**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes 10-2-2022
I Am the Light of the World**

Over the last couple of years my family made a couple of day trips to nearby caves. One was called Indian Echo Cavern, which is near Hershey. The other was Crystal Cave, which is over in Kutztown. Have any of you ever been in either one of these?

I have been fortunate to not only enjoy touring both of these caves, but also the Luray Caverns in Luray, Virginia as a child.

Each of these caves is so fascinating. It is like a whole other world underground. The stalactites formations that hang from the top and stalagmites that form from the bottom are really neat to look at.

Now these caves have all been turned into tourist attractions and various lights are wired in to help brighten the look in these underground caves. In fact, there was actually a wedding that took place in the Crystal Cave in the early 20th century. They even were able to bring a piano down into the cave for this event as well. And so today it is strictly a tourist attraction.

But in both of our recent cave tours, there was a moment when our tour guide had us deep into the interior of the cave and then they turned out the lights. They were nice, of course, and warned us in advance. But it was very dark. And I appreciated the effect of even one light being turned back on.

The Bible speaks a great deal about light and darkness. Even from the very beginning of the creation account we read of God saying, “Let there be light.” And there was light. And He separated the light from the darkness.

In the Old Testament, as Isaiah writes about how the Messiah will be someone not just for the Jewish people, but for all people. He writes in Isaiah 9:2 “**The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.”**

In the first chapter of John’s Gospel, John refers to Jesus as the One who brings light to all mankind and that the light brought by Jesus shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

We are told in 1 John that “**God is light**.” And that Christians are called to walk in the light.

So again, the images of light and darkness are so important in the Scriptures as a whole. But today, as we continue the “I Am” sayings of Jesus found in John’s Gospel, we will explore what Jesus was saying when he refers to Himself as “the light of the world.”

To help prepare us for the Scripture, it is important to know what is going on as Jesus makes this profound statement. We are told that this event took place during the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles that is celebrated each Fall. In fact, this feast will be celebrated once again beginning next Sunday evening the 9th at sunset and concluding the following Sunday October 16th at sunset.

Now what was the Feast of Tabernacles all about? It was designed by God to help Israel remember God’s presence with them in the wilderness. For 40 years, the glorious presence of God went with Israel. Isn’t that amazing?! There were clouds that were with them during the day and at night there was a pillar of fire. The presence and light of God would guide them on when they were to camp and when they were to move.

Over the years, a tradition was developed that during the festival, especially on the last and most important day of the festival, there would be all these torches that were lit. And what this symbolized was the light of God’s presence with Israel in the wilderness.

And as we now turn to this morning’s passage, we find Jesus on this last the most important day of the festival. And Jesus is teaching up a storm. The crowds are gravitating to Him and those that are opposing Him are becoming increasingly bothered.

Let’s see how John records the scene. We will be hearing from John 8:12-20:

**12When 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.”**

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

**14Jesus 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. 15You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. 16But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. 17In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. 18I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.”**

**19Then 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.” 20He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.**

We are told in verse 20 that Jesus spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Why would John include this detail? Scholars believe that this court is where Jesus was connected to the court of the women. And it was in the court of the women where there were torches that were lit to commemorate the light of God that was with the Israelites in the wilderness.

And so, with these blazing torches lit in the background, Jesus explains “I Am the Light of the World.” In other words, just as the glory and light of God was with Israel in their journey in the wilderness and they needed to follow that light as God would lead them, Jesus was saying that if people put their trust in Me and follow after Me, they will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

The Jewish festivals were meant to find their fulfillment in Jesus. The Passover pointed to Jesus, who became our Passover Lamb. The Day of Atonement was fulfilled as Jesus gave His life as an atoning sacrifice. And here, with the feast of tabernacles, and the glorious presence of God with Israel in the wilderness, we see this fulfilled in Jesus tabernacling with humanity and being the light of the world.

In this is this powerful “I Am” statement of Jesus, our Lord makes it clear that how people choose to respond to them will determine if they walk in spiritual light and truth and see God clearly or if their spiritual understanding is darkened and foggy.

Jesus helps people to see God much more clearly. Truly, to see God is to see God. Jesus helps people to see who they are and who they are called to be more clearly. Jesus directs that step and gives light and understanding on what His people are called to do.

Truly, this is a HUGE claim of Jesus. And then, beginning in verse 13 and for the next several verses, we see this confrontation that takes place. The Pharisees are challenging Him on His authority to make such a claim.

And Jesus tells them that His testimony is valid, because His Father testifies with Him. And Jesus goes on to say that if you knew me, you would know my Father as well. Jesus’ Father, of course, is God the Father. To reject Jesus is to reject God. To receive Jesus is to receive God.

So what does it mean that Jesus is the light of the world? It speaks of Jesus being the One who enables people to overcome the darkness of sin. He brings things to light. He helps people walk away from the darkness and into His light. He convicts people of their sin and He heals the brokenness in people as they turn to Him.

Jesus is telling everyone present that He is what they need. Jesus alone has the power to rescue people out of the darkness of sin and bring them into the light of God’s comforting presence.

Friends, what is the big takeaway from this passage? It is **to remember that Jesus is the only One that has the power to rescue people out of the darkness and to bring them into the light.**

Think about your own story. Consider how Jesus has helped you to see God more clearly and to see your need for Him more clearly. Remember how He has brought you out of the darkness and how He continues to help you walk in the light.

Paul writes later to the mostly Gentile church in Thessalonica (1 Thess. 5:5), that **“You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.”**

**The closer we walk to Him, the easier it will be to see.**

But the amazing reality of Jesus being the light of the world does not end here. Jesus goes on to call His followers “the light of the world.” That is amazing. It is like a chain reaction. Christ is perfect pure light in Himself. And as we walk with Him, we are shining brighter and brighter in this world. We are reflecting the light of Christ to the world.

So how do we let the light of Christ shine in us and through us? By walking in the light. By spending time in fellowship with God. By loving and treasuring His written Word and setting to understand it and live it out each day. Thy word is a light unto my path (this helps us to stay close to the light and to carry the light).

It is a humbling truth to know that God, in His mercy, has rescued you from your sin and has given you true life and eternal life. And it is equally as humbling to know that God wants to shine His light through you to others.

Our vision as Chestnut Grove is to be a light on a hill sharing the love of Jesus Christ. This all begins with acknowledging and celebrating Jesus as the light of the world.

Friends, in this world, there are lots of things that can leave us feeling confused and feeling lost. But Jesus’ presence continues to offer us clarity and peace and direction and joy. So let us choose to stay close to the light of Christ and let us follow Him as He leads us each day to shine brightly in this world that desperately needs His light in their life. Amen.

Sources:

<https://biblehub.com/isaiah/9-2.htm>

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

The Gospel According to John – D.A. Carson