

introduction

In the midst of the Feast of Tabernacles — a festival defined by light and memory — Jesus makes one of his boldest "I Am" claims. He presents himself as the singular solution to the darkness that pervades the human experience, offering a truth that provides direction and meaning in a confusing world. Jesus has come into the world to end the reign of evil and the fog of ignorance. To follow him is to step out of the chaos of self-reliance and into a sustained, directed life where his "powerful word" ([Hebrews 1:3](#)) illuminates every step of our journey.



Were you afraid of the dark when you were young? What did your parents or others do to encourage you?

read

John 8:12-20 (NIV)

¹² When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

¹³ The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid."

¹⁴ Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. ¹⁶ But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. ¹⁷ In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. ¹⁸ I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."

¹⁹ Then they asked him, "Where is your father?"

"You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also." ²⁰ He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.

Take a few moments to reflect on the Scripture. Share some insights, questions, or points that strike you. Then read what follows.

context

This dialogue likely takes place in the "Court of the Women" in the Temple, where four massive golden lamps were lit during the Feast of Tabernacles to commemorate the pillar of fire that guided Israel through the wilderness. Against this backdrop of flickering torches and national history, Jesus stands and claims to be the true, eternal version of that guiding light.

darkness as evil and ignorance

In the biblical context, darkness is not merely the absence of light; it is a metaphor for both moral evil and spiritual ignorance. To be in the dark is to be lost — unable to see our own condition, unable to find our way home, and susceptible to the chaos and evil that thrive where truth is hidden.

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

discuss

1. If darkness represents a confusing and chaotic world, in what areas of your life do you currently feel most in the dark (decisions, relationships, future)?
2. How does the realization that we are naturally in ignorance about God's ways make the offer of Jesus' light more of a necessity than a luxury?

Jesus is the light of the world

Jesus doesn't just claim to have light; he claims to be the light. As the light, he exposes what is hidden (the "scandalous" truth of our sin) while simultaneously providing the sufficient grace to move forward. His truth provides the ultimate meaning that anchors us when the world around us feels dark.

"Light reveals righteousness, and it also reveals sin."

—Theodore Epp

discuss

3. Light provides direction (where to go) and meaning (what things are). How has Jesus' teaching redefined the meaning of your daily life, work or your trials?
4. How does Jesus acting as a "pillar of fire" for us today change the way we view the dread of night mentioned in scripture?

the authority of the light (vs. 13-20)

The Pharisees immediately challenge Jesus' authority, claiming his testimony is invalid because he testifies about himself. Jesus responds by appealing to a higher reality: his origin and his union with the Father. The Light does not need a flashlight to prove it is shining; its authority is self-evident to those whose eyes have been opened by grace.

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

—Isaiah 9:2

discuss

5. The Pharisees "judge by human standards" (v. 15). What human standards of success or truth often prevent us from seeing the beauty of Jesus' light?
6. Why is the union between the Father and the Son so crucial to our trust in Jesus' promise to lead us out of darkness?

upcoming

- Sunday, March 15 | **RWS Membership Class, 1:15-2:30 pm**
This is a pre-requisite class for becoming a church member. This class is strongly encouraged of anyone who considers RWS as their "home church."
redeemerws.com/membership
- Sunday, March 15 | **Prayer Gathering, 5 pm in the Sanctuary**
Pray with others for our 5pm evening worship service launching on March 29. Learn more about the new service at redeemerws.com/evening
- Friday, April 24 & Saturday, April 25 | **RWS Conference: Redeeming Anxiety**
Explore the unique resources Christianity offers to help us identify, articulate, and grow in and through, the big and small things we worry about. Early bird rate through April 6.
redeemerws.com/anxiety