

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, April 15, 2018

**“I Am the Light of the World”
A Study of John 8:12**

www.hillcrest.church



What is your most vivid memory as a child in a dark place (cave, tunnel, power blackout)? What feelings do you associate with darkness?

Jesus gave seven “I Am” statements in the Gospel of John. Today is the third week in a series through these seven statements. Read John 8:12.

In that verse, Jesus *made a claim* and *extended an invitation*.

**The Claim:
“I am the Light of the World”**

By this metaphor, Jesus was saying 3 things.

First: “I make *life* possible.”

As winter ends, the northern hemisphere gets more of the sun’s light and warmth. What plants do you look forward to seeing return every spring in your yard and the surrounding area?

Is the light of Christ “thawing out” some part of your life so fresh commitment can spring up again? (In other words, how has he helped you mend relationships, or break addictions, or overcome spiritual apathy?) Alternately: Tell of a time in the past when his light gave you new life.

Second: “I make *knowledge* possible.”

What do people do to try to avoid really knowing themselves deep down?

Why are we afraid to really know ourselves deep down?

Tim Keller said, “The gospel tells you that you are more sinful and flawed than you ever thought possible but at the same time you are more loved and accepted than you ever imagined.” If this is true, how does the gospel make us unafraid to really know ourselves deep down?

Third: "I make **joy** possible."

Does sunlight bring you joy? If so, how?

Read 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 and 4:16-17.

Pastor Tom said that "happiness" is based on our circumstances while "joy" is based on the presence and purposes of Christ despite our circumstances. How do the verses you just read from 2 Corinthians 4 relate to that?

When Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," it was the end of the Feast of Tabernacles. One thing this Feast celebrated was how God led the Jews out of Egyptian slavery toward the Promised Land. Every night of the week-long Feast, they lit giant candelabra in the Temple Courts. Read Exodus 13:21-22 to see what the candelabra represented.

Jesus seemed to be saying, "I am the very pillar of fire you've been celebrating!" What was he saying about himself in this claim?

The Invitation:
“Whoever follows me
will never walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.”

To **follow** the Light of the World means three things.

First: "Live hopefully."

Read Malachi 4:1-2 and Matthew 13:43. These two passages speak about two different sources of light. What are the two sources of light in these two passages?

How does our hope in this glorious future help us...

...process grief?

...handle insults and persecution?

...be more generous?

Second: “Live with integrity.”

Read Ephesians 5:8 from your sermon notes or the NIV.

There are two sentences in the NIV translation of Ephesians 5:8.

- ❖ What is the *fact* stated in the first sentence and what is the *act* commanded in the second sentence?
- ❖ Without the *fact* of the first sentence, is the *act* of the second sentence possible? Explain.
- ❖ If we claim the *fact* of the first sentence and neglect the *act* of the second sentence, what happens to our spiritual growth? To our witness?

Third: “Live attractively.”

Read 1 Peter 2:9. When Peter told us to “declare the praises” of God, what does that mean? Does it apply just to what we do in a church service, or can we declare God’s praises in weekday conversations? What makes Christians hesitate to do this in our daily lives?

Read Matthew 5:14. As you start your prayer list for closing prayer today, list those in your circles of influence who need the light of the gospel.



Close with praise reports and prayer requests.