

29. Jesus Taught that He Is the Light of the World

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children how to show the love and compassion of Jesus. We saw that we can show that love by our own example as we share the love of Jesus with those who feel that their lives have been so sinful that Jesus would never forgive them. Instead, we can share the fact that Jesus promises to give them spiritual rest. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus can give that spiritual rest because of the fact that He is the Light of the world.

The previous day, the officers that had been sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Jesus had returned without Jesus. John 7:46 says, “The officers answered, ‘No man ever spoke like this Man!’” The chief priests and Pharisees had mocked the officers that day. Now, we see that Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees. John 8:12-13 says, “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’ The Pharisees therefore said to Him, ‘You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.’” Here, we see one of the many places that Jesus says “I am.” In this case, Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world.”

The religious leaders were familiar with the books written by Moses. They knew that God had spoken to Moses. Exodus 3:14 says, “And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” As a result, when Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world,” the Pharisees knew that Jesus was saying that He is God because Psalm 27:1 says, “The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” Jesus promised that those who followed Him would not walk in darkness. Jesus said that those who followed Him would have the Light of life to guide their lives.

The Pharisees did not want to accept the fact that Jesus is God. As a result, they challenged Him by saying, “You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.” Deuteronomy 17:6 says, “‘Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.’” Here, the Pharisees were saying that Jesus was the only witness of Himself and therefore they said that His witness was not true. We saw in John 5 that Jesus had given these Jewish religious leaders four witnesses of the fact that He is God. Those witnesses were John the Baptist, the works of Jesus, the witness of the Father and the witness of the Scriptures. Jesus had given those witnesses when these Jewish religious leaders had wanted to kill Him. We will see that their attitude has not changed.

Jesus went on to say in John 8:14-19, “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent Me. It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.’ Then they said to Him, ‘Where is Your Father?’ Jesus answered, ‘You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known

Me, you would have known My Father also.” Jesus said that He could bear witness of Himself because His witness was true. He said He knew where He came from and where He was going.

Jesus knew that He came from the Father. In fact, He goes on to talk about His relationship with the Father throughout this chapter. Jesus explained the problem that the Pharisees had. He said that they judged according to the flesh. Jesus had said in John 7:24, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” The fact that they were judging according to the flesh meant that they made their decisions based on human knowledge instead of spiritual understanding. Human knowledge and its consequences are described in 1 Timothy 6:20-21 which says, “O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace *be* with you. Amen.” Here, we see that human knowledge produces profane babblings, vain babblings and contradictions. We will see that is exactly what the Pharisees did in this chapter as they depended on their own knowledge.

In contrast, we see that spiritual knowledge helps us to know the will of God. Colossians 1:9-10 says, “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” We want to help our children come to realize that the Lord is the source of all spiritual knowledge.

Jesus said that He did not judge anyone. In His first coming, Jesus came to pay the penalty for sin so that all who come to Him can have their sins forgiven. However, when the day comes that Jesus does judge, His judgment will be true. In addition, Jesus said that He was not alone. He said that He was with the Father who had sent Him. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Jesus came from the Father and He knew that within a few months He would be returning to the Father. However, the Father was with Him all the time that He was on the earth as well, except for the time when Jesus bore our sins on the cross. Mark 15:33-34 says, “Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” During that time, Jesus was separated from the Father as He bore our sins.

Jesus said that He was not the only witness because His Father who sent Him was also bearing witness of Him. However, we see that the Jewish religious leaders chose to reject the signs that were done by Jesus. Instead, they asked Jesus, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus explained to the religious leaders that their real problem was unbelief. Because of their unbelief, they did not know Jesus and they did not know the Father. Jesus said that if they knew Him (placed their faith in Him) they would also know the Father. Then, they would have had spiritual understanding.

In John 8:20-24, we read, “These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come. Then Jesus said to them again, ‘I

am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.’ So the Jews said, ‘Will He kill Himself, because He says, “Where I go you cannot come?”’” And He said to them, ‘You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.’” Jesus taught the people in the temple but we see why the religious leaders could not lay their hands on Him. The time for Jesus to die had not yet come so the leaders could not touch Him.

Then, Jesus told the religious leaders that He would soon be going away. This referred to the fact that after His death and resurrection He would return to His Father in heaven. Jesus also said that the day would come when the religious leaders would seek Him. However, they would seek Him for the wrong reasons. They would not seek Him for spiritual life. Instead, they would seek Him so that they could put Him to death. That would happen just a few months later. Jesus said that because they would seek Him for the wrong reason, they would die in their sin. Then, they would never be able to go where He was going because they lacked eternal life.

Instead of understanding what Jesus meant, the Jewish religious leaders asked one another if Jesus was planning to kill Himself. The traditions of the Jews taught that a person who committed suicide would spend eternity in the worst part of hades. Because of this tradition (which is not from the Bible), the religious leaders were actually making fun of Jesus by this statement. They also failed to understand what their own judgment would be like. Revelation 20:15 says, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Jesus warned in Luke 13:27-28, ““But He will say, “I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.” There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.””

Then, Jesus explained to the religious leaders why they would experience eternal judgment. Jesus had come from God and would return to God. Jesus said the religious leaders were from beneath. Jesus said that the things that they did were for this world. Jesus said that He was not from this world. Jesus said that because they were from this world and did not know the Father, they would die in their sins. Jesus clearly defined for the Jewish religious leaders the thing that would cause them to die in their sins. The one sin that keeps people from having eternal life is the sin of unbelief. Jesus said that because of their sin of unbelief, in the fact that He was God and was from the Father, they would die in their sins. Here, we see a key lesson that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain. Jesus said in John 16:9 that the Holy Spirit convicts, ““Of sin, because they do not believe in Me.”” The one sin that keeps people from receiving eternal life is their sin of unbelief. They refuse to believe that Jesus was without sin and died to pay the penalty for their sin. We want to help our children learn to explain that unbelief is the one sin that keeps people from eternal life. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to work with the Holy Spirit in evangelism.