

Sermon Notes & References

Jesus Obedient 'til Death

John 8:12-30

July 3, 2016

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^A 1 John 1:5; James 1:17; John 12:36, 8:12, 9:5

^B Isaiah 59:2; 1 Timothy 6:16; John 3:19

^C Matthew 5:14; Psalm 119:105

^D John 5:31, 3:1

^E John 7:24; 2 Corinthians 4:4; John 3:17

^F Matthew 20:28; John 10:18

^G Matthew 27:54; Acts 6:7

^H Hebrews 10:7

A. Introduction

1. Christianity is Light

- a. The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is a religion of light.
- b. One of the most splendid descriptions of our Heavenly Father is in the words of John: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).
- c. James says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). Note James' descriptive name for God, "The Father of light."
- d. And the Lord Jesus declares that those who seek to do the will of God are the "children of light" (John 12:36).
- e. Our Saviour never said a more splendid thing about Himself than when He uttered that sublime declaration, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12; John 9:5).
- f. Everywhere in the Scriptures, light is used as an emblem of the righteous character of those who are the true children of God.
- g. Yes, the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is a religion of light.

2. Sin is Darkness

- a. it is darkness because as it is written, "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear." (Isaiah 59:2)
- b. sin is the barrier that stands between us and God, "who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honour and eternal dominion! Amen." (1 Timothy 6:16)
- c. and concerning man, we have read, "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil." (John 3:19)
- d. today, you and I are invited in these verses in John, to "Come, see this Jesus" who is Light, but who was willing in obedience to the Father to enter the darkness of death so that we might have life – to see Jesus, the One obedient until death.

B. Jesus, the Light of the World 8:12-20

1. Jesus' Claim (v 12)

- a. 'Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."

- b. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus calls His followers, 'the light of the world' (Matthew 5:14), but theirs is a light reflected off of His
- c. This took place at the Feast of the Booths or Tabernacles, which was commemorating the leading of God through the wilderness by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. So at this festival, the Court of the Women where Jesus was teaching, was illuminated by a great candelabra – a ready illustration Jesus applies to Himself
- d. Of God's written word we read, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, And a light to my path." (Psalms 119:105)
- e. so the light of God's living Word, Jesus the Son of God, will be kept from stumbling, but rather shall walk in God's path of life

2. The Pharisees' Objection (v 13)

- a. 'The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You are bearing witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.'"
- b. to this statement of Jesus, the Pharisees make a technical quibble, for according to their rules, 'No man can give witness for himself' ⁻⁽³⁾ derived from the law of witnesses in Deuteronomy
- c. but in doing so they were just echoing what Jesus had said in 5:31
- d. and in their clouded eyes they received no light from his words
- e. to them He is at best but a 'teacher come from God' (3:1)

3. Jesus' Arguments

a. His Knowledge of His Own Self (v 14)

- (A) 'Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true; for I know where I came from, and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from, or where I am going.'"
- (B) but though self-witness may not have weight in a court of law, that does not make it any less true
- (C) Jesus could speak authoritatively about His own persons, for He knew both His own eternal origin as well as His future
- (D) this knowledge the Pharisees did not and could not know; hence

b. False & True Conclusions (vv 15-16)

- (A) "'You people judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and He who sent Me.'"
- (B) these religious rulers judge according to the outward appearance as He had previously (7:24) told them; of them it was true:
 - (1) "in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Corinthians 4:4)

- (2) and even though they, lacking the necessary knowledge to judge Jesus, knowing neither His true origin or destiny, they kept condemning Him
- (C) but Jesus was not pronouncing judgement
 - (1) John 3:17 tells us He did not come to judge the world
 - (2) but if he were to give judgement, that judgement would be just, true and valid
 - (3) for He ever lived in complete union with His Father, the One who sent Him into the world; thus
- c. Jesus Testimony Supported (vv 17-18)
 - (A) *“Even in your law it has been written, that the testimony of two men is true. I am He who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.”*
 - (B) Jesus refers to it as their law, not that it was not God’s law, but because they claimed to understand it and to follow it
 - (1) so that on this basis they must hear His argument
 - (2) the law being that the independent testimony of 2 witnesses must be regarded as true, even to condemning a criminal
 - (C) in chapter 5 of this gospel, in what was more of a court-room setting, Jesus called upon a four-fold witness to His Person:
 - (1) John the Baptist
 - (2) the works of God that He did
 - (3) the Father’s words
 - (4) the words of Scripture
 - (D) but in this present instance, it is the Father’s witness alone that will show that Jesus is indeed the Light of the world

4. Know Jesus, Know the Father (vv 19-20)

- a. *‘And so they were saying to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me, nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.” These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.’*
- b. their question can be understood in many ways, and spoken with various tones of voice
 - (A) but it was not a question that was seeking knowledge
 - (B) but rather a way of lightly dismissing Jesus’ claim to be the Light of the world
- c. their problem, says Jesus, is that they did not know the Father since they did not know the Son – to know one is to know both

- d. the power of Jesus words – and the truth of His claim – is borne out by the fact that He was at that time teaching without being arrested
 - (A) the treasury was the place next to the court of the women
 - (B) it had 13 trumpet-shaped receptacles for offerings
 - (C) and was probably the most public part of the temple
 - (D) 6 months later Jesus would see the widow cast in her mites there

C. Jesus, the Saviour from Sin 8:21-30

1. The Great Gulf Between Them

a. In Their Destination (vv 21-22)

- (A) 'He said therefore again to them, "I go away, and you shall seek Me, and shall die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come." Therefore the Jews were saying, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'"
- (B) Jesus knows what lies before him, that in half a year he will again be in Jerusalem and face the final rejection from mankind
 - (1) from the Jewish rulers to unjustly sentenced him to death
 - (2) from the crowds who cried out "Crucify Him"
 - (3) from the Roman overlords who carried out His execution
- (C) but He also knew that he would rise again the third day, and after meeting with His disciples over a 40-day period, would ascend again into heaven from which He had come to be with the Father
 - (1) but their sin – singular, that which stood between them and God, and particularly the sin of unbelief – would prevent them from joining Him in that heavenly home
 - (2) their search for the Messiah of God would be unsuccessful for they had failed to trust in Him when they had opportunity
- (D) There is great irony in their question, 'would he suicide?'
 - (1) it was they who would slay him, not He slay Himself
 - (2) yet, it was also true that, "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28), and,
 - (3) "'No one has taken it (my life) away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.'" (John 10:18)

b. In Their Nature (vv 23-24)

- (A) 'And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins.'"
- (B) the religious rulers' nature is of the earth, earthly; Jesus' nature is of heaven, heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:47)
 - (1) these two are diametrically opposed
 - (2) the one is sold and enslaved in sin; the other is free and holy
- (C) yet even here in this warning that Jesus gives there is
 - (1) a hope: if they should repent and believe
 - (2) otherwise they will die ever separated from God
- (D) "I am He" – the "He" has been added by the translators
 - (1) the completion of that "I am" – of which there are seven or so in this book of John – must be made from the context
 - (2) "I am," says Jesus, "all that I claim, all that I said that I am"
 - (3) faith in Jesus, is accepting that statement, and shaping all your life and decisions upon it.
- c. In Their Understanding (vv 25-27)
 - (A) 'And so they were saying to Him, "Who are You?" Jesus said to them, "What have I been saying to you from the beginning? I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world." They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father.'
 - (B) Who are You
 - (1) a question these rulers ask in different ways throughout this gospel of John – but always with antagonism
 - (2) was He Messiah? – but their idea of Messiah was opposite in every way to what Jesus was
 - (3) they looked for a leader to deliver them from Roman bondage
 - (4) Jesus came to deliver mankind from the bondage of sin
 - (C) "I am," says Jesus, "what I have been telling you all along."
 - (1) the Bread of Life
 - (2) the Living water
 - (3) the Light of the World
 - (4) the One sent by the Father
 - (D) and Jesus will continue to speak the truth, though they will not listen and will not believe, because He

speaks from the Father, the One who commissioned Him, the One who is true

2. Jesus Is Doing God's Will

a. The Cross (v 28)

- (A) 'Jesus therefore said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me."'
- (B) it will be the cross that will bring the truth home
 - (1) they will know; but that intellectual assent will not be saving faith, but rather harden them in their unbelief
 - (2) that was indeed the case for when the soldiers told these religious rulers about the miracle at the tomb
 - (3) they were given money and protection to spread a lie
- (C) but even on the cross, with all the accompanying signs
 - (1) the earth being in darkness for three hours
 - (2) the veil of the temple being torn from top to bottom
 - (3) 'Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"' (Matthew 27:54)
- (D) and after the giving of the Holy Spirit, we hear that "And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7)

b. The Works (v 29)

- (A) "'And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.'"
- (B) It was Jesus Christ in His love for the Father
- (C) and His obedience to the Father
- (D) who said "'Then I said, 'behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.'"' (Hebrews 10:7)

c. The Results (v 30)

- (A) 'As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.'
- (B) the fruit of these words of Jesus themselves bear testimony to their truth.

D. Conclusion

1. and let us who believe in Him this morning
 - a. and rejoice in the obedience that purchased our salvation
 - b. sing with joy our closing hymn, "The Light of the World Is Jesus"

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AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NLT	New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

- Bruce – *The Gospel & Epistles of John*, by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983
- Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, www.holwick.com.
- NTC – *New Testament Commentary*, by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954
- RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson

2. '*Christianity - a Religion of Light*', Fredericksburg Bible Illustrator Supplements, Kerux illustrations # 21200
3. Mishnah, Ketub, 11:9 (source RWP)