

Title: Illuminating Qualities

Text: John 8:12-32

Introduction:

1. Light possess the wonderful quality to illuminate.
 - a. Light provides warmth
 - b. Light provides energy
 - c. Light reveals objects visually
 - d. Light provides for the ability to distinguish objects
2. The absence of light would result in the absence of life.
 - a. Life on earth would not exist without the light of the sun.
 - b. Even the creatures which exist underground and miles below sea level would cease to exist without the energy of the sun.
3. The spiritual parallel is clear, without the spiritual light of the Son, everyone is spiritually dead.
 - a. This is the second of seven “I am” statements of Jesus Christ.
 - b. The first, “I am the bread of life,” found in 6:35.
 - c. His Light dispels the darkness of sin which hangs heavily upon mankind, illuminating the spiritual truth of salvation available to mankind.

Proposition: The spiritual light of Jesus Christ alone leads to the liberation of man’s soul.

Question: Why does the spiritual light of Jesus Christ alone lead to the liberation of the soul?

Transition: This passage relates Jesus’ authority and authentic nature as the Son of God as the basis for human liberty.

I. Authority Questioned (12-20)

A. The *I AM* statement (12)

1. The doctrine: *I am the light of the world...*

a) The development of Jesus Christ the Light of the World so far in John:

- (1) John 1:1-14 – Jesus is the eternal Son of God, Creator, and redeemer of men.
- (2) John 3:19-21 – Jesus is the light which saves, yet is rejected by a world in love with itself and sin.

b) The implication of this new doctrine was far reaching.

- (1) First, this statement refuted the Jewish belief about God.
 - (a) The Jews considered God the Light of the World.
 - (i) The revelation of God, **Ezekiel 1:4** *And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.*
 - (ii) The holiness and salvation of God, **Habakkuk 3:3-4** *God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power.*
 - (iii) God appeared as a burning lamp in the covenant with Abram, **Genesis 15:17** *And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.*
 - (iv) God appeared before Moses in the burning bush, **Exodus 3:2** *And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.*
 - (v) There existed in the history of Israel the well established physical presence of God in correlation with light.

- (b) The Law of Moses, by extension, was the Light of the World.
 - (i) As God had given the Law to Israel as a means of worship, so Israel considered it the true light.
 - (ii) It was the final authority regarding man's approach to God.
- (2) Second, the far reaching implication refuted Jewish exclusiveness.
 - (a) Jesus proclaimed He was not only the Light of the Jews, superseding the Law with Grace, but He is the Light of the Gentiles.
 - (b) The Gospel message of Jesus Christ would have no boundaries.
 - (i) Over the centuries, the Jews had become exclusive and failed to carry out the message of redemption as God's witnessing nation on earth.
 - (ii) Their perspective was to be part of God's family and God's kingdom meant you must be a Jew.
 - (iii) Their pride destroyed God's purpose for the nation and now Jesus was removing their source of pride: Judaism.
- (3) This double attack on the Jewish religious thought was incomprehensible.

2. The exhortation: *...he that followeth me...*

a) Here is the call to a decision.

- (1) Jesus Christ always called for action from His hearers and followers.
 - (a) When He called His apostles, it was a call to leave all and follow Him.
 - (b) When He made the water into wine, He called them to fill the pots and dip it out to serve (chapter two).
 - (c) When He spoke to Nicodemus about becoming born again He required faith (chapter three).
 - (d) When He spoke to the woman at the well about living water He required her to face the truth about her life and believe on Him (chapter four).
 - (e) When He healed the nobleman's son He required faith on the part of the father (4:43-54).

(f) When the impotent man at Bethsaida could not reach the pool, He required the man to believe His word (5:1-9).

(2) Jesus was calling for a decision to be made in every occasion.

b) Here in this verse Jesus Christ gives them the doctrine, *I am the Light of the world*, and now tell them to act upon it.

(1) There is a condition here in this verse, the condition is to follow.

(2) Jesus is not proclaiming a spiritual Light to the world in a sense of everyone, Jew and Gentile, is now out of spiritual darkness.

(3) He is proclaiming the Light to be freed from spiritual darkness is available to everyone.

(4) Jesus says follow Him or receive Him or believe Him and you shall have the light.

3. The promise: . . . *shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

a) Finally, the promise given to those who accept the doctrine and act upon it

b) Jesus promises what mankind has been looking for since the fall in the Garden of Eden.

(1) No longer under the power of the flesh and influence of Satan

(2) Restored to spiritual fellowship with God

4. Application

a) The message for the unbeliever is to consider Jesus Christ's claim.

(1) Consider His fulfillment of prophecy.

(a) He fulfilled every prophecy of His birth.

(b) He fulfilled every prophecy of His life.

(2) Consider His perfect life, never once violating the perfect Law of God.

(3) Consider His miracles, healing the blind, dumb, sick, diseased, and raising the dead.

(4) Consider His words:

- (a) **John 3:16-17** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*
 - (b) **John 8:12** *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*
- (5) Consider the life changing power of Jesus Christ.
- (a) The apostles, who even the religious leaders considered uneducated and ignorant, through whom Jesus turned the world upside down.
 - (b) The life of loved ones: Who forever were changed by Jesus Christ.
- (6) Will you choose to believe on Jesus Christ?

b) The message to the believe focuses on the promise of Christ.

- (1) You have chosen to follow Jesus Christ, as is evident by your confession of faith.
 - (2) Following is a continual action which doesn't end with our decision to accept Christ as our Savior.
 - (3) Our following is a process of salvation or sanctification.
 - (4) As we follow Christ with our lives we become more like Christ than when we were first saved.
 - (a) We do this by remaining in the Word of God, **Psalms 119:105** *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*
 - (b) We do this by remaining in a position of prayer, **Ephesians 6:18** *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*
 - (c) We do this by remaining in fellowship with the church as God's chosen avenue of worship and ministry,
 - (d) We do this with the understanding of our own sinful flesh which we battle against and seek forgiveness, **1 John 1:9** *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- (5) Christian, it is imperative you continue to follow your Lord Jesus Christ.

- (a) You no longer belong to yourself, **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*
- (b) Your failure to follow the Lord Jesus Christ with your life will result in chastening, **Hebrews 12:6** *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*
- (c) Judgment begins with the house of God, **1 Peter 4:17** *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*
 - (i) Christian your personal life and the spiritual fellowship of this church are in danger of God's judgment.
 - (ii) Your failure to confess your sin before God and change will bring God's judgment.
 - (iii) If there is something between you and another brother or sister in Christ, then you need to take care of that, now.
 - (iv) Your fellowship with God is in jeopardy, not your salvation, but your fellowship.
 - (v) The church is in jeopardy if there is division in our fellowship.
 - (vi) Let go of the sin of pride, confess it before God, seek His help, and approach your brother or sister in the Lord.

5. **Exhortation: Will you follow the Light?**

B. Attempt at discrediting Christ's witness (13-20)

1. *...Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. (13)*

a) The Pharisees demanded more from Jesus in light of His statement.

- (1) They would have understood His claim.
- (2) He was claiming to represent a new change in God's dealing with the Jews and the world (a.k.a. new dispensation).

b) Their refusal to accept Jesus' previous claim of witnesses and deity:

- (1) John the Baptist
- (2) Scripture

- (3) Miracles
- (4) Father

2. ***...Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true... (14-18)***

a) **Jesus simply defends Himself with truth.**

- (1) His testimony on behalf of Himself is more than sufficient because it is divine.
- (2) Their refusal to acknowledge who He is, did not make Him any less God in the flesh.

b) **He compares their threshold of judgment to His.**

- (1) Their judgment is flawed, based upon the limited knowledge and sin nature of the flesh.
- (2) However, He as God in the flesh, one with the Father, is perfectly suited to witness for Himself and call upon the witness of the Father.
 - (a) He uses the Law to stand His claim.
 - (b) The Law required two witnesses (as just seen with the woman taken in adultery) and both the Father and He stand as witnesses the Light.

3. ***...Ye neither know me, nor my Father... (19-20)***

a) **Jesus never minced words with the Pharisees.**

- (1) The spiritual implications were too important.
- (2) He told them the straight truth as they needed it.

b) **Their claim to be following the Father, Jehovah, the God of the O.T., led nowhere but Christ.**

C. Illustration: Catholic Priest of Rhode Island who claimed acceptance of homosexuality was in line with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

D. Application

- 1. **The spiritual light of Jesus Christ alone leads to the liberation of man's soul.**
- 2. **As we think about how the Pharisees attacked Christ, they first focused on His authority.**

- a) **This is similar to what we as Bible believing Christians face: spiritual authority.**
 - (1) The world has significantly modified Christianity, it has become a watered-down, compromise seeking, feel good, entertaining social club.
 - (2) Those who stand upon the authority of the Word of God are mocked and rejected along with the Word of God.

- b) **This form of Christianity says anything and everything is okay for each person.**
 - (1) The idea of an independent spiritual authority is rejected.
 - (2) Responsibility to the God of the Bible is replaced with a watered down god of their own making.

- c) **Jesus never wavered from His authority and we must remain grounded upon the Word of God as our authority.**

Transition: The spiritual light of Jesus Christ alone leads to the liberation of man's soul. We must remain on the authority of Christ and the Bible. Second, they attacked His authenticity.

II. Authenticity Questioned (21-29)

A. His ascension and their eternal destiny (21-24)

- 1. *...I go my way, and ye shall seek me...*
 - a) This is a clearer statement of what He told them in chapter seven.
 - b) He makes it clear to them their eternal destiny is not the same as His: Heaven.

- 2. *...Will he kill himself?*
 - a) The Jews were truly spiritually hardened.
 - b) They refused to acknowledge what the O.T. taught and the result was God hardened their heart to the truth.

B. His identity and proof (25-29)

1. *...Who art thou?*
 - a) **The age old question, who is Jesus?**
 - (1) They asked Him again who you are.
 - (2) The truth was there for the spiritual to discern, but they could not discern His answer.
 - b) **His purpose was to reveal more to the world.**
2. *...When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am...*
 - a) **All the evidence they would need would be the crucifixion and resurrection.**
 - b) **There would be no room for doubt on anyone's part.**

C. Application

1. **The spiritual light of Jesus Christ alone leads to the liberation of man's soul.**
2. **The Pharisees questioned how authentic Jesus truly was.**
 - a) **The debate today between Bible believing Christians and main-stream Christians is the authenticity of the Word.**
 - (1) Bible believing Christians interpret the Bible literally wherever the language is literal; figurative where the language is figurative; and so on.
 - (2) However, most main-stream Christians use a non-literal approach, picking and choosing what is literal and interpreting in kind.
 - b) **Our response is to focus on the Word and its testimony.**

Transition: The spiritual light of Jesus Christ alone leads to the liberation of man's soul. We must remain on the authority of Christ and the Bible as the Word of God. Finally, the result of remaining true.

III. Acquiring Liberty (30-32)

A. *As he spake these words, many believed on him.*

1. **The attacks of the unbelievers did not dissuade the spiritual seekers.**
2. **Jesus speaks to those who accepted His teaching about the Light.**
 - a) **You have begun the journey down the road of salvation and true disciples are those who remain in teaching of Jesus.**
 - b) **Your spiritual journey will lead to spiritual freedom.**

B. Application

1. **The spiritual light of Jesus Christ alone leads to the liberation of man's soul.**
2. **The amazing result of a fair look at Jesus Christ result in people being saved.**
 - a) **The spiritual truth of the message of Christ brought by faith unto salvation.**
 - b) **A reliance upon the biblical message of Christ, prayer, and the Holy Spirit working will lead the seeker to salvation.**

IV. Exhortation: Do you believe the word of God is able to lead people to the Light?