

JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 7:53-8:30

Key Verse: 8:12

"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.'"

This incident in 8:1-11 is not included in the early manuscripts; it is inserted in the footnotes in some Bibles. Nevertheless, this passage is most fitting to be inserted here as the concluding incident of the Feast of Tabernacles; otherwise, its exclusion would be detrimental to the flow of John's gospel. In this incident, Jesus saves a woman from the condemnation of the religious leaders and gives her a new life direction. Then Jesus declares, "I am the light of the world." May God help us know the spiritual meaning of it.

I. Jesus saves a condemned woman (7:53-8:11)

First, Jesus [prays](#) (1). Now the water-pouring ceremony on the last and greatest day of the Feast was over. During the festivities the people must have enjoyed themselves to their heart's content. Now they felt tired and homesick. As the sun was setting on the western horizon, each went to his own home to eat and sleep. Strangely, one thing was lingering in their hearts. It was Jesus' testimony, "I am the streams of living water." "I came from God." What did Jesus do during the night while others were all sleeping? Jesus went to the Mount of Olives and prayed there. Jesus prayed all night. Jesus' [prayer](#) after the Feast manifests his holiness and divine majesty. Obviously Jesus prayed, "Father, save them."

Second, Jesus taught the word of God to the people (2). Look at verse 2. "At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them." Why did Jesus teach them the word of God? It is because Jesus believed that the word of God gives the streams of living water, the Holy Spirit, and [eternal](#) life (7:38, 5:24). The word of God gives new life even to the dead. John 5:25 says, "I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live." The word of God can change incorrigible sinners into holy children of God, like Saul to St. Paul, Simon to St. Peter, Levi the tax collector to St. Matthew. Most importantly, the word of God stands forever. 1 Peter 1:24,25 says, "For, 'All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.'" This is the reason Jesus taught the word of God as his mission from God. The best way of helping people is to teach the word of God, believing that the word of God changes them and gives them eternal life.

Third, vicious political religious leaders (4,5). While Jesus was teaching the word of God to the people, the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees interrupted Jesus' Bible teaching. The religious leaders were highly educated people and men of prestige. They were supposed to be shepherds to take care of God's flock of sheep. Most importantly,

they were chosen people to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, to proclaim the glory of God and cause the world to overflow with the word of God. They should know, then, that God chose them and appointed them to shepherd his suffering people. But they abused God's blessing and calling. What a surprise! They came into the temple dragging in a woman caught in the act of adultery. These religious people snoop around prostitutes' quarters to catch a woman in the act of adultery. They brought her in and made her stand before the audience. Then they said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" (4,5)

In their question there was a trap that would strangle him in one of three ways. Firstly, if Jesus had said to stone her, he would violate the Roman law, for the Jews were not permitted to carry out the death sentence. Secondly, if Jesus had said not to stone her, he would violate Moses' law. Thirdly, if Jesus had said to stone her, he would contradict his own teaching about God's love. Their plot was so clever that Jesus could have been trapped by them. The religious leaders became devils when they lost God's mission. These devils dragged in a woman caught in the act of adultery to use her in trapping Jesus. We don't know why this woman gave up her beauty as a woman and became such a smelly woman. Maybe she needed a boyfriend. But according to the statistics of social workers, 98% of the girls who turned out to be prostitutes did so because they gave in to their own sinful desires. This woman may have been beautiful. But now she was thrown down to the ground to be condemned after living according to her sinful nature.

Fourth, Jesus saves a condemned woman (6-11). How did Jesus save her from her condemned situation? When Jesus saw her, his heart was broken because of her life of sin and because of her life without a shepherd. To calm down people's commotion, Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger (6b). When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." The words "If any one of you is without sin" (Ro 3:10) pricked their corrupted consciences. It was a moment when the woman was condemned and Jesus was trapped. But when Jesus had a shepherd heart toward the woman, God gave him wisdom from above. On hearing Jesus, their consciences were pierced. They could not stand before Jesus, the holy Son of God. Verse 9 says, "At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there." Look at verses 10 and 11. "Jesus straightened up and asked her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir,' she said. 'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus declared. 'Go now and leave your life of sin.'"

Here we learn that Jesus took our place of condemnation. Jesus did not condemn her. The woman had lived a life of sin. She had lived under the power of Satan. She was a woman who should be condemned even by hypocritical religious leaders. No one could save her from condemnation. But Jesus saved her from condemnation because Jesus came from God to take her place of condemnation. Everyone wants to be praised. No one wants to be condemned. But she was a condemned woman. Galatians 3:13 says, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is

hung on a tree.'" Because Jesus was condemned on our behalf, there is no condemnation for us. Paul declares, in Romans 8:1, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...." When we come to Jesus and ask his mercy, Jesus gives us assurance of no condemnation. When we remember that Jesus was condemned in our place, we can know the grace of Jesus in our hearts.

In this world, no one wants to sacrifice his or her precious only son. There are many parents who are willing to suffer, but they don't want to see their children suffer. But God in his great mercy condemned his one and only Son so that we might be saved from eternal condemnation. This beautiful gospel has been given to us; but still there are many people who are suffering from guilty consciences. There are many teenagers and college students who commit suicide caused by guilty feelings and sinsickness after sinning in dark places.

Look at verses 10,11. "Jesus straightened up and asked her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir,' she said. 'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus declared. 'Go now and leave your life of sin.'" Sinning is not really against others, but against God. Sinning is the way to condemnation. When Jesus said, "leave your life of sin," he wanted her to live a life of sin no more. Jesus wanted her to live a life of faith. He wanted her to live as a daughter of God. A life of sin seems to be fun. But it is a condemned life. A life of faith or a life of mission seems too hard. But it is indeed a glorious life God created men for. John Newton was a slave dealer. When he felt condemned, he opened the Bible and happened to read Romans 8:1, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." "Wow! No condemnation, even to me!" Those who believe that there is no condemnation in Jesus experience heavenly sunshine in their hearts. From that time on, one can leave the life of sin, and instead, can live a life of faith.

II. "I am the light of the world" (12-30)

First, Jesus is the light. On the evening of the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, there was a ceremony called "the illumination of the temple." The temple lights pierced into the darkness of the night. Soon they would flicker and die. Likewise, there had been many lights in human history. For example, Dante compared Socrates to a candle light. His candle light burned up too soon. Jesus compared John the Baptist to a lamp light (Jn 5:35). John gave light to the people of Israel for the time being. But Jesus is the true light. John 1:9 says, "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world."

Verse 12 says, "...Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'" This verse clearly gives us a new life direction. For example, one who follows a wayward woman will end up as a street bum. One who runs after a dog goes nowhere. But those who follow Jesus, the light of the world, come to the light, getting out of the life of sin. As we know well, the power of darkness is very powerful. Nothing can defeat the power of darkness. Figuratively speaking, the darkness is likened to a sorrowful mind, to men of anger and hot temper, and especially, to the continuous life of sin. In short, all the fatalistic elements are the elements of darkness. No one can defeat this darkness. But Jesus who is the light of the world can

defeat it. John 1:5 says, "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it." In this verse the verb "overcome" has the same meaning as defeat. The light of Jesus defeats the power of darkness and sin. The woman was endlessly sorrowful and fatalistic because of her life of sin. Now she heard the Son's promise, "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." At this moment, we must come to Jesus, so that we may have the light of life. Those who have the light of Jesus can be a blessing to those who are in the darkness of sin.

Second, validity that Jesus is the light of the world (12-20). Jesus identifies himself as the light of the world. In this dark world, only Jesus can be the true light. Jesus can drive out the power of sin in our souls. Jesus heals our sinsickness and makes our lives meaningful and glorious. Peter who was saved by God said to his followers with great confidence, "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Pe 2:9) In Jesus we can have the meaning of life and the life of mission.

What was the religious leaders' response? The Pharisees challenged him to deny that he is the light of the world. For Jesus looked so poor in his appearance, and he was also pain-stricken on account of his shepherd life (13). Jesus said to them that his testimony was valid, for he knew where he came from and where he was going. Jesus is the truth because he knows where he came from and where he is going back to. But their sinful sight did not see the truth. Read verse 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.'" Jesus stands God as his witness that he is the Son of God. Who else is a better witness than God? Who can stand God as his witness? Jesus can stand God as his witness because he is the Son of God. The Pharisees were upset and asked in verse 19, "Where is your father?"

Third, Jesus is our judge (15-28). Though the Jews had no right to judge, they judged others. But Jesus, though he was the judge (5:22), did not judge men. Instead, Jesus shines the heavenly sunlight upon every man who comes to him. When one sees the light of Jesus, he can see God the Father and his glorious kingdom (16).

Look at verse 21. "Once more Jesus said to them, 'I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come.'" This verse is one of the themes of John's gospel: that Jesus is God who came from God to save men from their sins and to bring his precious children back to God. This verse is also a prediction of his death and resurrection for the salvation of the world. At the same time, it is a warning that those who dwell in darkness will receive eternal condemnation.

When Jesus proclaimed the gospel, they misinterpreted the gospel and said, "Will he kill himself?" (22) They did not believe. Still, Jesus did not give up on them. Jesus taught them that he came from God (23). Still they did not believe. So Jesus said in verse 28, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me." Jesus saw their perishing souls and repeated that he

should die on the cross to save men from their sins. Jesus gave them the life-giving message of God.

How was it possible for Jesus to die on the cross to save men to God? Look at verse 29. "The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." It was through his faith that he was always with God. The whole world seemed to be against him. He felt he was left alone all by himself in the world. But it was not the case. Jesus believed that he was with God as God was with him. Paul said, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Ro 8:31b) There is a saying, "One who is with God is the absolute majority." Therefore, we are not lonely, for God is with us. Jesus was not lonely because he had a heart's desire to please God. If he could please God, he could take any sufferings or rejections with joy.

Today we learned that there is no condemnation in Jesus, and that we must come to Jesus, the light of the world, so that we can stop the life of sin.