



Gospel Community Notes & Questions

Title: Light of the World

Text: John 8:12-30

Theme: Follow Jesus, not your heart, out of the darkness.

Teaching Notes: At the Feast of Tabernacles each year, the Jews would light four massive menorahs, each fed by four basins of oil, to illuminate the temple. It was a reminder of the pillar of fire that led their ancestors out of slavery. So imagine the uproar when Jesus stood up at this feast and said, "I AM the Light of the world," and went on to claim equality with the God of their fathers. Discover the real reason why the religious leaders of Israel couldn't understand Jesus' identity.

Outline:

1. An astonishing claim.

a. I am the Light that overcomes darkness. (v. 12)

b. I am the one true God of your ancestors. (v. 28)

2. An ignorant response.

- The religious leaders didn't know where Jesus came from, who he was, or where he was going.

3. An underlying reason. (vv. 15, 23)

- Their whole way of thinking and evaluating was characterized by the ways of this broken world system. Their values, priorities, ambitions, and agendas were all worldly. Wanting only a Messiah who would fulfill their hopes and dreams, they were willfully blind to the truth.

4. An ominous warning. (vv. 21, 24)

- Those who reject the light will die in their sins.



Questions to explore individually and with your group:

1. What's the first thing you associate with darkness?
2. How do the historic and cultural backgrounds of Jesus' claim, "I AM the Light of the world," impact the way you understand those words? What's something you came to understand in light of the background that you didn't see before?
3. The sermon mentioned several darkness vs. light contrasts (e.g. blindness vs. sight, despair vs. hope, evil vs. good, death vs. life). Which contrast is your favorite picture of what Christ has done for you – and why?
4. If someone says, "Jesus never claimed to be God," how could you show them from this text that he actually did?
5. What does it mean to "judge according to the flesh" (v. 15)? What are some ways people judge according to the flesh in our culture? What are some ways you do this subconsciously? What standards of judgment have you subscribed to?
6. What was the root problem of the religious leaders, according to Jesus (v. 23)? In your own words, what does that mean?
7. What are some of the basic values, priorities, ambitions, and agendas you observe in our culture today? How do these blind people to the light of Jesus?
8. Have you ever started with your own agenda and then acted as if Jesus' role was to get on board with your plans and make your dream come true? What happened? What about the biblical, authentic Jesus did you miss in doing this?
9. Positively, what specifically are you trusting the light of Christ to be or do for you right now?
10. What one actionable thing will you do this week in response to this Scripture?

Prayer Prompts:

1. Meditate on various aspects of what it means that Jesus is the Light of the world, then offer him praise and thanks.
2. Confess where your own values, priorities, ambitions, and agendas (or those you've adopted from the world) have blinded you to the light of Christ.
3. Ask God to make you a faithful follower of his light, so that you might consistently walk in his love/truth/justice/grace and not in darkness.