

DEVOTIONAL 3



CHRIST
CHURCH

JOHN 8:12-20:9:1-7

^{8:12} Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” ¹³ So the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.” ¹⁴ Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. ¹⁷ In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. ¹⁸ I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.” ¹⁹ They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” ²⁰ These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

^{9:1} As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. ² And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³ Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶ Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud ⁷ and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

DAY 1

JOHN 8:12

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying,
“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Our second “I am” statement is here in verse 12, “I am the light of the world.” Light and darkness is a theme that John has been building on since the opening verses of the book: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:1–5). Light and darkness are noteworthy for several things. First is the binary, oppositional nature of the two. There is no fellowship between light and darkness. Second is the welcoming nature of light as opposed to the isolating nature of darkness. We know this from our own experience as well as the characterizations of light and darkness throughout literature. What other observations can you make about light and darkness from a Biblical perspective?

Here in John 8 Jesus says that He is the light. Once again Jesus makes claims that no mere man could make. He can only make this claim as one who is himself very God of very God. Jesus’ claim to be the light illuminates so much of his mission. He has come to drive away the darkness. He has come to give guidance to the lost. He has come to give warmth and welcome to those who shiver from the cold, damp darkness. No wonder the apostle John would invite later readers to walk in the light:

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:5–7)

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, Light of the World, we come to you today seeking the warmth, the safety, and the illumination that we can find in no other. We thank you that you came to drive away the darkness and for the promise that the darkness cannot overcome the light! We praise you for the welcome that you offer as we seek shelter and hospitality along the way. We praise you for the promise of guidance and the knowledge that you will not let our feet stumble as we follow you. Holy Spirit help us, as your children, to embrace the light. May we not be tempted by darkness; may we always see darkness for what it is. Thank you that you do not simply give us the light, but that you are the Light and we can rest in you. We pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

DAY 2

JOHN 8:12b-16

^{12b} Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. ¹³ So the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.” ¹⁴ Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me.”

Ironically the challenges of the religious leaders to Jesus concerning “witness” highlight both the extent to which Jesus proved his claims and set the pattern for us to follow. The leaders, on the surface, are talking about the need for testimony to be corroborated in order to be established (think of how supposed witnesses were gathered at Jesus’ trial to establish the testimony that eventually led to him being crucified). RC Sproul in his commentary on John comments: “The Greek word translated as ‘witness’ in this verse is *marturia*, from which we get the English word martyr. This word, which indicates one who loses his life for a cause, comes from the Greek word for witness because there was such a close relationship between the martyrs of the early church and their witness to the truth claims of Jesus. They bore witness to Christ by giving their lives; their testimony was emphatic because it involved their own blood. The irony is this: the first martyr of the Christian church was Christ Himself, and in His martyrdom He bore supreme witness to the truth of the things that He was speaking even here.” (144,145)

Will you take a moment to reflect on the martyrdom of Christ? Such was his belief and commitment to his mission, such was his love for his people that he willingly laid down his life for that cause.

Now take a moment to reflect on the pattern that Christ’s martyrdom sets for our lives. Jesus famously said, “For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it” (Mark 8:35). In what areas is the Holy Spirit nudging you to surrender to Christ’s cause?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we thank you today for the witness that you bore to the truth, a witness that cost you your very life. May this costly gift on our behalf fill us with gratitude. As we seek to bear witness to your truth and take your light to the world, may we surrender to the Gospel paradox that only by losing our life will we save it. Holy Spirit embolden us today in the way of witness that Jesus has set before us. We pray this all in the name of Jesus our Beloved. Amen.

DAY 3

JOHN 9:1-7

¹ As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. ² And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud ⁷ and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

Jesus' claim that He was the Light of the world was grounded in origin. He said He was not from/ of this world, but from another place, of another family. He was from above, from heaven, the place of light. His father was God, in whom there is no darkness AT ALL! This is His nature, how He lives. And this pure life is the Light.

Light shines...it simultaneously illumines what is good, right, and true, and exposes what is evil, wrong, and false. It shines indiscriminately and impartially, and is not altered by human responses. It does not overlook some wrong or excuse some individuals. Conversely, the sun shines on the unjust as well as the just.

Sinners who have been born under the dominion of darkness have a love/hate relationship with light. Darkness seems normal, and we resist exposure; we find clever ways to call darkness light. The religious leaders of Jesus' day saw themselves as light, and assumed Jesus was standing at the bar answering to them.

When Jesus saw the blind man along the path, He saw an opportunity to illustrate the truth He was teaching. He would demonstrate the goodness, mercy, and power of His Father, training His disciples, and revealing hearts. He saw and touched the blind man. The dark world of a blind man was transformed by light; his eyes were opened. Jesus was before him as Light, but he needed sight. Can you imagine the wonder of seeing shapes, colors, people for the first time? Can you imagine how different his life would be? Can you imagine the joy and gratitude he would feel? He had met the Light of the world, the Savior! He would no longer walk in darkness.

Jesus told His disciples we need to keep working while it is day.
Think of ways you bring light into the darkness around you.

How do you respond when light exposes you?
Reflect on God's goodness and mercy in showing us our sin.

Does the joy of salvation permeate your life?
Use psalms of praise to help you express your gratitude to God.

PRAYER

Loving Father, thank you from rescuing us from the dominion of darkness and transferring us to the kingdom of your beloved Son. Jesus, you are our light and our salvation! We are filled with joy! Strengthen us for the work you have for us to do while it is day. We want the dark world to know you. Amen.

DAY 4

JOHN 8:15-16

¹⁵ You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me.

One of the core assumptions of modern science is that we can make observations through experimentation. We find empirical evidence by collecting information from the five senses, then draw conclusions from that. Scientists even bolster the natural senses with microscopes, spectrometers, digital modeling, and all sorts of instrumentation. The challenge however, is that every person has inherent bias—a tendency to lean in a certain direction, to see things in a certain way, either in favor or against a certain thing. Thus scientists do their best to identify their subjective biases and correct for them in order to attain a pure scientific process.

Yet there is a problem. The theologian Herman Bavinck puts it this way, “One may attempt [to silence their subjectivity], but will never succeed because the scholar can never be separate from the human being.” In other words, so long as we are human, so long as we are *creatures*, we cannot have a truly objective perspective. We don’t know all the facts. We are blind to our blind spots. Our logical reasoning is inconsistent and faulty.

To the secular scientist, this may be a tough truth to swallow. To the pious Pharisees boasting in their religiosity, Jesus gives a word that knocks them back.

When we acknowledge that we are creatures, we acknowledge that our judgment is limited. We are humbled, sat down, and our lips silenced... to look up to Him.

- How does it feel to sit humbled before your all-knowing Creator?
- Rest in the peace that the Lord holds the weight of the world in His hands. (Read Psalm 139 for further reflection.)

This conversation began with Jesus declaring that he is the light of the world. Then the Pharisees responded with their unbelieving hearts in an attempt to dismantle Jesus’ claim. They judged according to the flesh—enslaved to their biases, they tried to see while blind. They prioritized their bias for what the Messiah would be like, rather than surrendering their judgment before the true Messiah who stood in front of them! In contrast, Jesus judges no one—he does not falsely assault people’s identities as the Pharisees did. He is true in all his perception, in all his reasoning, and in all his judgment.

Why? Because he is one with the Father. Jesus has full claim to the title, Light of the World, because his father is the Father of Lights. There is no shadow of turning in God! (See James 1:17, 1 John 1:5)

- In what ways are you tempted to judge other people?
- Have you ever considered how you attempt to define who God is based on your own terms? What are the ways in which you are tempted to do that? Take a moment to repent of these things and rest in the one who is your light.

PRAYER

Father, we yield our minds to you. Illuminate our hearts by the power and presence of your Holy Spirit to see Jesus. Not as our creaturely minds want to define you, but as you truly are. Please forgive me for the ways that my prideful heart seeks to be the Judge. You alone reveal and define truth. We confess that we know nothing apart from you. Help us to shine your light in this dark world as we hold fast to your truth. Thank you Jesus for being our anchor and our guide. Amen.

DAY 5

JOHN 8:18-19

¹⁸ I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.” ¹⁹ They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”

I received my first flashlight from my dad. I remember it clear as day. It was black, required two AA batteries and felt as if it illuminated my whole house at night when I would use it to look at books in bed. I can remember this because I am witnessing the other side now. My son has a reading light he attaches to his books at night to read. A light in the darkness. As a father, I love the idea of giving my child something that keeps the darkness at bay. Certainly spiritually there is a real value to this. How much more does God the Father delight in giving His children light. Not to mention the light of the world: Jesus Christ!

- Take a moment to reflect on all the ways God has illuminated your story through Jesus. Pray and give thanks to God for the light that has entered into our world and keeps darkness at bay.

The light that Jesus Christ provides to the children of God comes through our connection to him. We call this the adoption of sons and daughters. Through the work of Jesus we have been grafted in, adopted so to speak by God’s grace. This gives us rights and responsibilities that go with that status, and it also gives us hope. As a seminary professor once said, “adoption breeds hope because it not only pertains to eternity (Ephesians 1:5), the past (Romans 8:15), and the present (1 John 3:2,3), but also the future (1 John 3:2).” Adoption transforms our story, it sheds light on our status before Christ. The light of the world has come down into darkness, and through this action has brought us near to the living God.

- Spend this morning praying that God would lead you in your assurance as a son or daughter of the living God.
- Read Romans 8:14-17,23,29 and Galatians 3:25-4:7 for more scriptural references to adoption.

PRAYER

Father in heaven. You sent us your son, the light of the world, that we may know and be known by You. Thank you for this gift. May you plant deep inside us the assurance of our place before you, in your family, through the work of the Spirit and the truth of your word. In Christ we pray, Amen.