

Series Title: **'Who Do You Say I Am?' Exploring the Declarations of Jesus**

Message Title: **'Are You Stumbling in the Dark...Follow the Light'**

Scripture Source: **John 8:12**

Date: Sunday, April 10, 2016

Teacher: John Garner

John's Airport Trip Adventure

Driving to Toronto alone is not a preferred trip! I had diligently prepared by reviewing the route with my son Jordan. I was confident that I knew where I was going until for some reason I exited at the wrong exit and watched as I saw the plane symbol pass me by. I called Jordan and he posed some questions...I was somewhat flustered and he asked if I would like to figure this out by myself!

I followed his directions as he stayed on the phone with me and I found my way back to the airport. I am grateful for his words and followed them religiously! And picked up Peg! I had become so turned around and anxious. The unfamiliar setting shrouded in darkness generated nervousness, yet a calm and knowledgeable voice showed me the way forward. And I thought about John 8:12.

Lost in the Dark

Have you ever felt that you are floundering in the journey of life, uncertain of what path to take relationally, spiritually, morally or practically? Illustrate:

Understanding Jesus' Claim

John 8:12 He boldly, clearly and emphatically states a critical truth about himself and offers a profoundly meaningful source of spiritual hope and practical help to people like you and me. First, his declaration: *"I am the light of the world."* In Scripture light speaks of truth, insight, discernment and understanding. Jesus is stating that he is the source of understanding the truth about God, life and oneself. He is the one who enables us to grasp what and who matters. Jesus is the one who gives people the ability to discern error, falsehood and destructive deceptions.

John 1:4,5; 9:5;12:35-36. Read and reflect.

Second, his invitation and promise: *"Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

Jesus invites people, one at a time to take him up on his offer. 'Whoever'...that includes the person who feels like the outsider, the lost soul, the failure, the outcast, the unforgiveable. That includes you and me. Do you see yourself in his 'audience of invitation'?

He promises to infuse the one who chooses to be his follower with insight, understanding, confidence and direction. He gives the ability to make wise decisions, to avoid deceptive and misleading paths.

Experiencing Jesus' Declaration and Promise: John 8:12, 12:35,36

Jesus wants us to come to grips with his stunning declaration. He wants us to investigate his character rigorously and come to our own conclusions. Do we believe he is credible and trustworthy? Do we believe Jesus stands as the singular source of definitive truth...or not? Read the gospels prayerfully. Read complementary books such as *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel. Investigate and come to your own conclusions. John 12:36 *"Put your trust in the light while you have it..."*

Jesus sets the terms for experiencing his life directing light. *"He who follows me will never walk in darkness..."* The non-negotiable requirement: to follow Jesus daily...to take our cues and direction from his character, example and teachings. To submit to his authority, obey his teachings and trust his promises, day to day, circumstance to circumstance. In all areas of life, morally, ethically, relationally and practically. This doesn't mean life will be easy or simplistic. It doesn't mean that we won't grapple with stuff and decisions. It does mean that we can have an underlying foundation of truth to build our lives on. We must be people of the Bible, learning, discussing...trusting and obeying. iLearn opportunity, the next three Sundays at 6:30 p.m. You are invited to join me.

What hold us back from this choice? Pride, fear...of what Jesus will ask of us. Fear that we won't stay the course, fear of rejection or misunderstanding. What holds you back? And what can move us forward? Sometimes the pain of regret for self-directed choices that have backfired on us.

There is a warm, generous, and gracious forgiveness awaiting us when we admit that we have chosen our own way forward. Yet, there come those defining moments when we must choose...self-rule or the leadership of Jesus. What will it be for you and me today?

Lighting the Path for Others

As we follow Jesus in the flow of life, God will use our lives to enlighten others. Jesus said:
*"You are the light of the world...let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works
And praise your Father in heaven."* Matthew 5:14-16.

Who needs you to shine brightly? Shine!