

Discipleship Group Weekly Resources
Week 6 Passage: John 8:12-20, 9:5

Big Thought:

I am the light of the world.

The claim by Jesus to be the light of the world is not just a claim to be divine, but also a claim to be Israel's Messiah. In this chapter, we see Jesus at odds with the teachers of the day; the Pharisees. They are questioning his testimony and if there's evidence that what he claims about himself is true. The claim to be a great light sent from God would have been a familiar one for the Pharisees made by other wanna-be Messiahs.

What Jesus recognizes about the Israel of his day is that they had forgotten who God really was. The way they treated each other and carried themselves, their attitudes and the things they cared about made clear that they no longer knew God the Father (as Jesus calls him). It's out of this trap in sin and selfishness that they question Jesus' testimony. The intent was for Israel to be the light of the world; a blessing to the nations. All Israel could add to the mix was more darkness.

But the light God was bringing through Jesus was a light to shine in the darkest parts of the whole world for the whole world. And when that light shines, it condemns. We see clearly though in the Gospels that Jesus wasn't just bringing judgement, but rescue and healing and salvation. And while those things bring hope and life, they also bring judgement on those of us who are so deep in the traps and cycles of sin and selfishness that being fully exposed by the light seems like bad news.

Jesus shines a light directly into the darkness. The darkness cannot overcome it. This works itself out in two ways:

1. **Being transformed.** As you come into closer proximity with the light, you recognize the darkness in your own heart and mind that cannot remain. Jesus exposes the sin and selfishness, but the beauty of the Gospel is that, just as soon as he has exposed it, he has forgiven it. You are free from it. Darkness has to flee and healing and hope and life fill its place.
2. **Transformed being.** Everything that God does in us, God wants to do through us. And God has chosen to empower us and use us as his image-bearing children. So, as much as Jesus exposes the darkness in you and provides salvation and healing, he desires for you, out of the overflow of life and freedom you've received, to go shine light in the darkness. Now remember, when the Light of the World exposes darkness, it does not bring pain or division, hatred or judgement. This is not an excuse to hop on your soap-box and call out what you think is evil from a distance. When the light of the world enters the world, he enters into relationship and suffering and his light brings conviction and love, hope and salvation, healing and life. Jesus operates according to the will he discerns from the Father, so should you.

4 Questions:

1. Very literally, what is the deepest darkness you've ever experienced (in a cave, in a room in your house, etc)? Describe how that deep level of darkness feels.
2. The Pharisees had clearly been caught up in their own cycles of sin and selfishness that they were missing the light in front of them, in what ways does the metaphorical darkness prevent us from seeing the light of the world in our daily lives?
3. In the last year, what darkness in your heart/mind has Jesus been shining a light on? What does healing and receiving life from that look like?
4. Question 3 may take some discerning this week. **Follow up with each other on that question next week. Hold each other accountable** to the process of discerning how the light is shining in our darkness.