

## “The Light of life”

December 1, 2019

John 1:1-9

Thank you for the opportunity to join you in learning the Bible. Now, if you can find a book better than the Bible, please see me today because I don't believe there is a book in existence as important as the Bible. And thank you for opening your Bible or your phone or your tablet with me to the eighth chapter of the Gospel of John.

It's one of the most ordinary things in the world to be a follower. That's because most people would prefer that someone else lead. But, it's a simple fact that we all choose who or what we to follow. Listen to what Jesus says about following.

It's right here John 8. Find with me verse twelve. Here's what we have. 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.*”

I've titled today's message “The Light of Life.” Shall we pray?

Now, we all, likely, consider ourselves followers. But, who here “follows directions”? Maybe you are one of those who “follow the news.” Or, you'll hear “follow your heart,” or “follow your passion.” Or, even, “follow your dreams.”

But, what does Jesus say? It's one of the clearest commands Jesus ever gave. It's a very short sermon; just two words. And He says it eleven times. Here it is.

Matthew 4:19 “Follow Me.”

Matthew 8:22 “Follow Me.”

Matthew 9:9 “Follow Me.”

Matthew 16:24 “Follow Me.”

Matthew 19:21 “Follow Me.”

Mark 10:21 “Follow Me.”

John 1:43 “Follow Me.”

John 12:26 “Follow Me.”

John 21:19 “Follow Me.”

John 21:22 “Follow Me.”

As important as you think it is to follow your dream or to follow your passions, these words take “following” to a much more personal and practical level. And, I'm sure you'll agree; a whole lot more important. Can you imagine a simpler call? Listen to Jesus. “Follow Me,” He says.

And then one day He adds this.

John 10:4 “*And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and **the sheep follow him**: for they know his voice. (5) And **a stranger will they not follow**, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.*”

And one more, Matthew 10:38 “*And he that taketh not his cross, and **followeth** after me, is not worthy of me.*”

So, following Jesus is not just very important. It's *the most important* thing you'll ever do. It's the single most important decision you'll ever make.

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.*”

You see, Jesus was never One to mince words or to make it easy or to make it confusion. Instead, He makes you a

promise. He says, “If you’ll follow Me, you’ll receive two things.” One, your life, that’s a reference to your daily walk; your life will not be a walk in darkness. And two, you will have a light that is much stronger than the sun; you’ll have the *light of life*.

Now, with that in mind, please turn with me to the first Epistle of John and the first chapter. I John 1.

Aren’t you always affected by someone who understands something? I want to say something today about following the LORD. You see, a lot of us think we’re following. But, we aren’t. We’re doing everything, but. So the question is this “Are you following?” And, I want you to hear it from a man who perfectly understood what it means to follow. That man’s name is John. John shows us how.

You see, when someone else understands something; *and* when he or she is willing to explain it to you, you are drawn to him or her. You *want* to hear what he or she says. Here’s what John understands about Jesus.

I John 1:5 “*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (6) If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in dark-ness, we lie, and do not the truth: (7) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*”

There are a lot of Christians across the globe. But who’s following Christ? Who would you say is following Him? Are you? Because, if you are, you are no longer walking in darkness *and* you are enjoying the Light of Life.

John, the Apostle, put it down in his Gospel that Jesus was the *Light* of the world and that those who followed Him would not walk in darkness. Instead, they’d have the light of life.

Now, here in his first epistle, John us how to follow.

First, he says, do you know Who the Light is? Verse five.

I John 1:5 “*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*”

What comes to your mind when you say the word “light”? Do you think of a Person? Do you think “Who is the Light?” Or, do you think of the light is mere physical radiation with properties that you can measure? Is light just something that enables you to see?

Here’s John, the teacher. He’s teaching us about God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Who is Jesus Christ? Verse one. I John 1:1 “*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of **the Word of life**; (2) (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you **that eternal life**, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*”

John begins this letter by telling us exactly Who this Person is that he’s going to write about. Who is it? Who is He? He’s The Word of Life. He’s That Eternal Life, which was revealed to us. Whom we know to be Jesus Christ.

John, remember, had heard Him teach. He saw Him. He traveled with Him. He watched Him minister. He touched Him. And now, as John looks back on the LORD’s ministry on the earth, he tells us exactly Who it is that he wants you and me to know. That One is “the Word of Life” and “that Eternal Life.”

And why? Why listen to John? Why learn about the Word of Life?” Two wonderful reasons. One, so that we, like John and the other Apostles, might have fellowship with Him and

His Father. And two, so that *as* we experience fellowship with the Father and the Son, we experience joy.

I John 1:4 “*And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*”

There are so many things to do in this world. There are so many things that attract your attention. There are so many things we put so much time and energy into that it baffles the mind. And you’ll hear this over and over again. “I’m running around like a chicken with its head cut off.”

Why? Because we think that *that’s* what we want and need; when all the while we neglect the One Who is the Word of Life, the One Who is that Eternal life, and the One Who, when we experience fellowship with Him, we find the greatest by-product of any effort anywhere – joy.

So, John begins with Jesus and he tells us that he’s found a way for any one of us here to discover fellowship with God and full joy.

Then, he explains, not *what* light is, but Who Light is; verse five again.

I John 1:5 “*“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”*

What’s the message? What’s so important; so much more important than sports and money and possessions and following our dreams and our passions? Here it is. It’s seeing God for Who He is.

So, can you now see what a follower it? He or she is someone who sees somebody that is worthy of following. Folks, if you aren’t following Him, maybe it’s because you don’t see Who He is. Maybe you’re following what you think

He is. Or, maybe you aren’t even really following Him. You’re just “saying” you are following.

Who is He? He’s Light. God is Light. Jesus spoke it as plainly as possible. I am the Light of the world.

Folks, believe me, you’re following somebody. You’re following something. And, if who and what you are right now following is enough, then you don’t need Christ. Because Christ has extended His call to you. So, if you don’t need Him and you don’t see Him as the Light, then you’ve not chosen to follow Him. You aren’t a Christ follower.

But, we all can know this absolutely one certain thing. We need to follow Christ more than we need to eat and to drink and to work and to exercise and to spend our money. We need fellowship with the Father and with His Son. If that’s not glorious, I don’t know what is.

Believe me, you are following. But, if there’s no light, how can you say you’re following the Light of the world? You might just be following your perception of what you think He is. Jesus said “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9).

Folks, you were made for fellowship. And you are like fish out of water if we don’t have fellowship with God. Look at the present state of the world here in our United States.

Here we are nearly into the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And how many people do you discuss spiritual things with today? Who here thinks it’s normal to talk about walking with God and such things? Is it normal? Folks, it’s normal to walk in the Light.

You see, the plain fact is this. We know we need fellowship with the LORD. And we know how badly we want to

experience joy. But, we can't stop the world long enough to find the right thing to follow.

John tells us that the right thing to follow is a Person. And that Person is Light.

God is Light. Now, to most of us, light is a thing that we need to see. So, says, John, it's not *what* we need to be able to see well. It's *Who* we need. We need God because He's Light.

Jesus said it so simply "I am the Light of the world."

John says it just as simply "God is Light."

I know there's a physical entity we call light. I know that we find light when we study and memorize God's Word. I know when our mechanic explains to us what's wrong with our vehicle we can see the light he has. But, none of that is enough. We need to see the Person Who is Light.

And if physical light helps us to see the sky and the ocean and the people and the trees and the world around us, then God is the One Who enables us to see the things we simply can't see with our physical eyes.

First, says John, Light is a Person.

Second, your greatest need as a human being is to experience fellowship with the Light, verse five.

I John 1:5 *"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (6) If we say that we have **fellowship with him**, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: (7) But if we **walk in the light**, as **he is in the light**, we have **fellowship** one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."*

Fellowship is what John wants for you and me. Fellowship is what life is all about. And fellowship with God is possible

because Someone loves you so much He was willing to die so that we could be cleansed from all your sin.

You see, it's not fellowship *in* the Light as much as it is fellowship *with* the Light. God doesn't just have light to give to you. *He's* the Light. God doesn't just want you to enjoy the light. He wants you to enjoy *Him*.

Everything starts with God. And sadly, everything so often starts with us. By nature, we think we have enough sense. We think we have enough light, enough understand-ing, enough knowledge that we don't need to expend any effort paying attention to the Light, paying attention to God.

But, I will guarantee you that if you'll decide today to focus on the Light, you'll see a whole lot more than you do right now. Your greatest need is for fellowship with the Light.

Folks, when you expend the effort to learn Who He is, you'll find Him to be the Light you so desperately want and need.

The LORD isn't calling you to a religion or to a philosophy or to a system of works. Rather, He's calling you to Himself. Whatever you're finding in your life that makes you more like the world, you can be sure of this. All of those things are stealing your God-planned purpose. You are here to know Him and enjoy Him. That's the original plan. That's His plan for you.

And He's made a way for you to do just that. Go to Him for fellowship. There's enough Light in God to keep you coming to Him for the rest of your life and then; even further; on into eternity.

So, what is this fellowship with God?

Here it is very simply? Fellowship is companionship. It's friendship. It's relationship. It's "He knows me and I know

Him.” It’s “He knows me perfectly and loves me perfectly.” It’s the joy and wonder of a true connection with the One Who created you. It’s “I have a relationship with God through the One Who died and rose again from the dead.” I’m in fellowship with a Resurrected Person.

Fellowship with God isn’t some mystery reserved only for those who hide away from the world and spend all day on a mountaintop in prayer. Fellowship is the most ordinary thing in the world.

Folks, the LORD created you for a close relationship to Him. He saved you to know and to love Him. He brought you to Himself in order for you to know Him.

When Jesus died on Calvary, He paid for your sins. Why? So, you wouldn’t go to Hell? Yes. But, is that it? Not in a million years. He paid for your sin so that, now, as a child with a father, you have entered into fellowship with Him.

Sin is gone. Hell is gone. Judgment is gone. And fellowship with Him has come. If you’re saved, you are now standing in the place of “I can enjoy fellowship with my LORD; all day, every day for the rest of my life.”

First, says John, Light is a Person.

Second, your greatest need as a human being is to experience fellowship with the Light.

Third, decide today to walk with the LORD. I John 1:6 “*If we say that we have fellowship with him, and **walk** in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: (7) But if we **walk** in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*”

A few weeks back in Sunday School someone was describing his relationship with his dog. He said “my dog is completely happy to do what I tell him to do because he loves

to be around me. He trusts me. And he knows that I always have his best interest at heart.” Folks, even a dog can teach us what fellowship is.

Walking, as I said, is, like fellowship, the most ordinary and normal thing a person can do.

“How would you like to go for a walk with me?” That’s God’s question to you.

But, let me show you what it is.

To walk in the light is to let the truth change you; verse six. I John 1:6 “*If we say that we have fellowship with him, and **walk** in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: ...*”

The Truth, as you know is both a Person and a Book. But, it’s this. When God shows you something, let that be the thing that changes you.

Let’s say you have tendency to lie. Stop, right now, and ask yourself “Is God honored or pleased by these words?” Suppose you are angry. Stop, right now, and ask yourself, “Is God honored by these feelings and thought?”

Folks, the only way to live is to live by listening to the One you’re walking with. Listen. What is the LORD saying to you right now? And, how are you responding to Him? According to your response, you are either walking with Him or you’re walking in the darkness.

The LORD isn’t interested in complicating things for you. Rather, He’s out to simplify them. What’s going on in your heart as it relates to Him right now? Can you see that either you’re walking with Him or you aren’t?

So, Who’s the Center of your walk? Who’s the One Who wants fellowship the most? Who’s most concerned about

having a conversation with you? Who wants to spend time with you today?

Listen again to Jesus. 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.**”*

God reserves these two things; the walk that is not in the darkness and having the light of life to those who make this one decision; to follow the Light of the world.

Today, what will it be? Will you take another look at the Cross and see the LORD's heart and His desire for fellowship with you? Will you submit yourself to His fellowship? Will you, right now, decide to walk with Him. To walk in the Light as He is in the light? It's really up to you. I know exactly what He wants. He wants you.

So, what will it be for you? “The Light of Life”? “Fellowship with the Father and with the Son”?

All of the work of the Cross is now focusing on you. The LORD's intention is that you experience His fellowship and His joy. And these things are bound up in a Person, Jesus Christ. It's up to you. He's willing to walk with you. Are you willing to walk with Him?

Folks, if you've never trusted in Christ, Go to Him today; this One Who is Eternal Life? Turn to Him? Receive Him as your LORD and Savior? Will you trust Him? Will you receive the free gift of Eternal Life? God puts the choice into your hands. What will you do? If you've never trust Christ as you Savior and LORD, do it today.

The Sinner's Prayer

“LORD, I know that I am a sinner. I ask Your forgive-ness for all my sins. I believe on Your Son today as the One Who

paid for all my sins. Thank You for the free gift of Eternal Life in Him. Amen”

And here's the Christian's Prayer. “LORD, I say this to You today. I say that I have fellowship with You, and I will not walk in darkness and lie. I will do the truth: And I will walk in the light as he is in the light and enjoy the fellowship You promised. And I take the blood of Jesus Christ Your Son as the only cleansing from all my sin.”

Shall we pray?

Hymn # 244 “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”