validity of His testimony. In Jewish law, you needed at least 2 witnesses. So they disqualify His testimony because He doesn't have 2 witnesses. But Jesus responds, I do have 2 witnesses: Myself and my Father. Verse 18 – I and my Father bear witness. We're both very reliable witnesses. In fact, our witness is completely true. Besides, no human witness can judge a divine witness for accuracy. But these Pharisees avoid His claim because of some legal technicality.

Sometimes people do this with Jesus. They have a default response to anything about Jesus or Christianity. They have one piece of supposed evidence of an error in the Bible. They take one verse or they look back on some misdeed done during the crusades. Instead of considering Jesus' word, their default response kicks in.

So Jesus says, "I am the Light of the World." "I'm not interested because of what that knight did during the crusades." They move on. Do you think you might have responded to Jesus like that? If so, His light has just

revealed that darkness default response in your heart. Might you need to reset the default to consider Jesus' claims rather than immediately reject them?

The conversation continues where Jesus makes another claim.

▪ **Claim 2 – I am from above; (8:21-24)**

Now he's talking to some Jewish folk.

Verse 23 – “But he continued, ‘You are from below, I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.’” Jesus talks about going away to a place they cannot come. He also concludes that they will die in their sin. They understand Him to be talking about life beyond the present life. So they ask if He will kill himself.

If that's what He had in mind, they certainly could not go where He was going. In Jewish thought, suicide sent you to the darkest Hades. But far from being doomed to darkness, He claims He is from above, the heavenly world. Since Jesus is from above, He is destined to return to the world above. So he makes another “I am” statement in verse 24. “I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he.” The “he” is the one He claims to be; the one from above.

In that claim, He exposes another reality of darkness in and around our lives.

Darkness – You are from the world. We live and were born into a dark world. (We are from below.)

Everyone is born into this spiritual darkness which is separation from God. When Jesus went back to be with the Father, He was beyond the reach of unbelievers including those talking to Him. They did not grasp that nothing except faith in Him can save them from dying in their sins.

The same was true for us before we came to Christ. We are from below. If we die apart from Christ, we will die in our sins. This requires us to expand our view of Christ to the one who is from above. One commentator puts it this way “It is impossible to have the kind of faith John describes without having a high view of Christ. Unless we believe that Jesus is more than a man, we can never trust him with faith that is saving faith.” Unless we believe that He is from above, we cannot go to Him.

Well the Jews do not fully get this. They realize he said “I am he.” But who is the he? So they ask in verse 25, “Who are you?” Jesus does not directly answer this question. He points them back to His previous

claims. “Just what I have been claiming all along.” We’ve just seen Him claim He’s from above. But it seems His next claim more directly connects Him to the Father. Verse 26 – I have much to say in judgment of you. But He who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from Him I tell the world.” So I would define Jesus’ third claim like this.

▪ **Claim 3 – I am he who was sent from the One above. (8:25-30)**

Jesus claims God the Father sent Him. John lets us know the Jews didn’t understand that “he who sent me” was in fact the Heavenly Father (verse 27). So Jesus makes it plain to them in verse 28 with another I am statement. “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.”

This claim and their response to it reveal another form of darkness that can lodge in our hearts.

Darkness – Confusion. Especially about Jesus’ identity and relationship to His Father. Lots of people are confused about Jesus. He’s been portrayed as the secret lover of Mary Magdalene; one of many founders of today’s religions; a good moral teacher. Many don’t understand His relationship with the Father. They see Him as an inferior to God, another god, the human son of God just like any other child of God.

But God provided something that brings clarity to confusion about Jesus; His lifting up. Verse 28 – Jesus said “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.” The phrase “lifted up” has a double meaning in this Gospel. It refers both to Jesus’ crucifixion and His exaltation. He was lifted up on the cross and He was lifted up through the resurrection, ascension into heaven and seating at God’s right hand. Those who recognize the lifting up on the cross as evidence that Jesus is who He claims to be will be saved. Those who don’t will recognize that Jesus’ claims are true when they see Him exalted at His return. By then it will be too late for salvation but they will know His claims were true. If you are confused about Christ, will you ask God to give you some clarity through the cross? Ponder the cross; read about the cross in the New Testament; ask and explore why the cross. The more you do that, I believe Jesus’ real identity will become clearer to you.

Now there is some good news in this chapter. In verse 30, John tells us “Many put their faith in him.” Some people heard his claims and took Jesus at His Word. They put their faith in him.

It seems most obvious to conclude that He's talking to the same people in verse 31. "To the Jews who had believed him." But notice the difference there – The people in verse 30 "Put their faith IN Him." The Jews in verse 31 "Believed Him." Keep those differences in mind as we go through this next claim.

▪ **Claim 4 – If you hold to my teaching, you will be set free by its truth. (8:31-32)**

Jesus makes a widely quoted but often misunderstood statement. "Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." Certainly surrender to the facts in any situation or discipline provides genuine freedom. But His Words could be interpreted to mean "sticking to the school of Jesus gives you insight that will deliver you from ignorance." But that's not really His thrust here. When John uses "truth" in this Gospel, He refers to the person and work of Jesus. In a few weeks, we will see Jesus claim "I am the way, the truth and the life." Before Pilate Jesus says "Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." Pilate asks "What is truth?" Truth was standing right in front of him.

So Jesus says to these Jews who believed Him "if you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. So do you see that it's not certain they actually are His disciples? If you do this, you are really disciples. True discipleship or following Jesus involves welcoming Jesus' Word into our lives; living by it so continuously that it becomes part of us. True disciples let Jesus' word permanently influence them. When we abide in His Word we abide in Him.

So what darkness does this claim expose? **Darkness – I recognize some truth in Him but I won't do anything about it.** These people believed Jesus spoke true things. But that's as far as it goes. It doesn't make a difference in their lives. They're not willing to change anything because of Jesus' true words. They are not prepared to yield Him the far-reaching allegiance that real trust in Him implies.

One commentator writes – "This is a most dangerous spiritual state. To recognize that truth is in Jesus and do nothing about it means you line up with Christ's enemies. It means that there is some powerful spiritual force holding back the would-be believer from the right course of action." This explains the direction the conversation will take. There were people conversing with Jesus who believed He said true things. But they didn't entrust themselves to Him as Savior. They were still lost. Friend, if you think that simply

acknowledging Jesus made some true statements saves you; listen to Jesus' appeal here. "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples." Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

But sometimes it's hard to admit that we're not free – that we're enslaved. If we're successful in life or enjoy our life as it is, it's pretty hard to see how we might need a Savior. That's exactly what these folks thought. So in verse 33 – "We are Abraham's descendents and have never been slaves to anyone. How can you say that we need to be set free?" Certainly they had been physically enslaved by the Egyptians, Philistines, Assyrians and Babylonians. But these objectors perhaps thought that they had always been God's people. Even though they were currently occupied by Rome, they still had special status in the Roman Empire to freely practice their religion.

Jesus' answer makes plain their slavery and reveals another claim.

- **Claim 5 – Apart from me, you're enslaved to sin. (8:33-38)**

Verse 34 – I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Here was a bitter truth. Apart from their imagined freedom, they were prisoners to sin. No amount of paying lip service to Jesus' true statements or practice of external religion could save them. Jesus offers proof of this claim. Whoever commits sin is a slave – a person who continues to commit sin. So we are all born slaves of sin. When we come to Christ, we are released from sin's bondage. We will still commit sins but sin is no longer our master.

But a person who continually commits sin is still a slave to sin. He who habitually asserts his own will, prides himself on his own independence, follows his own inclinations and shows primary concern only for himself is a slave. The self-centered life proves enslavement to sin.

Darkness – Belief that "We're not enslaved to sin apart from Christ. We're good moral people. We believe in God." If Jesus' Word has no place in our lives, we're likely still enslaved. A strong spiritual force compels us away from Jesus' word and towards sin. Jesus begins to refer to this force in verse 38. "I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your Father." So Jesus has One Father; the Father in heaven. They have another father.

But they don't get who He might mean. So they declare in verse 38 "Abraham is our father." But Jesus disputes that. If they were Abraham's children, they would act like Abraham. What did Abraham do? He

welcomed visitors who came down from above. He listened to God. In Genesis 18, when the Lord visited with 2 angels, Abraham invited them to stay and have a meal. He listened and talked with the Lord. These Jews were not welcoming Jesus so they were not like Abraham. They had a different father. In verse 41 Jesus says “You are doing the things your own father does.”

They respond “We are not illegitimate children. The only Father we have is God Himself.” They weren’t like the Samaritans – Jews who intermarried with pagan conquerors and worshiped many Gods. They claimed they were true to God the Father. But Jesus dispels that with His next claim.

▪ **Claim 6 –If you don’t love me, you are children of the devil. (8:39-47)**

Darkness – If God is not our father, we’re children of the devil.

If we love Christ, we are God’s children. If we don’t love Christ, we are the devil’s children. He concludes this because they are trying to kill Him. When they act like that, they act like the devil.

Jesus says “He was a murderer from the beginning.” Where do we see that? Well, it could be in the first murder. When Cain killed his brother Abel, the devil was surely there.

But I was really struck by the point of one commentator. “It was through Satan that Adam became mortal. Satan thus became a murderer of the whole human race. Though the devil existed before that time, men did not. So there was no opportunity for him so show himself a man-killer.” (Morris). So for those who like to dabble in darkness and think Satan is fun, He wants us all dead. He played a part in ensuring all of us would experience physical death.

On top of that, he’s a liar. Since Jesus is truth, Satan has no interest in Jesus or His Word. So when these Jews want to kill Jesus and when they have no interest in acknowledging the truth of Jesus’ Words, they’re acting just like the devil, their true spiritual father.

Well that didn’t go over well. I don’t know how you’d respond if someone called you a child of the devil. But they continue to act like the devil. Verse 48 – “Aren’t we right in saying you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?” Those were the two biggest insults a Jew could put forward in that day. They label Jesus with both of them.

Jesus rejects these accusations. “I am not demon-possessed because I seek to honor the Father in heaven. Demons don’t honor him. They honor their father the devil.” Then he adds a component of eternity into the discussion. Verse 51 – I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”

The Jews pounce on this. “Abraham died. The prophets died. You say if anyone keeps your word, they won’t die. Are you greater than Abraham and the prophets? Jesus will build to his last and ultimate claim in this passage.

▪ **Claim 7 – I existed before Abraham and before the world began. (8:51-58).**

Verse 54 – My Father, who you claim as your God is the one who glorifies me. I know Him. I keep His Word. Verse 56 – Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day. He saw it and rejoiced.” In other words, Jesus’ claims to have knowledge or to have witnessed Abraham rejoicing. We’re not sure when this rejoicing occurred. It could have happened in Genesis 15 when Abraham went into a deep sleep and received a vision from God. There was a rabbinic tradition that Genesis 24:1 which says “Abraham was now old and well advanced in years” should be read as “Abraham went forward in the days.” Somehow God brought Him forward into the future to see Christ’s day. We don’t know for sure. But Jesus claims to have seen this rejoicing.

So the Jews respond – You’re not yet 50 – the age when a man can claim to be an elder and lived a good life – and you have seen Abraham – who lived about 1900 years ago?” Jesus responds “Before Abraham was born, I AM.” That is the most direct claim to deity we have seen so far. He deliberately uses the divine name God used in Exodus 3. Jesus claims He existed before the world and Abraham.

The Jews understand this claim perfectly because they look around for stones to throw. You stoned people who blasphemed. The punishment for blasphemy, speaking against God or claiming to be God, was stoning. This claim revealed another type of darkness in their hearts and maybe some here.

Darkness – I cannot allow for a pre-existent Son who became flesh. That would upset my worldview. I must stone him.

That’s what we see all around us today isn’t it? People stone Christ with their books, article or emotional outbursts. Jesus is dismissed as a joke at the University. The new atheists like Dawkins and Hitchens continue

their hysterical screeching in an attempt to deny an intelligent designer. People use Christ's name as a curse word all the time while they wouldn't dare use the name of Allah or Buddha or Krishna. People get angry when Christians claim Jesus is the only way. They want to stone Him.

But it was not yet time for them to successfully murder him. So he slips away in verse 59. How did He do that among such a mob? Some argue that the verb could be passive, "He was hidden." The Father may have intervened to protect Him here. Or Jesus simply supernaturally hid himself and perhaps very symbolically left the temple grounds. It could be that Jesus now leaves His own people, the Jews and the temple and goes out to the world – the man born blind in chapter 9.

In 47 verses Jesus makes multiple claims that shine His light on the darkness in his listener's hearts and our hearts. If you're a Christian, maybe the Holy Spirit used some of Jesus' words to expose an area of darkness that you've harbored in your heart. Will you confess that today and then ask the Holy Spirit for His power to come to the light Jesus.

If you're not a Christian, I trust Jesus' words exposed the darkness in you. But you don't have to stay there. If you put your personal trust in Jesus you will not die in your sins. If you come to the Son, He will release you from slavery to sin. He will set you free indeed. Come to Him and invite Him and His Word into every part of your life.

Christians, Hear the truth about yourself from Jesus today. "I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life. I pray you will receive the encouragement from Jesus today. You will never walk in darkness but have the light of life. If you know me, you know the Father. If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. You are set free from sin's reign and can live through this life and eternity by the Light of Christ. Leave behind the darkness and come to His light.

Yes, there is darkness. But light shines bright in darkness. We've got the brightest light of all—Jesus before us and in us.