

August 25, 2019

## **"I am the..."**

***"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. John 8:12***

My 91 year-old Dad has been staying with us for a couple of weeks and in preparation for his stay we had to find several night lights so he could find his way down the hall safely during the night. We really don't think about how much light there is in our hallway during the night because we are very familiar with it after thirty years in the house.

Finding our way in the dark, especially over unfamiliar ground, is never easy. In the same way, finding our way through this life as those who follow Jesus is never easy. It would not be an exaggeration to say that our path through this world is always over unfamiliar and dangerous ground.

So, Jesus tells us in our context today, ***"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness."*** As we make our way through this life, Jesus wants to be our guide, lighting the way. Of course, that would assume that we actually are following him, and I am afraid for most of us that assumption is not very accurate.

For most of us, following Jesus is sort of like riding in the car with me on a trip through a city. Almost invariably Gloria will ask me if she needs to get her Google Maps app up to give us directions and of course, being a man, I assure her that I don't need it. I know the way. And then, after I get us hopelessly lost because I took a wrong turn, I ask her to load the app and she gives me the grief I so richly deserve.

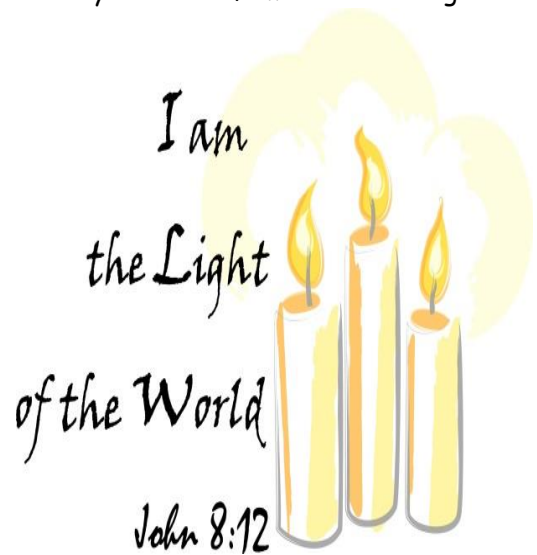
A lot of us follow Jesus the same way. We try to navigate our way through the world and when we have totally messed up we turn to the Master to show us the way out. Jesus isn't really suggesting that we use his light as a only-when-needed flashlight. He is saying ***"I am the light of the world"*** all the time.

In keeping with our theme... If we choose to follow Jesus then we must choose to follow him all of the time; not just occasionally. That means that we follow him no matter where he might lead us. In the end following Jesus demands that we submit absolutely to his direction in our lives.

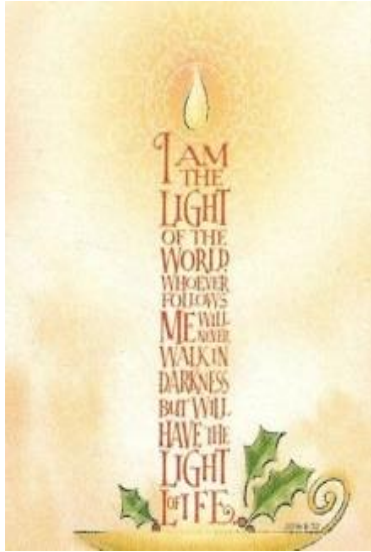
That is not easy for any of us. We are, by nature, strong willed. We like to decide for ourselves, stand on our own two feet, be all that we can be...and so on. If we choose to follow Jesus, **he** becomes our Lord and Master. He leads the way. He decides where we are going. We stand in him and anything that we become he produces. That is a drastic contradiction to what the world constantly encourages us to do.

Of course, if we choose to follow Jesus we must constantly seek his direction for our lives. That means that I must constantly be asking him where he wants me to go and what he wants me to do. He is leading the way and I am following him.

He is leading the way and as the ***"light of the world"*** he is illuminating my course. He is not asking me to follow him into the unknown or into the scary darkness. Jesus lights the way for me



and there is nowhere that he might lead me where he has not already gone. He is the perfect guide because he is the trail-blazer.



Think about all of the decisions we make in a single day about where we will go and what we will do. Does it ever occur to us to ask Jesus to guide us through a day. 'Jesus, I'm on my way to Starbucks. Is that a good idea?' 'Jesus, I think Gloria and I should retire in Saint Paul. Is that what you want?'

Can you picture following Jesus to that degree. Remember his promise. ***"Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*** What would my life be like if I let Jesus, the ***"light of the world"*** led me through every moment; in every decision. How often do I stumble around in the darkness trying to find my own way, when Jesus is standing right there beside me with his light showing me the way? When will I finally just let him lead, when will I finally follow his light, not just when I'm lost, but all of the time? ***"Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness..."***