

SERIES: Gospel of John: Seeing is Believing?
SERMON: *The Light of Life*
SCRIPTURE: John 8:12-30
SPEAKER: Pastor Jeremy Krause
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Well, good morning, glad to be here with you, my name's Jeremy Krause, I'm the student ministry pastor here. I like to play basketball, it's one of my hobbies. I was playing a couple of years ago in Manhattan, KS before Brooke and I moved here to Wichita. I was playing at a place called Ahearn gymnasium, that's where K-State practices. We played Noon ball (I'll let you decide when we play), and as we were playing, sometimes students would join us.

On one occasion, I was privileged with the opportunity to guard a guy who was six foot nine and as I'm guarding this guy, I thought, man, he can jump well. So when the game's over, I shake his hand, "Hey, my name's Jeremy, thank you for dunking on me a lot. What do you do?" He's like "Aw, man, I high jump." I said, "That's real cool, man. You go to school at K-State and you're on the track team. Cool!" He said, "No, I don't go to K-State, I've graduated. I'm a professional high-jumper." "Oh! Well that's REAL cool. Real real cool, man." "Yeah, Adidas pays me, I'm sponsored by them, and I'm a professional high-jumper."

And I realized, K-State actually has really good jumping coaches. I had known this before but I'd failed to remember. And some of those coaches are so good that they train Olympians and potential Olympians. This was 2006 and so I thought, "This guy's training for the 08 Olympics! Now that's REAL cool." So I said to him, "Are you gonna try out and be in the Olympics?" He kind of gave me this funny look, and said, "Yeah. Yeah I am." "Wow... That's real cool man." So I told my buddy that I played with him. "That guy? He's training for the Olympics." And HE gave me a weird look! And here's a little video that gives you an idea of why he gave me a weird look.

(Video clip)

So the guy you see jumping is named Matt, he's six foot nine, and just for context, in the video, he jumped over my hand, it's over seven foot tall, that's what he's able to do right there. So that's who I was saying hi to. My friend that gave me a funny look says, "Yeah... he got silver... in Athens." "Oh! Now that's cool man, real cool."

You know, Matt could have said, "I've got bling the size of a pie tin, and if I wanted to, while I'm dunking on you I could hit you in the head." He knows something about high-jumping, but I didn't know who he was, and in our fame-drunk culture, I was a little embarrassed. I wish I would have known and not made a fool of myself. I've never been an Olympian, but I've imagined the time and effort you put into this is incredible. I was kind of impressed, but my inability to recognize him doesn't really matter. But there is a man who you must recognize, and eternity hangs in the balance. It's this man we've been studying, and it's his birth we're celebrating this Christmas season. And this morning we're going to look at John the evangelist as

he teaches in this book. And the question that I want you to answer is: Is Jesus who He says He is? Is He who he says He is?

We're in chapter 8 of John, and as we think about this question, if you get it correct, eternal life is available to you. But if you don't get this right, judgment awaits. Hell. So this morning, I want to invite you to understand, Jesus is the light of the world, and he pleases His Father by providing salvation upon the cross. That's what I'm arguing for this morning. But before I jump into the chapter I just want to make sure we're all on the same page. In verse 25, Jesus says He is who he's been saying he is from the beginning." So since I want you to know, who is this Jesus and who is John the evangelist ... I want to be sure you're caught up. Flip your Bibles back a couple pages. John chapter 1, you're going to see the introduction. *"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God."* This is Jesus. In verse 4, He has life, and that life is the light of men. John tells us in 1:11-12 that Jesus came to the world. His own people don't recognize him, but those who do receive Him, who believe in His name, they can become children of God. John the Baptist comes on this scene as kind of a mythical character, we're not really sure about this guy, but he makes this really bold pronouncement, in verse 15 he says, *"Behold! The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* The disciples begin following Jesus, and they call him Messiah at the end of Chapter 1. In chapter 2, Jesus is at the temple, and in effect says, "I'm really the fulfillment of the temple, this great meeting place between God and man, it's ME!"

And then in the end of chapter 2, we see that He knows what's going on in men and women's hearts; in their minds, He knows. Carrying on to chapter 3, we see this prediction in verse 14 – He's going to be lifted up on a cross, and then the most well-known verse perhaps in the whole Bible, 3:16, God so loved the world that He gave His son. That's Jesus. And in chapter 4, Jesus reveals himself to the woman at the well, look at 26. She's saying prior to that, I know the Messiah's coming, and when He comes He will tell us all things. And Jesus looks at her and He says, *"I who speak to you am He."* John the evangelist and Jesus, they are establishing who He is. In chapter 5 He heals a sick kid and He heals on the Sabbath. In verse 18, we read that the Jews wanted to kill Him, because he's calling God His own father, this is what Christ is doing. In chapter 6, He feeds the 5,000, and He walks on water, and He's got all these people following Him. Then He looks at them, thousands perhaps, and He says, "Eat my flesh, drink my blood, that's what it takes." And the people just scattered. They don't understand it's symbolic of Him; the symbolism of belief.

And now we find ourselves at this feast of Booths. And as Pastor Josh set up for us last week, this feast of Booths was a very popular celebration. And there would be perhaps hundreds of thousands of people at this feast of Booths. And part of the ceremony involves taking water, and they throw it down on the ground, and it's in this context that Jesus, perhaps, stands up, and he says to the whole crowd, *"If anyone thirsts, let Him come to me and drink!"* That's chapter 7 verse 38. And He says, *"Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."* And so there's this word picture that Jesus is building on.

Then we get to see the Pharisees are angry. And in their anger they send officers to go arrest Jesus. And then the officers come back empty-handed, and the Pharisees are like "What in the world is going on?" And I always thought the officers would have goofy voices, and say "Well,

you've never heard him talk! It's really good!" And the Pharisees are angry, you know, they're committed to ending Jesus's life. And we find ourselves still there, still at the feast of booths. Contextually, that's important for you to remember.

We're going to be at chapter 8, verse 12. And before I jump in there, you might be wondering, "Uh, Jeremy, you missed 7:53 to 8:11, what's going on?" Well, your Bibles probably say this, but I'll remind you. This wasn't in the original inspired word of God, and I'm actually fine with the thought that it happened. I'm okay with that. Perhaps it did. However, it certainly doesn't go here. In fact, with John the evangelist, we're clearly seeing we're still at the feast of booths; so this section doesn't fit here. And since it wasn't in the original, we're not going to preach it. We're going to find ourselves in verse 12 of chapter 8, and you don't have to stand up, I'm going to read this passage in two sections. There are two big ideas here, so let me read to you 12 to 20, follow along.

John 8:12-20 (ESV)

¹²Again 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." ¹³So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true." ¹⁴Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony 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. ¹⁵You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. ¹⁷In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. ¹⁸I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me." ¹⁹They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." ²⁰These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

So we see here, the context of the feast of booths. There would have been these torches that get lit, and perhaps are being walked around the city, and walked around the temple, and those carrying the torches would have placed these torches down, and it's in this context that John is writing this part of the narrative. Jesus is in the treasury. This crowd of people who are listening to Jesus, they can see that this is happening. And so as this word picture is happening in front of them, Jesus points and says, "*I am the light of the world! Whoever follows me won't walk in darkness but will have the light of life.*"

I confess to you, I want to know my Bible better. And I am sometimes embarrassed that I don't know it very well. The original audience, some of these religious leaders, they would have had the whole Old Testament memorized. And so when Jesus stands up and announces, "*I am the light of the world,*" they would have all the sudden had these cross-references slamming into their brain, and their synapses are firing and they're going "Whoa, whoa, whoa!" And maybe some of you have an understanding of what Jesus perhaps is speaking to. He's using some of this language we find in Genesis when God in his first act of creation (we know Jesus is there, from Colossians), creates light. But that's not the only reference He's making here.

There's also this arrow pointing back to Exodus 13:21-22, when the Israelites are coming out of Egypt. What's leading them? A cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night. And it's fitting that Jesus

says, whoever follows me, (because you followed the pillar of fire). But there's something else, Psalm 27 – there's this song that Israelites would have memorized, and the first line from this song says *“The Lord is my light and my salvation!”* And so when Jesus stands up and says *“I am the light of the world,”* he is making a very important claim. And then in Isaiah, this prophecy says, *“I am the Lord, I've called you in righteousness, I will take you by the hand and keep you, I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations.”* Certainly speaking of salvation there in 42:6, and 49:6, when we read, *“I will make you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”* And as I told you earlier, John 1:4-5 says, *“In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”*

So Jesus stands up, and He makes this bold claim. It is no small thing, and they know what He's referencing. See, those who follow Christ walk in light. If you don't follow Christ, you're actually walking in darkness, and so look what the Pharisees say to him, *“You're bearing witness about yourself! Your testimony's not true.”*

What are they doing here? Well there's this legal principle in Deuteronomy that says you've got to have a corroborating witness if you're going to make this kind of a claim. No fair just standing up and saying something. And now watch what Christ does. He's illuminating himself, and then this metaphor of light, this light of course is clearly seen and as you come closer to the light, the darkness goes away. It's like this, let's look at these candles over. As the lights come down, notice something... the light, by nature, you can see it. And then as I come closer to the light, if I even poke my little face down here, you see my face. But if I back away from it, you just kind of vaguely can see. This is the nature of the metaphor. And as these Pharisees come closer to Jesus, he illuminates the sin that's going on. Because when we get close to Jesus, all of the sudden our sin comes into the picture. Jesus says in verse 14, *“Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you don't know where I came from or where I'm going.”* Jesus is affirming what He already told them. “I have a unique origination, and a unique destination, and y'all don't know what it is; you think you know, but you have no idea.” And He is affirming He is the great God-man, this is who Jesus Christ is claiming to be.

But the Pharisees are hung up on this “where's your witness?” business. So they ask him, *“Where is your father?”* And Jesus looks at them, I see Christ looking at them with love, but clear words right in the eye, and He says, *“You know neither me nor my father. If you knew me, you would know my father also.”* We already saw in chapter 5, religious leaders knew who Jesus was saying his father was. He's just giving them the business. We understand Christ's divinity here clearly, and his connection to the father. And Jesus really identifies the sin of the Pharisees clearly, their opposition. And as readers of this great book, we see the tension growing. Because if you were back there a couple thousand years ago, you'd know – Pharisees don't put up with this kind of lip! Why don't they take Jesus out? And so John gives us a little hint I think here, *“Because his hour had not yet come.”* You see, Christ's steps toward the cross were purposeful, they were intentional, they're not accidental, they're not coincidental, it is a clear, direct path. Christ IS going to the cross and He will be crucified, but it will be on His timetable, and it will be when He says it's time, not when some Pharisees decide. So His hour's coming, but it's not yet.

As I think about application from this first big idea, this idea that Jesus is the light of the world, I want to ask you, do you have the light of life? Do you have it? Do you have salvation? Are you following Jesus and not walking in the darkness? As you draw close to the light, does it illuminate your sin and put you in a position where you recognize, I must confess this? Ultimately, do you see what Jesus is saying about Himself here? And do you believe He is who He says He is? Do you believe that? Well as I read 21-30, consider this second point. Jesus provides salvation on the cross.

John 8:21-30 (ESV)

²¹So he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come."²²So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?"²³He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.²⁴I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."²⁵So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning.²⁶I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him."²⁷They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father.²⁸So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.²⁹And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him."³⁰As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

So Jesus gives this prediction. "Where I'm going you can't come, and you'll die in your sins." And the Jews totally misunderstand this! In chapter 7, we saw that they misunderstood what he was saying, and they thought he was going to the Greeks. And now they're thinking He is going to commit suicide. Similar to our culture, it would have been really horrible that Christ would consider that. Why would He? But that's what they're thinking. They're misunderstanding, and John's doing something here in this book. He's doing something some of you have maybe seen in film, where the superhero's enemy doesn't know who he is, and then the girlfriend doesn't know that the superhero and the regular person are the same person, and we spend like millions of dollars at movies every year because we love watching when all of the sudden, the penny drops and everybody knows who everybody is. And there's this tension, "this is my favorite part!" John's doing that for us here. John is probably the last gospel written, so most people know the story as they read it, but they're watching Jesus make these clear definitive statements, and then they're watching the religious leaders as they just don't get it, and the Jews, the crowd as they're just sitting around, scratching their heads going, "Huh?"

So Jesus responds, verse 23, "*You are from below, I am from above. You are of the world, I am not of the world. I told you, you would die in your sins, unless you believe I am He, you will die in your sins.*" Now again, the original audience would have known their Bibles well, and as some of you know immediately, the way I read that, the way it is in the original language, what Jesus is saying... again a little veiled, but it's clear. "Unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." What's it a callback to? Exodus. Moses, weak-kneed, in front of a burning bush, said, "Uh uh uh I'm gonna go to the pharaoh, and uh, and uh, uh, you know, I've got this mouth problem. Who, who, who do I say you are?" And God says, "I Am who I Am." or "I will Be who

I will Be. THAT'S who you say sent you, THAT'S who's got your back, Moses. I Am who I Am." And here's Jesus saying, "I Am." And the background music of this cinema soundtrack begins, and we as the readers start to see, there are these colliding forces that are coming very powerfully together. And it is going to end in a bloody mess. So they ask this question in verse 25. Of course it follows because Jesus just made this claim, "I Am". They say, "Who are You?" and Jesus says, "Just what I've been telling you from the beginning."

It's like you know how your mom or dad, or the teacher, asks the same question again, and they're like, "How many times do you want me to go over this with you, I'll say it again... all the way back, let's review." Yes, yes, yes, Jesus tells them the same thing John's telling us all through this book. "I'm the Temple! I must be lifted up on the cross. I'm the Messiah! I'm sent from God! The Bread of Life, the Living Water, I am the light! This is who I Am! It's what I've been telling you from the beginning." He continues, *"I have much to say about you and much to judge. But He who sent me is true. And I declare to the world what I have heard from Him."* And they didn't understand. He was speaking to them about the Father. Again, affirmation that Jesus is divine, he's identifying it, and there's more Jewish misunderstanding. So Jesus says in 28, *"When you have lifted up the son of man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. 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."* In Jesus's mind, the cross is clearly before Him. And He says, "when I'm lifted up on the cross, you're gonna know it." Chapter 3 verse 14, Jesus said the same thing, but Jesus is telling us now, He's not going independent, He's going with the Father. Saying what the father told him to say, He's sent by the Father, and He's pleasing the Father.

And so the last verse of this passage here ends with this great relief. At least it's relieving on first read, phew... many believed in Him. Good! Because here I thought they weren't going to get it. Aren't you glad they believed? And I thought that's what it meant, until I did some homework. And I don't want to steal the thunder of the next sermon, but in the end of chapter 8 these people who say they believe, they're picking up stones to kill Jesus. And so you wonder, do they really believe?

Because Jesus is clearly illuminating their sin, and they've got a big problem with sin issues, they have a big problem admitting that they're sinners. So I'm here telling you, you have got to believe. You have to believe Jesus is the Light of the World, and His illumination shows us our need for salvation. And it shows us our terrible sin. And so I wonder, as we apply this second big idea, do you understand that apart from Christ, you will die in your sins, sitting right here, if Jesus Christ is not the great intermediary between you and God, you are dead in your sin! Do you see that Jesus, the Light of the World, illuminates our need for salvation? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is who He says He is? We sang this great song earlier, What Child is This. What a good question! Is He the temple? Is He the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world? Is He the bread of life, the Living Waters, the Light of the World? Is he the Son of God, sent by the Father, pleasing the Father, and with the Father? My conclusion is made, I'm saying, "This, this, is Christ the King!"

Here's what I'm wanting you to understand. Jesus illuminates our need for salvation so we must understand and believe. You see, our text today calls us to actually know something in our

minds, you have to know the facts. But it doesn't end at mere knowledge, it's not, can you answer questions on tests. It's, do you believe that?

You can't walk out of here today and say, I didn't know. If this is the last sermon you ever listen to, and you're facing God at judgment, and you said, "O God, I didn't know who this Jesus was and I've never heard." God could look at you if he wanted and say, "No, no, no, December 11th, 11:45 AM, I had Jeremy stand up and he gave you the business, so you know. You're on the hook. Is Jesus who He says He is? You've got to answer the question." Who is He, who is this Jesus? You know, we say 'Gospel' here a lot, and Gospel is really theological shorthand for the finished and completed work, the satisfactory work of Jesus Christ. That's what we mean when we say 'the Gospel'. So I want to be super clear for you about what the Gospel is.

Here's how Jerry Bridges puts it. No one is declared righteous before God by observing the law. The Bible's clear. We have the moral code written on our hearts, we know we ought to follow rules, but we have failed miserably, as miserably as possible. No one can be justified. No one is found righteous by themselves. That is bad news.

But there is a righteousness from God that is apart from the law. Hallelujah! There is righteousness available.

And this righteousness from God is received through faith in Jesus Christ. And it's available to everyone on the same basis, for all of us have sinned, and all of us fall short of the glory of God. All who put their faith in Jesus Christ are justified freely by God's grace. It's just as if you hadn't sinned. And it's this double imputation, where our horrible wretched deeds and these black clothes that we're wearing, Jesus puts them on! But He doesn't just take away our sin, but we also get to put on the brand new, sparkling white suit of Christ! And now, God sees us as righteous because of what Jesus did for us, if you believe the Gospel.

And if you believe the Gospel, the Gospel gets into your heart, and it creates this attitude. For me it's like, "...I can't believe You'd do that. I bring nothing to the table, Jesus! I am so humbled that a King would leave glory for a wretch like me." And I move from humility, and I'm in that for a while, and then I transition into this, thankful attitude, when I'm really thinking about what Christ did... Thank you God! And as it goes deep inside of me, I'm thankful, and I want to adore him, you are so magnificent! Because of You, it has nothing to do with me. And then I find myself wanting to know why. It's going deep and as it's going deep, I find, I've got to tell people, there are people dying this Christmas season, and they don't know! You're going to be eating food with them on Christmas, are they your neighbor? You're going to wave at them when you come home from church today, or you're working with them, or you're at noon ball playing basketball with these people, and they don't know the Gospel, and they need to know it. And I pray this morning that the gospel goes deep in you. And as Pastor Josh says often, that then it would go wide to others.

I'd like to invite Andy up here, and he's going to play a little background music, and we're going to answer three questions. As we finish our time, I want to draw you very clearly to three questions. You were given a handout, you can write a few response thoughts on that, or maybe you need to close your eyes and bow your head and think through these questions. We're going

to put all three on the screen, and I'm going to give you a minute or two to do business with them.

First, who is your king? Who is your king. Is it Jesus Christ? Is it something else? Who is on the throne room of your heart? Is it another person? Is it some possession, is it some idea, is it you? Who is your King? Think about that for bit, then when you're ready, transition to the second question. Is Jesus who He says He is? And finally this question, is Christ your King?

As I was driving up here this morning getting ready to preach, this thought crossed my mind... Jesus, You're my King. I'm all in, betting my life on it, God. I believe You are who You say You are. And yes, this is Christ the King. It's revealed in Your bible. This is the Lord of my life. If you have come to that same conclusion, if you agree with that, you're going to have a chance to stand up and sing it. If you have questions, I'd love to talk to you.

God, thank you for your Word. Thank you for your Gospel. And thank you for your Son, who would go to the cross. God, this is for Your glory and our good. In Jesus name, Amen.