

# Beyond Belief

John 8:12-59

Bethany Assembly of God

1/28/2024

## Introduction

Last week we learned from John 7 that Jesus is the Living Water but that there are barriers that can keep us from that living water, things like familiarity that leads to pride, mixed motives, and fear. We're going to see some of those same barriers in today's passage, John 8:12-59. Today we'll hit three claims Jesus makes about Himself and what they mean for us. These claims all relate to Jesus' identity and their application has to do with what belief in Jesus really means; they show us what we should believe about Jesus and how to believe it.

### **1. Jesus is the Light of the World.** See John 8:12 and Psalm 119:105.

It was still the Feast of Booths and, during the feast, very large candelabras were set up in the courtyard of the temple, filled with oil, and then lit at night. This light ceremony was reminiscent of the Jews wandering in the wilderness when they followed a pillar of fire by night. This is the background of Jesus' statement, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Jesus was simply saying to the Pharisees that if they really loved God and loved His word, they would recognize Him because He is that light that gives life.

### **2. Jesus is Liberty...so abide in Him.** See John 8:31-36 and Philippians 4:13.

The Light continued to lead them forward, but they were only willing to go so far. Why would they be offended by Jesus telling them that abiding in Him would lead to liberty? Because they believed they were already free. They were the offspring of Abraham, God's chosen people. But Jesus knew they weren't really free and He confronted the illusion. If you are truly free in Jesus, you are able to willingly do what you ought in every circumstance.

### **3. Jesus is "I Am"...so keep His words.** See John 8:58.

The final claim Jesus made, the one that pushed those who supposedly believed in Him so far that they wanted to stone Him, was that He is "I Am." The Jews claimed to be children of God descended from Abraham. Jesus said that if they were descended from Abraham, they would have believed Him, just like Abraham had faith and followed God's lead. Since Jesus is God, then keeping His word is all the more important. This means that you receive Him as the Word of God, and stay with Him.

## Conclusion

All three points in today's passage are very similar. Jesus tells us to follow Him because He's the light, abide in Him because He's true liberty, and keep His Word because He is I Am. So, how are you believing in Jesus? Is your belief characterized by following, abiding, and keeping His Word, or is your belief just a curiosity, a vestige of your heritage, or a bit of religion that helps you keep true light at bay?

And what if Jesus confronts you, as He certainly will? Will you still follow Him? What if He shines the light in your life and you find yourself squinting because of your pride, your greed, your unforgiveness, your impurity?

Will you revolt and turn away from the light with childish claims that you make your own truth or that you have your own light, like a fool trying to use a candle when the sun is shining? Or will you turn to the light of Christ and allow Him to expose and heal?