

Text: John 8:12-30

Title: It's Personal – I am the Light of the World

Thesis: Because Jesus' claim to be the Light of the World is a claim to Deity, we must determine how we will respond to all of Jesus' claims and instructions.

I. Introduction

- a. NTA: Making decisions in the dark can lead to some regrettable consequences. Back in the days before electricity, a tightfisted old farmer was taking his hired man to task for carrying a lighted lantern when he went to call on his best girl. "Why," he exclaimed, "when I went a-courtin' I never carried one of them things. I always went in the dark." "Yes," the hired man said wryly, "and look what you got!"

II. The Light of the World (12)

- a. E – Context of the Feast of Tabernacles
 - i. During the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths), each evening (except Sabbath) priests would light 5 lamps in the court of women as a symbol of the leading of the Israelites by God through a pillar of fire at night. This would have clearly been in the mind of those present when Jesus claimed to be the Light of the world (title reserved for YHWH) and that those who followed Him would not walk in darkness. Even to pagans who would hear of this later, the claim to be light (opposed to being enlightened) would convey the idea of being God, as light carried the international concept of the good god.
- b. I – "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. ... Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God." (C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity)
- c. A – In light of Jesus' claim, we must make a choice on who we believe He is. He leaves us no option for fence-sitting.

III. Witnesses and Judgment (13-20)

- a. E – Jesus is challenged regarding the authenticity of his testimony, which has happened before (John 5:33-47, where Jesus points to 4 other witnesses to himself – John the Baptist, his works, the Father, and Scripture). The opponents failed to recognize those witnesses, so Jesus declines to address the issue of witnesses and instead focuses on their lack of understanding His origin and His purpose (from where I came, and where I am going). Jesus points out that their lack of

understanding makes their judgment merely human judgment (a judgment on their judging). He says He judges no one, but if He did it would be authentic judgment because of the Father with Him, another claim on being God. By His very presence, Jesus is in the role of evaluator – what people freely choose concerning who He is becomes their own judgment, either life or condemnation.

- b. I – In the midst of a generation screaming for answers, Christians are stuttering. – Howard Hendricks
 - c. A –
- IV. Change your attitude. (21-30)
- a. E – Jesus tells them that unless they change their understanding of who He is, they will die in their sin(s) – once singular, perhaps for their unbelief, and then plural, encompassing all their actions – and not be able to go where He was going. Instead of recognizing their condemnation, they choose instead to question how He was going to die – Oh how often we choose to focus on the minor things instead of the major thing. Their question reveals that they are focused on worldly things instead of heavenly. He reminds them again that they just don't get it, and so they ask Him who He is – “Just what I've been telling you.” Jesus tells them that He has much more He would like to tell them, but they are not even able to hear the truth about His identity first.
 - b. I – Some people change their ways when they see the light, others only when they feel the heat.
 - c. A – No room for universalism – Unless you believe Jesus is who He claims to be, you will die in your sin. Are you so focused on things of this world that you circumvent the issue to ask other questions?
- V. Conclusions