

John 8:12-20

I am the Light of the world

I will admit that I am a little bit of a chicken! I am not afraid of the dark but I am not happy in it either! I remember as a teenager who was part of the scouts deciding to walk to a weekend camp that was going on by myself. It was the wrong time of year though and got dark really quickly and as I neared the end of the journey I came to this stretch of track in the middle of nowhere and suddenly stopped as I heard voices! No lights just voices! I had a tiny rubbish torch with me and I just stood there in the pitch black unwilling to any further with only my little torch to guide me!

It is amazing how much light makes a difference to our fears! Children I wonder what you did last time you did last you had a scary dream? I bet lots of you turned on a lamp near your bed!

We now live in a world that is brighter than ever before! Just check out one of those satellite photos from space of earth at night.

So in this world of lights and brightness it would be easy to miss the real impact of what Jesus says in the verses we heard earlier: *"I am the light of the world."*

So what does Jesus mean and Why can he say it!

1. What does Jesus mean v12?

Listen carefully to those words in v12 – *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life"*

Notice what Jesus says. I am THE light of the world!

Our local lighthouses work together along the coast to guide ships safely but Flamborough lighthouse couldn't say I AM THE lighthouse of Britain! YET Jesus can say I am THE light of the world.

Jesus is in a premier league of lights that has only got one team – HIMSELF

V12

:“Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life”

Not only is Jesus THE light but in some sense we can HAVE this light! We can make this light personal by following Jesus!

Liverpool are the football team that have won the lockdown league right now and yet their followers claim the victory! They have made it personal!

So what does Jesus mean?

3 things

1. Jesus is THE light because he lights up the reality of God!

How do we know there is a God?

There are loads of ways of starting to answer that but have you noticed how popular it is to say something like: “*you can’t know anything about God until you die*”! Maybe you say it yourself?

Yet Jesus is the light of the world because the Bible shows us he reveals the reality of God! In fact the first verses from this book of the Bible we are looking at today tell us that Jesus was with God, that Jesus was God and that Jesus took on human form!

Religion often begins with humans trying to climb the impossible ladder of making sense of God! Christianity makes the unique claim that Jesus slide down the pole to us to reveal God!

God showed up! God didn’t keep the mystery wrapped up and guarded like a Christmas present that no one is allowed to touch until Christmas day!

God didn’t show up in a corner either but in time and space and with witnesses, at the perfect time to shape the history of the world. God is not playing a game of guess who or hide and seek but has shown up and ended the game! If you follow Jesus you HAVE the light of the knowledge of God.

2. Jesus is THE light because he lights up what is good!

This is the day isn’t it when everyone is trying to work out what is good! What is justice! What is right! We are living in a

really polarised world at the moment with strong opinions everywhere and we spend our time ducking and diving to not get on the wrong side of a strong opinion!

Yet if Jesus claims to light up the reality of God then he also lights up the reality of what is good!
He does this by shining the **spiritual spotlight!**

There is a constant contrast in the Bible between light and darkness, this natural imagery is tied up in the spiritual reality of God's way v the way of the world!
Here is the startling thing! Jesus shines his spiritual spotlight on the reality that the world as a whole lives in rebellion to God's way and it doesn't take a genius to work this out!

We often tend to morally weigh ourselves on one a scale we have invented ourselves and also only on the horizontal level of how we relate to others.
Yet sometimes we don't realise how dark it is in a room until someone comes in and switches the light on.
Jesus comes and shines the spotlight in that his deeds and words reveal in us the true reality of our spiritual darkness in relation to others but firstly in relation to God.

Ephesians 5:13 – Everything exposed by the light becomes visible.

Even with Jesus risen and ascended his spirit does the same job in the world today. Hence people seem to seemingly randomly wake up to their need for God. Maybe that is you watching today!

So here is the challenge church! As people not only know the light but have the light ourselves our role is shine the spotlight of Jesus!

What does that mean? Not pointing the finger in judgement hypocritically at the world around us but living and speaking in such a way that is so distinct that people see the light!

Now shining the light in darkness can make you stand out! However no one will see the beauty of the light if we think we just need to turn dim the light a little! Don't be tempted by the idea that we don't want to be too bright. You see following Jesus seriously will only make you shine brighter and become a more attractive friend (maybe not in looks) and family member!

You see as people wake up to the darkness they can also wake up to the wonderful news that!

3. Jesus is THE light because he beats the darkness!

Children – Who wins between light and dark when you open a door into a dark room! The light outside or the darkness inside?

As Jesus shines the spiritual spotlight on our hearts and attitudes we quickly realise that the reality of our hearts is that we are drawn to the darkness of rebellion against God! Yet where does leave us! How can I truly have the light if that is where I am at?

The good news is that light overcomes the darkness! You get home late and switch the light on and who wins providing the electricity is working? The light!

It was as the sky went very dark 2000 years ago as the light of the world hung crucified on a cross! As darkness looked to have won that the light struck a death blow to the darkness as Jesus died so that all our darkness would not keep us separated from the light but God would welcome us into his light as forgiven people. Jesus took the judgment for all our darkness on himself!

And then! Bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave he rose again!

And as he stands in victory! Sins curse has lost its grip on me!

Now if you hear this then surely following Jesus and having this victorious light in your life not just now but for eternity is what you must do and continue to do!

Yet here is the question that gets asked even today ...

Why can Jesus say it? V13-20

Listen to v13: The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”

How is it that Jesus can say these things! In fact these Pharisees know that there were laws in their Old Testament part of the Bible that spoke about the need for multiple witnesses to confirm certain cases! Why can he say these things!

Children if I claimed to be purple polar bear would you believe me? Shouldn't you expect me to show my purple furry coat? Or at the very least other people to come along and agree with me!

Now what Jesus says next is even more shocking in v14: *"Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid,*

How can Jesus make this claim himself?

According to Jesus its because of where he is from!

V14 – "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"

Imagine Emma my wife saying you must believe what I say because I'm from Hertfordshire! We'd kick her out of Yorkshire!

Yet Jesus says trust me because of where I am from! In reality its not at all that crazy!

In v16 Jesus ties the place he is from with a person

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 witnesses is true. 18 I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."

The simple reality is this ... Who else could be wheeled in with authority to verify the claims that Jesus is God other than God himself who dwells in heaven the place Jesus has come from and is going too! God the Father who has existed for all eternity with Son is the only one qualified to verify the identity of Jesus because who else would have that authority! TO say that anyone else can truly verify the identity of Jesus as the true divine light of the world would be like asking a toddler to verify my identity, bank details and past history! Yet Jesus does a great job of verifying himself and as you hear his words, and see what he did ultimate you have to be left saying there is no one like this man. You have to be left with Thomas his close friend after the resurrection saying "Mt Lord and my God"

All this said

As Christians we are NOT anti-reason, anti-evidence and we ARE pro helping people think through the reasonable and

compelling arguments put forward for Christianity! In fact elsewhere Jesus does actually call on others to confirm what he has said and done! He brings forth extra evidence!

Yet ultimately there is no better way of verifying Jesus claims than checking them out yourself or encouraging others to do the same.

How can we do that?

Treehouse - Amazing opportunity to share our experiences of Explorers zoom, and treehouse videos etc with others when we see our friends again. Tell them about all the fun you've had learning about Jesus

Church family – Keep using the online resources and share. I had an amazing phone call last week from someone who had shared the service and has all sorts of people engaging!

Those not yet follows. Keep investigating Jesus. Nothing to lose, everything to gain.