

I Am the Light
February 5, 2023
Allen Power

John 8:3-12

How many of you find yourself using the flashlight on your mobile device to see things up close when you used to see them just fine in normal light? We're blessed to have Nhung Brandenburg a Doctor of Optometry and member of the Presidents Council of the American Optometric Association in our group. She could explain in technical terms what we can all confirm from life, as we age our eyes need more light.ⁱ The fact is all of God's creation needs light and this morning as we look at Jesus' second "I AM" statement in John's gospel we will focus on the "light of life" that is needed for every soul at every age.

Before Jesus' "I AM" statement about light, we see Him shedding light on sin and offering grace and forgiveness to all who repent and believe in Him. The Jewish "Feast of Booths" was ending and Jesus was in the temple area in Jerusalem teaching and ministering to the pilgrims at this festival. As He taught, the "scribes and Pharisees" interrupted by literally shoving a frightened woman into the scene. Their accusation: "*This woman was caught in the act of adultery.*"

John 8:5–11 (ESV) — 5 Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" **6** This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.

- Let's quickly deal with a controversy about this text. In your Bible you may see brackets and the statement, "the earliest manuscripts do not include 7:53-8:11.] We are not going to "trip" on this note. If you want to "nerd out" on the subject of "textual criticism" I've given you a link in the footnotes.ⁱⁱ
- (Wiersbe) "*Most scholars seem to agree that the passage is a part of inspired Scripture ("a fragment of authentic Gospel material," says Dr. F.F. Bruce) regardless of where it is placed.*"ⁱⁱⁱ That's good enough for me. What I know for sure is the story sounds just like Jesus!
- First we ask, "Where is the man? It takes two to "tango." The law called for both parties to be executed.
- Perhaps the man was a co-conspirator in this "set-up" to trap Jesus (V.6).
- The religious leaders thought they had Jesus this time! If He said, "*Don't stone her (to death),*" that would violate the law of Moses: Gotcha! If He said, "*Yes, stone her!*" He would be violating Roman law that only THEY could execute someone. (i.e. Jesus was taken to Pilate for crucifixion.)
- Jesus turned the tables on them by shining the light on THEIR sins.
- The law required the witnesses to the crime to throw the first stones.

7 And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” 8 And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. 9 But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.

- These self-righteous “vigilantes” walked away one by one but it reminded me of how cockroaches flee when you turn on a light. Jesus shined the light on THEIR sins and from oldest to youngest they dropped the stones.

10 Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11 She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

- Did Jesus violate the law of Moses about adultery? Why?
- Jesus said He didn’t condemn her. Was he being “soft on sin?” Why?
- **John 3:17 (ESV)** *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.*
- **Matthew 5:17 (ESV)** *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*
- This is where law meets grace. Paul wrote in **Romans 3:20 (ESV) — 20** *For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.* [Not saved by rule-keeping]
- The law of Moses exposes sin and grace, paid for by Jesus’ death, offers us a pardon if we will only accept it by repenting and trusting in Him.
- Jesus was the only sinless player in this scene. He could forgive the woman’s sin because when He died on the cross He paid the penalty for all sins of all people past, present, and future including her sin of adultery.
- Through His Holy Spirit, Jesus turns His light on our sin (conviction) and when we’ve seen how hopelessly guilty we are, He gives us the “light of life” (forgiveness and grace) and tells us, “Go and sin no more.”
- Whether John wrote this account or not, it is the perfect illustration to Jesus next words in verse 12 – His second “I AM” statement:

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.”

- We might ask, “What did Jesus mean when He said He is ‘the light of the world?’” Let’s just let other scripture connect the dots for us.

- In our natural state, every human being is born in the darkness of sin.

Proverbs 4:19 (ESV) says, “The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.”

In **Ephesians 4:18 (ESV)** Paul described sinners as, “darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.”

- That is why Jesus came into the world to offer the “light of life.”

Isaiah 9:2 (ESV) The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

John 3:19 (ESV) And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

John 1:4–5 (ESV) In him was life, and the life was the light of men. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 8:12 (ESV) ...“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

- How can I know if I’m living in Christ’s “Light of life?”

1 John 1:5–7 (ESV) — 5 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. **6** If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. **7** 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. **8** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- If we’ve trusted Christ as Savior and Lord, we should shun the darkness.

Ephesians 5:8 (ESV) — 8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

Ephesians 5:11 (ESV) — 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

- Illustration: Being distracted as the sun is setting - gradual darkness.
- Solution: Walk in the light like Jesus – Obey His word to be more like Him.
- Warning: Don’t be taken in by “fake light.” There is only one Source of true spiritual light and it’s Jesus.

2 Corinthians 11:13–14 (ESV) — 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. **14** And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

- If we’ve trusted Christ as Savior and Lord, we are to be “light reflectors.”

Matthew 5:16 (ESV) — 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. [Don’t take 5:14 out of context “you are the light of the world.”

Illustration: solar powered garden lights]

- Illustration: Mirrors, photographers reflectors, sun tunnels, and zoom lights. We don’t have to “be” a light...we can’t...we must reflect His light.
- Jesus gave two promises with that statement, “I am the light of the world.”
- “First, His followers will *never* walk in darkness, which is a reference to the assurance of salvation we enjoy. As true followers of the Light, we will

never follow the ways of sin, never live in a state of continually sinning (1 John 1:5–7).”^{iv}

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- Jesus is the light of the world; what does that mean for you and me?
- His light exposes our sin and offers us the “light of life”; salvation in Him.
- He doesn’t condemn our sinful state; instead He offers forgiveness, relief from guilt, and the opportunity to live in His light now and for eternity.
- Beware of “gradual darkness” or “fake light sources.” Turn on the light of His word to expel the darkness of Satan’s deceptions.
- Be a “reflector. Keep your “mirror” clean so you can shine His light on others.

ⁱ <https://www.aoa.org/healthy-eyes/eye-health-for-life/adult-vision-41-to-60-years-of-age?sso=y>

Does John 7:53-8:11 belong in scripture? A couple of articles.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/neither-do-i-condemn-you--3>
<https://www.gotquestions.org/John-7-53-8-11.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 319). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^{iv} <https://www.gotquestions.org/light-of-the-world.html>