



Growth Group Curriculum

March 5, 2023 – Gen. 1:3; John 8:12-20; Ex. 3:13-14; Is. 9:1-2; Matt. 6:22-23; Ps. 23:4 & 139:11-12

“Walking In The Light”

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

In the gospel of John, Jesus makes seven statements that begin with I AM. This phrasing points his listeners back to Exodus 3 when Moses is concerned about his mission of leading the people out of Egypt. He asks God who he should tell the people has sent him. And God says tell them I AM has sent you. He gives Moses his name.

So when Jesus says I AM the light of the world (his second I AM statement) he is again asserting his divine status. John had written back in John 1:4 that in Jesus there was life and that life was the “light” of the world. Bringing light to the world is rooted in the stories of Israel. Isaiah proclaimed that God intended for Israel to be God’s light. They were the ones who were to bring truth and justice to the world.

This teaching of Jesus happens during the Festival of Tabernacles. Throughout this Festival special golden lamps were lit in the court of women. The lamps were intended to remind worshipers of God’s leading the people of Israel through the wilderness at night by a pillar of fire. The lighting of lamps also signaled Israel’s commitment to the God of light.

Jesus conflict with the religious leaders continues as he reminds them of his relationship with the Father. Claiming to be God and keeping the Sabbath were major issues for Jesus and the religious leaders. Jesus tells them that their attitudes and ambitions reveal that they do not know God. Though they knew their Hebrew texts, those texts had not changed their lives.

Jesus proclaims that the “light” is right in front of them and they continue to miss it. This is the ongoing dilemma in John 8. Israel was supposed to be the light of the world. They had been called by God to show God’s love and mercy to the world. Yet, instead of shining the true light they were only providing darkness to a broken and weary world. Because of this, God sent his son Jesus so that he might declare that he, himself, was the light of the world and that people should follow him.



Exploring the Text

Genesis 1:3 “Then God said, ‘Let there be Light,’ and there was light.”

John 8:12-20 (the morning’s text)—“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’ Then the Pharisees said to him, ‘You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid.’ Jesus answered, ‘Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgement is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf.’ Then they said to him, ‘Where is your Father?’ Jesus answered, ‘You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.’ He spoke these words while he was teaching in the treasury of the temple, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.”

Exodus 3:13-14 “But Moses said to God, ‘If I come to the Israelites and say to them, “The God of your ancestors has sent me to you”, and they ask me, “What is his name?” what shall I say to them?’ God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ He said further, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “I AM has sent me to you.”’

Isaiah 9:1-2 “But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.”

Romano Guardini, The Lord: “Jesus recognizes a personal power that fundamentally wills evil.... Here is something or someone who positively defies divinity and attempts to tear the world from God’s hands—even to dethrone God.”

Romano Guardini, The Lord: “Seeing is a protective service to the will to live. The deeper our fear or distaste of a person, the more tightly we close our eyes to them, until finally we are incapable of perception or the reception of truth. Then we have become blind to that particular person. The eye simply ceases to register what is plain to be seen.”

Matthew 6:22-23 ‘The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!’”

Psalms 23:4 “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death; I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.”

Psalms 139:11-12 “If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night’, even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.”



Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

1. Have you ever heard someone say he/she was “completely in the dark” about something? What did they mean by that?
2. In John 8:12, Jesus says: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”
 - a. When Jesus says He is the “light of the world,” what is He really saying to us?
 - b. What is the “light of life” that Jesus promises us?
 - c. What does it mean to “walk in darkness”?
3. Pastor Scott said that walking in the light is one way we follow Jesus. Can you select a Bible verse that describes what it means to you to “walk in the light”?
4. Although the title of the sermon is “Walking In the Light,” Pastor Scott said that Jesus calls us not to just “walk” in the light, but to intentionally follow in the light. What do you see as the characteristics of someone who is truly “following in the light”?
5. Pastor Scott also spoke of the some of the benefits of following in the light as well as some of the dangers of walking in the darkness. What does the Bible tell us are the benefits of following in the light? What does the Bible tell us are the consequences or dangers of walking in the darkness?

