

I Am the Light of the World

John 8: 12-20

Do you realize how much we have lost the concept of trust? We live in a dark world. We are skeptical of everything. These days with alerts of terrorism, everything is suspicious. Traveling is a headache. People are not sure whom to trust. The questions we ask: **“Whom can we trust? What is reality? What is the truth?”** People are skeptical about the news, skeptical about politicians, skeptical about marketers and their products... We have become a society of doubt and speculation. One of the reasons that we are skeptical is because truth has become relative. Everything has become permissible. Values have turned upside down. God is out of the picture. New idols have replaced God.

As a Christian, truth for me is Christ. I want and try to live by this truth. The question I raise to myself: Am I tempted to compromise the truth? I try not to compromise, but I am tempted. **I pray that I stay firm in my belief about THE TRUTH.** But what is truth?

It is Advent season. This coming four Sundays we are preparing our hearts, homes, churches and the community for the coming (the advent) of our Lord Jesus Christ: **the Truth.**

This Sunday we lit the **candle of Hope.** We live in a dark, distrustful world, where evil is doing its job in hindering Hope, Joy, Peace and Love from coming to this world. It is ADVENT. We are waiting for the coming of the LORD: The LIGHT in the darkness.

When Moses asked God, “What is your name?” God answered: “I AM who I AM.” (Exodus 3:14) The Gospel of John contains seven statements giving the reader a clear picture of Jesus. Seven times Jesus says, “I AM ...” Today I would like to explore Jesus as the LIGHT. **“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”** (John 8:12 ESV)

Light... How important it is for life!

In the beginning... “God said, ‘**Let there be light,**’ and **there was light.** And **God saw that the light was good.** (Genesis 1:3 ESV)

The metaphor of God being our light has been used many places in the Bible. The psalmists say: **For it is you who light my lamp; the LORD my God lightens my darkness.** (Psalm 18:28 ESV). **The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?** (Psalm 27:1 ESV). **The LORD is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us.** (Psalm 118:27a ESV)

Not only God is light, but also we find God’s Word being a light to us: **Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.** (Psalm 119:105 ESV)

In the New Testament, John uses this metaphor describing who Jesus (*THE LOGOS*) is:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 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 ESV)

Illustration: How far away can one see a candle flame? Scientists debate to answer this question. It is a complex question. The earth is not flat, therefore seeing something on the surface of the earth is different than seeing it from space. It is a very complicated question and you can go and read more about it. The short answer the farthest distance a human eye can detect a candle flame is 2.76 kilometers (1.714984 miles) .¹

A human eye can see a candle flame that far. How beautiful is the metaphor of **God being our light.** How beautiful is that **Jesus continues being that light in this dark world.**

Let us examine John’s gospel about this topic. In today’s passage Jesus declares he is the light of the world.

1. Authority from his Father

The concept started from the beginning of the gospel. “...**the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.**”

(John 1)

Only in John’s gospel we read about Jesus declaring himself as light of the world. This is an important point. He represents God the Father. At least seven times in this passage, Jesus says **he comes from the Father**. Thus Jesus speaks in the authority of His Father. He comes from the Father, and he goes to his Father.

I stress this concept so that it would be clear that this is not any light that illumines us. **This is God’s light that comes through Jesus Christ.**

2. To have the LIGHT is a Life Changing Experience

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

Light that gives life:

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4 ESV)

Whoever follows Jesus, which means whoever believes in Jesus, will not be in darkness; furthermore one will have life.

This light brings life. Like the light of creation in Genesis brought life to our physical world, the light that Christ brings gives us life. We will have Jesus in our hearts. He becomes our Shepherd, he irrigates our dry hearts with Living Water; he feeds our hungry hearts the Bread of Heaven.

Life and more life, **abundant life**... a life changing experience indeed.

3. Jesus Christ is the ONLY LIGHT, no other lights

The statement that Jesus does: I am the light of the World; that makes a clear statement that Christ is the only LIGHT can illumine us from darkens. Which means everyone in the world needs this light.

In the Bay Area, I have met people who say, "I am illumined, I am spiritual person." "I don't believe in Jesus, but I am spiritual being."

Other religions speak about the light. You can study them. Some even speak about illumination, using the same metaphor. Yet in the end, **there is one TRUE LIGHT.**

Illustration: In 1995, a Rabbi, a Christian father, and a Buddhist Monk wrote a book called: *How Do You Spell God?* The book of course discuss all religions have their ways to spell God. In the end, the conclusion is that anyone of us can spell the way they want. It is all relative...

Here is my problem. **God cannot be relative. Light is light, either it illumines us and gives us true life, or it does not.** There is not middle way. When we measure something we need to use a canon, that we all agree this is true. There is something called truth.

Jesus Christ is the Light. One can have eyes to see this or not.

4. Light is offered to ALL

While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." (John 12:36a ESV)

It invitation is for all. While you have the light, you can also become sons of light.

When you make Jesus the light of your life, you follow his steps in all you do and you become "a son of light." You are a member of the family of light.

I can have this light. And it is offered to everyone who is ready to see it, believe in it, embrace it.... It is yours, if you want it...

5. Our lives should reflect the LIGHT

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 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. (Matthew 5:14-16 ESV)

We are called not just to follow Jesus and accept His light in our lives. His light should reflect in our works. Like salt, which needs to come out of the saltshaker to be useful, light needs to be put on a high stand so it illuminates. Last Sunday I said that one leper came back in a loud voice thanked Jesus (Megaphone).

A candle can be seen from a mile away.

Paul says about himself:

To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, (Ephesians 3:8-9 ESV)

This brings to my main topic. **We are called....**

All our gifts, **talents should Testify, Edify, and Glorify**. His light, not mine...

It is Advent season. The candle of HOPE is illuminated.

Go out and take this message, the message of light, to bring real Hope in this world.

Let us approach the Table of the Lord.

1 <http://www.technologyreview.com/view/539826/how-far-can-the-human-eye-see-a-candle-flame/>