



# VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

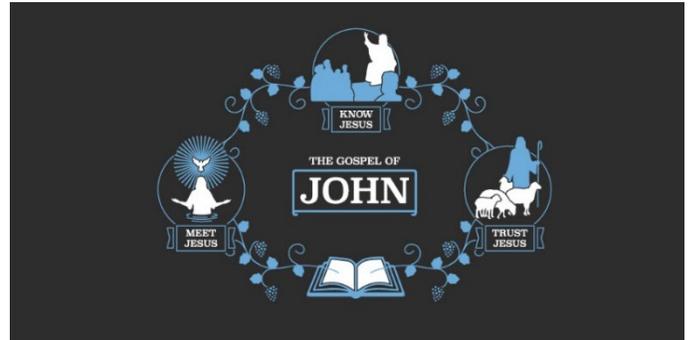
## SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

## Jesus: The Light of the World

### The Gospel of John

John 8:12–30

Tim Badal | January 16, 2022



Turn in your Bibles to John 8. We're in a series we've entitled "The Gospel of John," looking at the life and ministry of Jesus through the eyes of His closest and dearest friend, the Apostle John. Our aim in this series is, first, to meet Jesus. Then, as we've been learning over these last weeks, we want to learn from Jesus through His miracles and message.

Then as the Gospel continues to move forward, what John wants us to do is believe in Jesus, putting our trust in Him. John says at the end of his Gospel that these things were written so that you and I might believe in Jesus Christ and that in believing, we might find life in Him.

Last week Jesus made a declaration about being the One Who had living water and that if we would give our lives to Him, we too would have rivers of living water flowing from us. This morning we find ourselves in John 8, starting in verse 12. Here Jesus makes another declaration about Who He is. All of these declarations—that He's living water and today that He is the light—come during a celebration in the city of Jerusalem. There was a yearly festival called the Festival of Booths or the Festival of Tabernacles when the children of Israel commemorated and celebrated all God had done for their forefathers as they departed from their slavery in Egypt and headed toward the Promised Land.

Jesus used moments of celebration to talk about His ministry. Let me give you an example. When He talked about being rivers of living water, it came on the heels of a very symbolic moment during the Feast of Tabernacles. On the last day of the feast, a priest would be given the job of going to one of the many pools in Jerusalem where he would draw out water with a gold pitcher. He would then, with great pomp and circumstance, make his way back to the temple. There he would go into the Holy of Holies and douse the altar with that water. This was in remembrance of when God provided water from a rock in the time of Israel's wandering in the wilderness.

On this last day of this festival, all of Jerusalem would be darkened, then four candelabra in the temples would be lit. It would be a reminder of God being a pillar of fire that helped protect and lead the people of God in their wandering. It is at this point Jesus said, "Just as God led and guided you with a pillar of fire, I want you to know today that I am that light. I am the light of the world."

We've been going verse by verse, chapter by chapter, through this incredible Gospel. If you've been with us the last couple of weeks, you know we normally deal with each passage consecutively, but not today. Last week we were in chapter seven and finished with verse 52. You might think we'd be picking up with verse 53, moving into the first eleven verses in John 8. Then if you know your Bible, right away you might be thinking, "That's a really good passage of Scripture." It's about the woman who was caught in adultery, then experienced the grace, mercy and love of Jesus Christ. It's a story that is consistent with the character of Christ. It teaches that no matter what our sins are, the evil things in our past or maybe even in the present, we can find grace and forgiveness at the foot of the cross of Jesus. Why wouldn't we preach that?

In your bulletin you have an insert that says we're not preaching that text. I'm going to give you a couple reasons why, because this isn't normally our practice. We have good reason for doing this today. This passage of Scripture—John 7:53-8:11—is a passage

that is questionable. The first question that comes up is, "Why does this passage not show up in the earliest manuscripts that were transcribed way back in the days of the early church?" You see, for a long time, the manuscripts that were being circulated around the church did not have that passage here. All of a sudden, centuries later, this passage shows up. Seemingly someone added it later on. Probably because it was a part of the oral tradition of what Jesus had done. We don't doubt this event happened, because it's consistent with the character and ministry of Jesus, but it just wasn't there initially.

A second reason why we are choosing not to preach it is because of the consistency of the message. What I mean by that is if you were to look at John 7:52 and 8:12, there seems to be no distance in time there. In other words, the contents of what we studied last week and what we're studying this week is one singular conversation that Jesus is having on that same day with the Pharisees. If we put this newer manuscript story in the middle, it's as if everybody went home, then John comes back in John 8:12 and says, "Jesus continues..." Wait a minute. If He went home, how could He continue what seems to be one ongoing conversation? But if we skip from 7:52 to 8:12, the storyline seems to be seamless.

Third, if you're one who pays attention to the Greek language, you'll notice a cadence in the words John uses. The problem with the other story is that it appears to be the work of a different author. There are words used here that John never uses anywhere else in his Gospel. There are cadences that are foreign to any of the other verses in the Gospel of John. It would seem as if someone, trying to be helpful and to illustrate the ministry of Jesus Christ, thought it was important to add this oral-tradition story to the account of Jesus' ministry. We have no issue with the story, but to stay consistent to what we believe is in the original text, we have made this decision.

We're not the only ones. If you have an ESV, an NIV or an NASB Bible, you will see brackets around these verses and a note that says, "The earliest manuscripts do not include this text." The reason why it is so well known is because it was placed in the King James Version which based its idea on the manuscripts called the *textus receptus*, which was a newer group of manuscripts. It was the older ones that revealed this discrepancy.

If you have more questions, check out the insert in your bulletin. There you'll find some of the other reasons why we made this decision. We've also put a sermon in by John Piper, who helps explain this in greater detail. So for the sake of consistency, we're starting in John 8:12 this morning.

We live in a world of lights. In fact, our neighboring city, Aurora, is called "The City of Lights." We love our lights and are thankful for the light our friend Edison gave us. But did you know that the brightest and shiniest of lights is a light that can be seen some 275 miles away? This light is so bright that it costs one million dollars each year to shine. This light is so bright that you could almost see it from space. It boasts more than 42.3 billion candela, that is, the measure of light. To put that in perspective, a single candle puts out one candela; a 60-watt light bulb puts out 60,000 candela. But this light emits 42.3 billion candela. You'd think the scientists would love it. You would think the laboratory that created this light would want all the world to see it. But would you believe this brightest light is only used to show the wealth of a hotel in Las Vegas?

The Luxor Hotel has what is called the Skyview—the shiniest, most brilliant of all manmade lights in this world. It shines over the city of Vegas. Again, it can be seen some 275 miles away by approaching aircraft. It is so bright that if you wanted to put yourself in its ray, you would need to be 15 stories from the actual point of illumination not to be burned to death. That's how powerful this light is.

Now, this is not just one light; it's 39 individual lights that make this beam. This light, so powerful and brilliant, pales in comparison to the light of Jesus Christ. So what we want to do is put our time, attention and focus on the true Light that changes lives. We'll do this by opening the Scriptures and seeing Jesus say to a listening crowd the following words in John 8:12: *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* What we are going to learn is that this is the dividing line between the believer and the unbeliever. What you do with this light will determine your destiny.

When Jesus says He is the light of the world, there will be many who say, "No, You're not," then they'll seek to discredit and destroy the message of that light. But in verse 30 we're going to see that as this light shines in the world, many will believe in Him. So we want to learn about this light and see what it declares about Jesus. What does Jesus mean when He says He is the light of the world?

There is a lot of talk about Jesus not having witnesses to what He says. If you go back to John 7, you'll see that I've already addressed that. I want to focus our attention now on this theme of Jesus being light. So what does He mean when He says He is the light of the world?

## All of history is focused on Him.

When Jesus says, "I am the light of the world," He is telling the world He is God. Now, you might say, "I don't see anywhere in the text that it says Jesus is God." The Jewish audience would have totally understood this. Light was symbolic of God's presence in the world.

Jesus said to these Pharisees and anyone else who was listening, "I know where I've come from and I know where I'm going." In other words, He was saying, "By declaring that I'm the light, I want you to know I was there in the beginning and I'll be there in the end."

How do we know this to be true? Because of lights. If you go back to Genesis 1, you read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Verse two says that the cosmos was formless and void, then something was hovering over the earth. It was darkness. Then in verse three it says that at the beginning of time and space as we know it, light is what starts it all. Jesus is saying, "I was the light that got this all started. I was the illumination that brought life and vegetation into existence." The Pharisees knew that God was there in the beginning.

They also knew their history, that in the garden of Eden man and woman enjoyed the light of God. They would walk with that light. They would experience fellowship with that light. But at some point, because of the temptation of the devil, Adam and Eve fell into sin. The darkness did not extinguish the light, but it began to cover the light that had been so radiant and beautiful. The storyline of the Old Testament is a story of greater and greater darkness. That darkness hit a high point in Genesis 6 where it tells us that as God looked down on His creation, He saw that every inclination of the heart was to do evil. Talk about a dark time. It wouldn't take long from the original sin for darkness to infiltrate the world.

Then God showered great grace upon Noah, so that flicker of light continued through Noah, then on to Abraham, whom God called out of Ur of Chaldees and led Him and later his descendants to a Promised Land. In that prophecy God said, "You will shine like the stars in the sky. You're going to be the lights. As you bless others, they will be blessed by Me."

As the world continued further and further, even with these little glimpses of light, darkness began to overtake the world. Darkness would overtake the Israelites and they would find themselves in captivity. Little by little, God would continue to point to the horizon, saying, "There's a light coming." The prophets would see this. They would say to Israel, "Don't lose hope. God's promise of that light coming into the world is on its way." It wouldn't be until some 700 years before Christ that Isaiah would articulate these words in Isaiah 9:2: *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined."* That might seem ambiguous to you if you didn't know the context.

Four verses later, we get the name of that light: *"And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* Then 700 years from the time Isaiah made this statement, that light would be inaugurated on earth in the city of Bethlehem. That light's name would be Jesus.

Now, John knows about this light. That's the whole theme of the book he's written. Turn back a couple pages to John 1 and you'll see that the subject of light is on his mind and in his heart. Here's what he wrote, beginning in John 1:3:

All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 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. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John [the Baptist]. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

Here Jesus comes, shining His light for a short season on this earth. He shines it through His message. He shines it through His miracles. He shines it through His mercy on the cross. Then that light would be extinguished from the world. We'll talk about why that happens in a moment.

What we see in the totality of Scripture is exactly what John says. The light was in the world, but the darkness could not overcome the light. If you turn to the book of Revelation, to the last pages of your Bible, you will see this light. It will be the light that will shine in heaven. We will have no need for a sun or moon in heaven for all of eternity, because we will have the beautiful radiance and majesty of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Essentially what Jesus is saying is, "All of history pivots on Me. All of history centers itself on Me. All of history is focused on Me." When Jesus says, "I am the light of the world," he is saying, "I was, I am and I will forever be God."

## **Those in darkness will hate Him.**

So how do the Pharisees respond? They hate this. You see, we have a problem. Light came into the world, but the world didn't like it. So the second truth we see today is that those in the dark will hate Jesus. The rest of this passage deals with the hatred of the Pharisees.

If you are in darkness and light shines, the first thing you will do—because of the penetrating nature of light—is shield your eyes. You will do what I wish I could do every Sunday, so I could see you guys out there. I've got a lot of lights shining on me. As I'm in darkness, those lights get brighter and brighter.

The Pharisees are deflecting the light because they don't want to see it. Ten times in the text, from verse 12 to verse 30, we see the Pharisees interrupt Jesus. They don't interrupt Jesus to ask questions because they want to believe. They don't ask Jesus to stop for clarification. They want to stop Jesus' words, because like a blinding light, they're trying to put distance between them in their darkness and Jesus Who is the light.

Now, they're not the only ones. In John 3, in His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus says He has a judgment for the world. He says this in John 3:19-21:

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.

You are either living in light or you're living in darkness. Jesus says this is His judgment for those who live in darkness: they're going to hate the light. Why? Because light exposes what we don't want people to see. Go back to the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve loved God and loved hanging out with Him. God walked around in the garden and they wanted to meet up with God.

That is, until they fall to sin. That same God Who walked with them, Who talked with them, now, because of sin, and because of their shame, when God comes walking—what happens? They go running. They don't want to be anywhere near God, because that light is exposing their rebellion against Him.

It's not uncommon, my friends, that many of us will sin in private. We'll do it when we think nobody is watching. We'll do it in private where the shame stays with us and doesn't get broadcast. If you really want to see how light exposes darkness, watch the next time someone falls morally—politicians, pastors, people of notable interest. Look at what happens when they have to stand before the cameras and talk about their failure. It sure doesn't look like they enjoyed their sin then, right? They enjoyed it in darkness, but when light exposes it, they become undone. Likewise we live in a world that loves to keep things in the dark.

Now, let me add that depravity will cause people to lose the feeling of being shamed in the light. We are living in a time when people aren't ashamed about sin anymore, because they have allowed their consciences to be so seared that the light doesn't even bother them anymore. That's why they can believe their sin is okay, that it should be celebrated and embraced. So why do they do this? The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 4:4 that it's because the god of this age—the devil—has blinded their minds so they cannot see the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The most notable work the devil is doing is trying to get between the light of Jesus and us. He wants to eclipse that light and the way he does that is through temptation and sin. Just as he did with Adam and Eve, he says to people today, "You can do what you want. You don't have to listen to God. God is a killjoy. Do what feels right and you'll be okay." But Jesus says that is going to lead to a place of hopelessness. You see, Jesus says this type of living in rebellion to God is futile.

The group of men who are opposing Him, conspiring to arrest Him and destroy Him. We know that in God's pre-ordained time and place, this will happen. They're going to arrest Jesus and they're going to be excited about it. They will say, "Finally we can bring darkness back to the world." Then they will hang Jesus on a cross. But let us not forget what happens when Jesus gives up His Spirit. Do you remember what happens in that ninth hour? Darkness overtakes the land. It will seem as if darkness has won. The people who hate Jesus will celebrate that they have extinguished the light. Praise be to God that on that third glorious day, out from that tomb, that light comes forth, shining like the noonday sun. Out of that grave of death comes the living light of the world. The world could not overtake Him.

## **We have no hope without Him.**

So what God is saying through Christ is that all of history is focused on Him. Those in darkness will hate Him, but without Him, they will have no hope. At the end of this argument that's going on in our passage today, Jesus says in verse 20, *"I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin."* Then let's pick up this passage in verse 22:

<sup>22</sup> So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'" <sup>23</sup> He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. <sup>24</sup> I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."

Three times, Jesus says, "You will die in your sins." In other words, "Your life will be utterly meaningless. At the end of all of it, you are going to die, and you will die far from Me."

Let's look at two things that come from this.

First, this points to the futility of our living. The Bible says over and over again that as we live in darkness, we stumble about. Let me give you some verses that will help you understand this.

- Proverbs 4:19 says, *"The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble."*
- Deuteronomy 28:29, *"You shall grope at noonday. As the blind grope in darkness...you shall not prosper in your ways."* When it's the brightest, you're going to be groping about.
- Later in John 11:10, Jesus says, *"But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."*
- When Jesus told the Jews in John 8:24, "You will die in your sins," He means they will live a futile life.

The best way to explain this is when you hear a noise during the night and all the lights in your house are off, you stumble out of your bed and are trying to find the light. You can't see anything, but you know that chest of drawers is there, because you've stubbed your toe on it numerous times. You know it's there, but you can't find it. As you're making your way into the hallway, your children have left all manner of Legos and Matchbox cars on the floor. You then feel the great pain as you stumble about in futility and step on these things.

What Jesus is saying is that without Him lighting the way, your life will be like a blind man groping about, never knowing where you're going, never knowing what you should be doing. There is zero purpose in life. Let me tell you, if you are far from God, the reason why you can't find purpose, the reason why you can't find peace, is that you are trying to do it without the light of the world. So you're going about begging for someone to turn on the lights.

Jesus goes even farther, saying, "Not only will there be futility in life, but at the end of your days, you will die in your sins." Jesus doesn't bring up hell at this point, but that's where people go who die in their sins. I think it is a bit ironic that the way Jesus describes hell is that it's a place of utter darkness. It will be the blackest, darkest place possible. Right now we have the common grace of God shining around us. We are not as dark as we could be. But there is a day coming, my friends, if you die in your sin apart from Christ, you will enter into a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth, where God will send those who rebel against Him. It's a place called hell and it's a place of utter darkness.

Jesus could have stopped there. He could have said, "I am so tired of dealing with you people. You don't know Me. You're of this earth; I'm from heaven. I know where I've come from and I know where I'm going. You don't have any idea. You're groping about, trying to figure it out. Then you have the audacity to tell Me I'm a worker of Satan. Forget it. I'm going to take my light and go back to heaven, so nobody's going to get any light from this point on." But that's not what Jesus does.

Amidst such darkness, look at what He says in verse 12: *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* He invites them, saying, "You can have hope. You can find light. That light is found in Me."

Then notice what He says. There's a pronoun I want you to see and there's a place I want you to see. The pronoun is "whoever." That word whoever means whoever. Got that? It doesn't take a Greek scholar to understand that He is inviting everyone. That pronoun is important. He's not just talking to the Pharisees. He's saying, "Whoever." He did this earlier when He spoke about rivers of living water.

Then notice the place where He's saying all these things. In verse 20 we read, *"These words he spoke in the treasury..."* If you were to look at a diagram of the temple, you would see that the treasury is in the area called "the court of women." That's where everyone was invited to go in the temple. It was separate from the court of the Gentiles, where only men could go. It was separate from the Holy Place, which is where priests of all kinds could go. And it was separate from the Holy of Holies, where the chief priest was allowed to go only once a year. Jesus was addressing this invitation to receive Him as the light of the world to whoever, in a place where anybody could hear Him.

That same invitation is here today. Are you stumbling around this world? You can't find purpose. You can't find peace. You don't know which way is up. Turn to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, and He will shine His light. He will guide you and lead you in this world, then into the world of light called heaven. So turn to His light.

## **We have something to highlight because of Him.**

Now, many who are here have already turned to that light. For a long time, you've been children of light. What does this passage mean for you? It means we have something to highlight. There is something we're to highlight because of Him. This truth bears itself out in two ways.

### **We embrace the light.**

By being a Christ follower, we have, in the proverbial sense, "seen the light." We have embraced the light, by faith and through grace. That light is what should now lead us and guide us. The psalmist says the light of His Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Psalm 119:105). This light of salvation shines brightly for us, so that we can live upright and holy lives until He comes.

Time out. Is that true of you, Christian? You who are a child of light, are you living in the light? Romans 13:12 says, *"So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light."* That means every decision, every thought, every action of the Christ follower—what we do, what we think, where we're going—hinges on whether or not what you're involved in is light or darkness?

Brothers and sisters, I am saddened, number one, by my own pursuit of darkness. The decisions I make, the things that come out of my mouth, the things I allow my eyes to see, I know in my heart that the Holy Spirit of God says, "That is darkness. As a child of God, you should not have fellowship with darkness." If I know my congregation, I know you too fight this as well. If you're like your pastor, you don't just fight it, you fall to it. I am so thankful for that light. John tells the church in 1 John 1:9 that if we will confess our sins, that light is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That means we don't have to lie to God and say we're without sin, but we can have fellowship with that light. We can experience what it is to live in that light.

So let me ask, as you look back at this past week, were you living in light? Or because of decisions, thoughts and actions, did you allow yourself to go back into that world of darkness from which Christ rescued you?

### **We reflect the light.**

Number two, this doesn't just involve our sin. Rather, that light has been given to us and in response we are to be reflectors of that light. I want the room lights to be turned down and the screens turned off. Don't be afraid, people. The job of the church in this dark age is to be reflectors of light. In this situation, you symbolize the world you live in. You're in darkness.

I symbolize the role of the Christian. The radiance of God illuminates my life. I get to enjoy that. I can read. I can see things around me. I can see where the edge of the stage is. I'm living pretty good. But as I look out at my loved ones, my neighbors, my friends,

my coworkers and my schoolmates, I see you all living in darkness. How in the world will you see the light unless I shine that light to the world around me?

That's our job as Christians. Our job is to reflect Jesus' light to the dark and needy world around us. We don't do that with pride. We don't do that with arrogance. We don't do that by saying, "I've got the light and you don't. Nana nana boo boo." That's Greek for you being a knucklehead.

We do this as one who once was blinded ourselves. The Apostle Peter put it this way. He must have been in Jesus' audience that day. In 1 Peter 2:9 he says this about Christ followers: *"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession."* That's what Jesus did for us. He did all of that, church, so that *"you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."*

Now, what are we to do? As reflectors of the glory and grace of Jesus, let us go out into the dark world and show the world that which they cannot see—the glorious grace and gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord. When you do that, depending on the Holy Spirit, your light will shine ten times brighter than that light at the top of the Luxor Hotel. God will be brought incredible glory, and lives will be saved.

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