

The Great Sayings in the Gospels
Message 89
Walking in Light

John 8:12-20

- 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.
- 13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.
- 14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.
- 15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.
- 16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.
- 17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.
- 18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.
- 19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.
- 20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

Introduction:

Can you imagine living in a world in which everyone is blind and always had been except for you. How could you ever describe to them what it is to see, what light is, how one could get around in the world with just his eyes? Do you see how they would think that you were insane, deluded, deceived, and dangerous?

Or, how about a world in which everyone except for you was a slave but had been deceived to think that they were not and were happy in their delusion. Could you describe freedom to them? Could you cause them to desire it?

This is the world in which Jesus lived. He alone could see and he alone was free. Everyone else, except those He had delivered, were blind and in bondage. Yet, they did not know it and would not be convinced that they had a problem. They were quite content in their blindness and in their bondage.

You and I, to the degree that our eyes have been opened by Jesus and to the extent that we have been set free of our bondage, live in the same sort of environment.

When we speak to lost loved ones about what we see concerning the great spiritual danger they are in, we seem like a crazy person, someone who is deranged. The warnings we try to give them fall on deaf ears because they are blind to the awful state in which they live.

What does it mean to have “the Light of Life” and not “walk in darkness?”

One of the first things that God did in creation was to create light. Then, He divided the light from the darkness making day and night.

Ever since then, this has been a visual reality which has been used as an analogy between true understanding of spiritual principles and ignorance or misperception of those principles. Those who truly know God and have been given perception by Him. They have been ‘enlightened’

One of the real difficulties here is that there are many who are walking in darkness have the real and genuine self-perception that they can see quite clearly. The Jews of Jesus’ day were classic representatives of this particular phenomenon.

Darkness is anything that is opposed to or at odds with spiritual truth. But there is a kind of a twist in this issue. With ordinary light, the closer one is to the light, the less dark it is and the further away from the light the darker it is.

People tend to think that it is the same way in religion. Those religions, we think, that are just a little bit ‘off’ from the truth are still somewhat in the light and those that are really and totally in error are those that are entirely in the dark.

Notice what Jesus actually said.

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.

Millions of things have been said about what it means to follow Jesus. Many have made the thing into a system of religion in which certain ceremonies, forms and symbols must be practiced. This, they say is what it means to “have the light of life.”

Others have made it a system of doctrine. If one memorizes certain catechisms, learns certain dogmas, accepts certain confessions of faith, this, they say, is what it means to walk in light.

Jesus, however, said that having light means to “follow” Him.

Consider some things with me.

Following Jesus:

Does not mean belonging to a particular church or denomination - although if you follow Jesus, you will be a faithful member of one of His churches

Heb 10:23-25

- 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)
24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. KJV

- Please note that I did not say “any” church but one of His churches. The following of Jesus means that you are faithful to a local assembly that is also laboring to follow Him.

Does not mean believing a particular dogma, confession or set of doctrines - although if you follow Jesus, you will be a student of His Word and will learn the doctrines that He taught.

Titus 1:7-9

- 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;
8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;
9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. KJV

- There is certainly doctrine involved in following Jesus. The very teaching that we are discussing is itself a doctrine. But the learning of theology and the memorizing of statements concerning it is not, in and of itself, the following of Jesus. When one follows Christ every thing he learns of theology and doctrine pushes him forward to follow the Lord more intensely and properly. This is the function of doctrine.

Is not dressing a certain way, wearing a particular costume, there is no religious uniform to wear - although if you follow Jesus you will not be molded into the world’s mold, will not mimic and imitate them, will dress modestly, not drawing attention to your self.

Rom 12:2

- 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. KJV

- The one who is following Christ does not desire to look like, act like, behave like those who are living in immorality and rebellion against Him. They will not wear the emblems and badges of the ungodly. There is something in them that causes them to desire to look and act differently from those who do not love their Savior. One thing that is always obvious is that the person who is seeking to look like the latest fad of the world does not have his/her mind on following Christ. The two things are opposites one of another.

Is not attending church up to a certain percentage of the times it meets - but if you follow Jesus, you will be most often found meeting with his people when they meet.

One of the first examples of Christianity was the continual fellowship of the saints.

Acts 2:44-47

- 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;
45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.
46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,
47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. KJV

Following Jesus is not some kind of a contest in which a person sees if he can get a badge for 100% attendance at every service. But here is the thing, if a person is earnestly seeking to follow Christ, he/she is going to make every effort to be faithful. They do not want to miss anything. They enjoy the study of God's word and the fellowship of the saints. The world really doesn't have anything that they like better than attending the services of the church.

It does not mean learning to speak in certain cliches or having special words that identify you as a Christian - but it does mean that you will more often than not be found speaking about things that are useful and profitable to others and that you will not be one who uses blasphemy, obscene word, or who takes God's name in cursing.

Col 4:6

- 6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. KJV

James 2:12

- 12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. KJV

Eph 4:29

- 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. KJV

Does not mean that you are so overtly righteous that you call attention to yourself by your religious deeds - however, if you follow Jesus, you will be known as a kind, unselfish, giving, loyal, humble and caring person because of the way that you deal with others.

Acts 9:36-39

- 36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.
37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

- 38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.
- 39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. KJV

It was not the public display of religion which endeared Dorcas to the residents of Joppa but the quiet, generous and godly nature that she demonstrated in her life, giving to the needs of others. This is what it means to “follow Jesus.”

Does not mean that you will not have friends who are not believers - however, if you follow Jesus, you will find that the core group of your friends will be children of God because you will have more in common with them than anyone else and because they will love and appreciate you for your godly demeanor and behavior.

Ps 1:1-2

- 1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
- 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. KJV

- Delight in the Law of God automatically puts one in a place that the ungodly and the scornful do not want to hang around so much. The conscious choice to follow Jesus and the changes of behavior and attitude that go with that decision in and of themselves create an environment in which on a small percentage of the people you know desire to associate. But it is not the believer's choice to exclude people from his life but his choice to follow His Lord that creates the separation.

Does not mean that you never do anything that is ‘fun’ or entertaining - but, if you follow Jesus, you will carefully choose your entertainment so as to do nothing to dishonor Him nor grieve His Holy Spirit.

Rom 13:13-14

- 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.
- 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. KJV

Rom 13:13-14

- 13 Let us live becoming for people who are in the light of day, not in carousing and drunkenness, nor in sexual immorality and licentiousness, nor in quarreling and jealousy,
- 14 Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and put a stop to gratifying the evil desires that lurk in your lower nature. Williams.

It means that you will be more interested in the things of God than anything else in your life.

It means that the primary interest that you will have in life will be pleasing Him.