

Place: Lurgan Baptist: 10:7:2016

Reading: John 8:1-20

THINGS THAT ONLY CHRIST COULD SAY

2. I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) was a Scottish novelist, poet, essayist, and travel writer. His most famous works are *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped* and *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Stevenson was born in Edinburgh on the 13th November 1850 and as a boy Robert Louis Stevenson was intrigued by the work of the old lamplighter who went about with a ladder and a torch setting the street light ablaze for the night. One evening in Edinburgh, a young Robert stood watching with childish fascination. Then his parents heard him exclaiming, “*Look, look there is a man out there punching holes in the darkness.*” With one statement of childish wonder Robert Louis Stevenson summed up the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus. Christ came into this world and accomplished many great and miraculous wonders yet His primary purpose was to punch great gaping holes in the spiritual darkness that surrounded the world.

At the 1938 Empire Exhibition held in Bella Houston Park Glasgow many groups of Christian assemblies combined to make the gospel known to the large number of visitors to the exhibition. One of the spheres of witness, was a kiosk on the royal mile where Bibles, New Testaments, and portions of Scripture were displayed. In the large

window of the kiosk was an open Bible. It was opened at (Jn 8:12) where Christ says, “ *I am the light of the world.*” Underneath that text was printed these words, “ *The only way out of the dark.*” My are you in spiritual darkness ? (2 Cor 4:4 Eph 4:18) Are you still ignorant concerning your sin, your soul, God, eternity, heaven, hell ? Do you need to be enlightened ? Well, Christ says, “ *I am the light of the world,*” light for the blind one, for the ignorant, for the unenlightened one, “ *he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.*” (8:12) Now I want you to notice,

1. The Context here:

For the Lord Jesus spoke these words at a very specific moment in the life of the Jewish nation. You see, for seven days each year sometime between mid-September to mid-October (Lev 23:33-34) the Jews celebrated *The Feast of Tabernacles*. (7:2) This was not only a time of thanksgiving for the harvest but this feast helped them to remember that for 40 years they had wandered in the wilderness and lived in temporary dwellings. So for seven days the entire nation camped outside. Every family moved outdoors into booths made of branches to remind themselves of the hardships, they had experienced while living in tents. On the opening night of the celebration a great Menorah or Candelabra with 4 bowls of oil was set up in the Temple grounds in the Court of Women. Then with great pomp and ceremony the 4 bowls of oil were lit. The light from this great candlestick lit up the streets of Jerusalem. These lamps were reminders to the Jews of the pillar of fire by which God led Israel through the

wilderness. As the priests extinguished the candelabra in the court of the women and thus ended the festival the Lord Jesus cried out, “ *I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall the light of life.*”) 8:12)

2. The Condition here:

Seen in the words “ *light and darkness.*” Familiar as we are with night and day, it’s no surprise to us that light and darkness are used as metaphors. Light usually symbolizes what is good and darkness what is bad. Also in the Bible “ *light and darkness,*” are very familiar symbols. **Intellectually:** light refers to biblical truth while darkness refers to error. (Ps 119:105 Prov 6:23) **Morally:** light refers to holiness while darkness refers to sin. (3:19 1 Jn 1:6) Now when Christ said, “ *I am the light of the world he that followeth shall not walk in darkness,*” He was saying that the world is in spiritual darkness. It was so then, it is so now. The world of 2016 is a very dark place. Millions of people today live in the darkness of witchcraft, drugs, alcohol, violence, and sin. This is the condition of the world. Is this your condition. Are you still in spiritual darkness ? Are you still in the dark about spiritual things ? (Eph 4:18)

3. The Claim here:

For Christ says “ *I am,*” taken from the book of Exodus when God said to Moses “ *I am that I am.*” (Ex 3:14) My the name Jehovah was so sacred to the Jewish people that some Bible historians say that it was only

pronounced once a year when the high priest would go into the holy of holies and whisper the name Jehovah. Do you see what Christ is saying ? He is emphatically saying that He is God. What a mighty light the Lord Jesus is.

He is the SHINING Light:

The light of the world. Many so called lights have burned like Roman candles, up like a rocket and down like a rock, never to be heard from again. But I want to tell you that 2000 odd years after he came, His light shines more brightly than ever before in human history.

He is the SEEKING Light:

Do you know what you will discover when you have found Christ as your personal Saviour ? You’ll discover that He was seeking for you all along. (Lk 19:10)

He is the SAVING Light:

Sure, if He could save a woman taken in the very act of adultery, what problem are you to Him ? Now there are lot of things that light does, which Christ also does for those who trust Him. I want to borrow an idea from Guy King and take this word “ **light,**” and use it an acrostic, to help understand what Christ is willing to do for you. As the light,

(1) CHRIST LEADS

For he says, “ *He that followeth me,*” (8:12) As the light

of the world, the Lord Jesus came to lead us by a straight path into the very presence of God. The word that is used for “*following*,” here does not mean copying or imitating, but trusting, putting faith in another. “*Following*,” here is the same as believing. (10:27) To follow someone if you are blind requires trust and confidence. My to follow Christ is to commit ourselves wholly to Him as Saviour Lord and to submit ourselves to Him in every matter both of doctrine and practice. It means to bank all on Christ and “*follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.*”

(Rev 14:4) Do you recall when Israel were in the wilderness ? They followed the pillar of cloud and fire. When that pillar of cloud stopped they stopped, when it lifted they moved, asking no questions, just marching on in faith. My is this not how you must come to Christ and follow Him continually ?

Dr. F. B. Meyer was crossing from Dublin to Holyhead one very dark night. He was on the bridge with the Captain and he said, “*How do you find Holyhead harbour on such a dark, starless night as this ?* The Captain replied, “*Do you see those three lights just ahead ?*” *These must be lined up behind the other in one straight line of vision, and I follow them, keeping the ship in line with the three, until I safely enter the harbour.*” Here is a man walking across the moors one evening, when a mist descends, and in the darkness he is completely lost, until he sees a light and groping his way to it he reaches safety. In John Bunyan’s “*Pilgrims Progress*,” when Pilgrim is in great distress because of the burden of his sin, he seeks to escape but he does not where. Presently Mr. Evangelist comes along and pointing across a great field he asks

Pilgrim if he can see a gate over on the other side and when Pilgrim says “*No*,” Mr. Evangelist asks if he can see a light. “*Yes*,” he can see that and Mr. Evangelist says if he makes his way to the light he will discover the gate just by it and when he goes through the gate he will lose the burden of his sin and will be on his way to the Celestial City. My how often the light leads to safety and joy. Do you realise that you are on the ocean of life sailing but by yourself you cannot find the harbour ? Do you see that you are on the moors of life lost but you cannot find the home ? Do you recognise that you are on the journey of life burdened with sin but you cannot find the way ? But the Lord Jesus stands and says “*I am the light, come to me, trust in me, follow me and I will bring you safely home.*” Have you done that ? (1)

(2) CHRIST ILLUMINES

For Christ says “*I am shall have the light.*” Back in the days before electricity a tight fisted old farmer was taking his hired hand to task for carrying a lantern with him when he went to call for his girl friend. “*Why*,” he explained, “*When I went a courting I never I never carried one of those things, I always went in the dark.*” “*Yes*,” said the hired help “*and look what you ended up with.*” You see, light illumines. What was wrong with these Jews to whom Christ spoke was this, they did not understand Him. (8:43) He says in (8:43) “*Why do ye not understand my speech ? even because ye cannot hear my word.*” My is it any different today ? Folk do not see or understand the character of God, the value of their souls, the reality of eternity, they are in spiritual darkness

(Col 1:23 Acts 26:18) If only they would but trust Christ, for as the light illumines, Christ shows to us,

(a) THE “WHAT,” OF OUR CONDITION:

What is your condition before God this ? Is it not that of a sinner, lost and undone. Have you ever gone into a room in your home, thinking that it was perfectly clean and you pulled up the blinds and as the sun came streaming through the window, you noticed that the top of your furniture was so thick with dust that you could write your name on it. It was the light that showed it up. You see, until Christ the light comes and illuminates your darkened mind you think you are alright don't you ? Are you like these Jews who thought they were not in bondage ? (8:33) Who thought they were such fine fellows ? (8:34) No dust in their hearts, no sin in their lives, no iniquity in their souls. Is that you ? Or has the Lord opened your eyes ? Do you see yourself as the Lord sees you ? A little boy once heard his Sunday School teacher say that Jesus Christ was the light of the world. After class he went up to his teacher and said, “ *If the Lord Jesus is the light of the world, I wish He would come and hang out in my house. It's awfully dark where I live.* ”

Are you in spiritual darkness ? Perhaps like Nicodemus you are a *religious person*, but are you saved ? (3:2) Maybe like the women at the well you're *living in sin* and asking is there a way out of the darkness ? Perhaps like Judas you've enjoyed *great privileges* but is Satan controlling your life ? You know the moment Satan entered into Judas the Bible says “ *he went out and it was*

night. ” (13:30) Is it “ *night,* ” in your soul this ? (a)

(b) THE “WHERE,” OF OUR POSITION:

For to have the dust of sin upon our hearts places us in a very dangerous position. Indeed the Lord Jesus talks in this very passage about “ *dying in your sins.* ” (8:21) Several years ago before modern transport a gentleman went one day to a distant town on horseback. While returning in the evening he was overcome by a severe storm. The rain poured down incessantly, and it became very dark, and in crossing the moors on his way home he got lost. After going some miles in the storm, with not a single star to be seen and no friendly light in a window, suddenly the gentleman was startled by a vivid flash of lightening. To his horror the light showed him that he was galloping along on the edge of a steep precipice where any a given moment he could have gone over the edge into the darkness below. I wonder is this where you are this spiritually ? *Are you hanging over the very mouth of hell ? Are you on the very precipice of a lost eternity ?* Well, Christ says “ *I am the light of the world,* ” *come to me, trust in me, and follow me.* ” (a) (b)

(c) THE “WHO,” OF OUR SALVATION:

For He says “ *He that followeth me shall have the light of life.* ” A little boy forgot his lines in a Sunday School presentation. His mother was in the front row to prompt him. She gestured and formed the words silently with her lips but it did not help. Her sons memory was blank. Finally she leaned forward and whispered the cue, “ *I am*

the light of the world.” The child beamed and with great feeling and a loud clear voice said, “ *My mother is the light of the world.*” The little fellow was sincere but he was sincerely wrong. Could it be this that you are looking for the Light in all the wrong places ? Think of the crowd who followed the Pharisees, the priests, and the scribes but they walked in darkness. Think of those today who follow Confucius, Buddha, Muhammad, and Krishna but they walk in darkness. The end of their road is the darkness of death, but the person who trusts and follows Christ walks in the light and the end of that road is the light of life. My on whom are you depending on for eternity ? On what are you depending on for eternity ? Has the Lord showed to you that salvation is not found in a creed, a church, a cause, a ceremony, it’s only found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Peter says, “ *Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven,*” **its exclusive** “ *given among men,*” **its inclusive** “ *whereby we must be saved,*” **its conclusive**, for you must be saved. (1) (2)

(3) CHRIST GLADDENS

For the Lord Jesus said “ *I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness,*” (8:12) That is, he shall no longer live in ignorance, he shall not grope in doubt and uncertainty, but he shall see the way to heaven and know where he is going. How a little bit of light brightens up the darkness. It may be only a tiny night light, or a little twinkling star, but it brightens things immediately. An artist on one occasion was painting a picture of a house in a wintry twilight. The trees were

heavily laden with snow, the house looked dreary and dark, lonely and desolate. ***Then with a touch of yellow he put a light in one window.*** The effect was magical, the whole scene was changed by that gleam in the gloom. My when the Lord Jesus comes into a life that is a dark because of sin and guilt, He always brings gladness because He is the light. Do you think that it is an unhappy thing to be a Christian ? *Do you think that is unfulfilling ? Do you somehow believe that it is unsatisfying ? How can you be unhappy when your sins are forgiven ? How can you be unhappy when you have peace with God ? How can you be unhappy when you are saved from hell ? How can you be unhappy when your future is secure ? How can you be unhappy when heaven is your destiny ?* What a tragedy to think that Christ will make you unhappy, for as the light of the Lord He gladdens. Did the Saviour not say that very thing in this chapter ? Speaking to the Jews He said, “ *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.*” (8:56)

Getting on for 2000 years before, Abraham had been given a dim vision of the great day when a Saviour would come, and even that faint, far-off glimmer was enough to make him rejoice and be glad. I want to tell you that it’s not Christ that’s takes the joy out of living it’s the Devil. Do you remember the prodigal ? “ *Father give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.*” (Lk 15:12) Here’s a young man starting out for the far country. He thinks he knows it all, he wants to live independently of God, he could hardly walk fast enough to where he was going and when he got to the far country he blew it all on riotous living. He was letting the good times roll. Is that where

(4) CHRIST HEALS

you are this ? “ *Why,*” you say “ *man its great, there’s plenty of beer to drink, plenty of pills to pop, and there is free sex, I am having a blast and ball in this old world.*” But there came a time when the bubble burst. Have a look at him now. He is hungry, his clothes are old and ragged, his hair is unkempt, his eyes are hollow and fearful. Take a good look at him for this is what Satan and sin does. Sin won’t just take you to the pigpen, when it gets you down there, it will strip you, wreck you, and ruin you. *Sin will take you further than you want to go, sin will cost you more than you want to pay, sin will keep you longer than you want to stay.* My *if you are determined to sow your wild oats don’t expect to reap strawberries.* I tell you it all looked so promising, but now it all looked so bleak.

That’s the way it is with the Devil, it starts sweet but it does not end that way. (Prov 20:17) Satan dangles the carrot of drink, but he does not show you the carnage on the roads. Satan waves the carrot of sex, but he does not show you the lives blasted by aids. Satan dangles the carrot of heavy metal music and drugs, but he does not show you the suicides. Do you know something ? This world will never satisfy the thirst of your soul. (Ps 42:2)

**Friends all around me are trying to find
What the heart yearns for by sin undermined
I have the secret, I know where tis found
Only true pleasures in Jesus abound
Jesus is all the world needs today
Blindly men strive, for sin darkens their way
Oh, to pull back the grim curtains of night
One look at Jesus and all will be light**

For Christ says if you trust and follow me you “ *Shall have the light of life,* “ says Christ. That is, he shall possess living light. He shall have spiritual light, independent of time and space, not affected by sickness or death, burns on for ever and cannot be quenched. Do you know what Christ said to these Jews ? “ *If a man keep my saying he shall never see death,*” that is, eternal separation from God in the torments of hell. (8:51) You see, by healing our sin He saves us from that death when we trust Him. And He heals because He is the light. For many years it has been known that certain diseases can be successfully treated by exposure to sunlight. The general physical tone of the body can be increased by the action of ultraviolet rays. *It is estimated that there is a 20% increase in mortality wherever direct light is not enjoyed in the home, street, or office.* In just the same way, there is a saving power in God’s divine light, the Lord Jesus. It is Malachi who tells us that the Lord Jesus as “ *the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.*” (Mal 4:2)

But first, He had to go to dark Calvary. Do you recall at *Christ’s birth* there was supernatural light which changed the midnight sky ? (Lk 2:8) Do you recall at *Christ’s death* there was supernatural darkness which changed the midday sky ? The Bible says “ *Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.*” (Matt 27:45) My when Christ died on Calvary for our sins it was as if the universe went into mourning. As the Saviour cried “ *My God my God why hast thou forsaken*

me.” (Matt 27:46) There He hangs in the midst of the darkness forsaken by God, without a smile, without a drop of comfort, the agonies of hell going over Him, taking the place of guilty lost sinners enduring the judgment that was my lot. The Redeemer left alone with the sinner’s sin. Then the third day He rose again with healing and saving power in His wings. And He is the Light of life to all who will personally trust Him. My at Calvary Christ stepped into the darkness that you might step into the Light. He endured God’s wrath, that you might enjoy God’s love. He endured hell, that you might enjoy heaven.

**Come to the Light tis shining for thee
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me
Once I was lost but now I am free
The Light of the World is Jesus**

(5) CHRIST TESTS

How often to find out if a thing is genuine we hold it up to the light. My the Light of the World is a sure test of our reality. These Jews to whom the Lord Jesus was speaking claimed to be the children of God (8:41) Now how do we find out whether they really were or not ? Why Christ is the test ? What did they think of Christ ? What did they do with Christ ? Well, we are told that they took up stones to cast at Him. (8:42,59) *They rejected the Light, the Lord Jesus.* You see, the test of whether you are really a believer is not your Christian background, not your church membership, not your religious life, not your good works. The test of whether or not you are a Christian is Christ. My what do you think of Christ ? What

have you done with Christ ? Have you received Him or rejected Him ? (1:12) You see, there are only two ways of dealing with light. One is to pull down the blinds, shut up the windows, and lock the doors. The other is to throw everything open so that the sunlight can come streaming in. *There are just two ways of dealing with Christ, the Light of the World, you can either let Christ in, or keep Christ out.* What have you done ? What will you do this ? “ *What shall you do then with Jesus, which is called Christ ?*” (Matt 27:22)

“ **The Light of the World,**” is the title of a famous picture by Holman Hunt. The artist pictures Christ, thorn crowned carrying a lantern in his left hand, knocking at a closed door. It is said that after completing the picture the artist showed it to some friends who praised it, but one said, “ **you have no handle on the door.**” Holman Hunt immediately replied, “ *you forget the handle is on the inside.*” Today, Christ knocks on the door of your life. He is able to dispel your darkness and bring you light, life and love. To refuse his entrance is to continue in spiritual darkness here and to enter eternal darkness hereafter. My hell is no joke. The Bible calls it “ *outer darkness.*” (Matt 25:30) The choice is yours, the time is now, the question is crucial. “ *What shall you do then with Jesus, which is called Christ ?*” (Matt 27:22)

