

I AM Part 5: "The Light of the World" (12-3-2017)

This series . . . As we move towards Christmas this year, instead of exploring the Nativity, we will be looking at the **Identity & Mission** of the child that came into the world.

The series is titled: I AM . . . we will be exploring Jesus identity & mission through the eyes of the apostle John

There are 7 proclamations Jesus made in John's Gospel, about His Identity . . . The 7 "I AM" statements

There are 7 proclamations Jesus made in John's Vision (Revelation), to His People . . . The 7 letters to the churches

We will be looking at the connection between Jesus' Identity & Mission, and our own.

Today: Part 5 – "I AM The Light of the World"

John 8:12 (ESV)

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

The picture throughout John's Gospel describing Jesus as the Light of the World

John's gospel opens with Jesus creating the world, and now Jesus arrival to redeem it . . .

John 1:1-10 (ESV)

(1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was in the beginning with God. (3) All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. (4) In him was life, and the life was the light of men. (5) The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it . . . (9) The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. (10) He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

Let's look at that creation story together for a few minutes . . .

Genesis 1:1-4 (ESV)

(1) In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (2) The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (3) And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. (4) And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

Notes:

- This is the 1st act of creation! Light is a pre-requisite for life.
- **Importance of Light:** It brings life – Light gives Warmth/Heat – Light brings Sight/Clarity/Vision
- It is distinct from Sun, Moon, & Stars (Day 4) – so there is a light that sustains life prior to these! (Rev 21)
- The Presence of God hovers over the dark & void – waiting to spring into action bringing Light & Life!

During Jesus conversation w/ Nicodemus right on the heels of John 3:16 . . .

John 3:19-21 (ESV)

(19) 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. (20) For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. (21) 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."

Jesus heals a man born blind (the story of us all) . . .

John 9:5-7 (ESV)

(5) "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (6) Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud (7) and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

Notes: Why does Jesus rub mud in his eyes?

This is the final passage in John's Gospel prior to the Passion of Jesus . . .

John 12:35-36 (ESV)

(35) So Jesus said to them, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. (36) While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

Verses 37-50 . . .

- Most didn't believe in him
- Many did believe in him (even among the authority figures), but for fear of losing their place & position, they wouldn't confess their belief
- Why – they loved the glory that came from men, more than the glory of God
- Isn't it time for us to start worrying more about God and what He thinks?
- So the passage ends with a final invitation . . .

John 12:44-46 (ESV)

(44) And Jesus cried out and said, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. (45) And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. (46) I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

- Truly the Spirit of God hovers over the dark, longing to bring light to the world. Will we hear him say: "Let there be light!"

Thyatira History: **Map of the 7 churches**

Thyatira was the name of an ancient Greek city in Asia Minor, now the Turkish city of Akhisar ("white castle").

It is about 50 miles from the Aegean Sea. It stood on none of the Greek trade routes, but upon the lesser road between Pergamum and Sardis.

Thyatira was a military town as well as a commercial center with many trade guilds.

Dyeing was an important part of the industrial activity of Thyatira. It is first mentioned in the Bible in connection with Lydia, "a seller of purple" who becomes a follower of Christ after hearing Paul and Silas preach (Acts 16:14).

The principal deity of the city was Apollo, worshipped as the sun-god under the surname Tyrimnas.

The longest message was sent to the church in the smallest city!

Revelation 2:18-19 (ESV)

(18) "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. (19) "'I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.

- Commended for: love, faith, service, patience, endurance, and they are steadily growing in their faith!

Revelation 2:20-23 (ESV)

(20) But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. (21) I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. (22) Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, (23) and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.

- **(20-23) Key issue** – the church was tolerating darkness where there should only be light!

Bryan Cranston on Kevin Spacey and the issue of sexual abuse in Hollywood - "There's a disorder among all those people who use their power, their place or their status in any industry to overpower someone and force someone to do something that they don't want to do. It's beyond disgusting. It's almost animalistic."

This quote echoes Romans chapter 1 and the devolving of a society that walks in darkness and compromise

Revelation 2:24-29 (ESV)

(24) But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. (25) Only hold fast what you have until I come.

- **(24-25) To those who are faithful:** holdfast and remain so! Walk in the light even when surrounded by the dark

Revelation 2:26-29 (ESV)

(26) The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, (27) and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. (28) And I will give him the morning star. (29) He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

- **(26-28)** In Rev 22:16 we see that Jesus is the bright and morning star . . .
- So the promise is that He will give us himself – the Light of the World

Conclusion:

Many of us are familiar with this passage . . .

Psalms 119:105 (ESV) - Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

But I want to close by reading just a few verses down, a longer explanation of Jesus' word being light to our path.

Let's read this as our closing prayer this morning . . .

Psalms 119:129-136 (ESV)

Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple. I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments. Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name. Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me. Redeem me from man's oppression, that I may keep your precepts. Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes. My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law.

Closing: Lord, may Your word be a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. We pray all of this in the name of Jesus, the Light of the World, Amen.