

Do we have the Light of life?

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Let us turn to **John 8: 12**

John 8: 12

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

The Lord Jesus is God Himself come into this world: lived in our midst as a Man. There is so much that we can learn as we look at His life, as we ponder over who He is, as we observe what He has done.

Here the Lord Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world". While we appreciate who the Lord Jesus is, the Lord Jesus did not come into this world just to show us who He is. He came into this world to save us; He came into this world to help us to become what we ought to be.

So, as we learn to appreciate who the Lord Jesus is, let us be conscious of what He wants to give to us, how He wants to help us, in what way can we be transformed to become what we ought to be.

So here, one aspect that He tells us that He wants us to have is that we will have the Light of life. He says: "...he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

So, what does it mean to have the Light of life?

We can say that here, the word “Light” refers to the moral and the spiritual realm: it is not physical light; it is moral and spiritual light.

So what does that Light do to us? If we have that Light, what would it mean to us?

If we have the Light of life, one aspect that we can be very grateful about is that we will know where we are going, where we ought to go, how we should live our lives, where the true meaning of life is.

Mankind are living in a world where many are lost; they do not know where they are going. They live day by day just doing the things that come to them or that seem attractive to them; and this can apply to Christians as well. Even though we know God, even though we believe many things that are right and good, the daily life may not correspond to that.

Why is that so?

Who has the Light of life? We know that whoever is born of the Spirit will have the Light of life. That is because the Holy Spirit brings life to us, He makes our spirit to come alive and when our spirit comes alive, the Light of God will begin to shine within us.

But then if we look at the life of Paul and we look at the life of the Corinthian Christians, we can see a very great difference: both have the Light of life but their lives are very different.

We can say that there are different degrees of quality, of substance, in which we may have developed or attained the Light of life in us.

So, it is good for us to consider further what this should mean to us, what the Lord wants to give to us and how we can benefit – and this benefit will have eternal value.

We say that light shows us the way, helps us to recognize the path that we should take, but does that mean that if there is light we will live a meaningful life? Does it mean that when we see the Light of God in the Lord Jesus Christ, we will find meaning in life?

In reality, we know that is not true. There are many people who have seen the Light but they walk in the darkness: what they recognize is not translated into the way they live. The Lord Jesus said, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."

So the meaning is: whether we benefit from the Light or not depends on how we respond in our hearts. God in His creation of man has given Light to all of us. We can say Light is the revelation of God to us to help us to know how we should live, what we should do that is right, that is good.

When God created man as a moral being, He gave to man a conscience that will let him understand and recognize what is the right path, what is the wrong path; what ought to be, what should not be.

When God spoke to Adam, He gave him additional instruction not to eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That was a specific instruction from God. God gave him that light to know what he ought to do.

So although Adam had a conscience, he had the presence of God, he recognized God's instruction; he did not benefit from it: because he chose to go his own way.

So this is also true throughout the ages and today.

God gave the Law of Moses to the people of Israel so that there could be more detailed instructions that could make things clearer to them as to what God required of them, the path that they should take. But again we see that the Jews, many of them disobeyed God. God called them stubborn, rebellious, disobedient – and so God was angry with them.

So while there can be Light that God wants to give to us, whether it be through our conscience, through the Law, through the Scriptures, or through the revelation of God Himself in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, we may not benefit.

We may have Light but we may not have Life – and that is the critical difference.

We say that there are those who may reject that Light so they hide from the Light. That is one category of people who will not benefit from the Light. The Lord Jesus came into this world but many refused to listen to Him, to appreciate Him, to honour Him.

What about those who appreciate the Lord Jesus, who listen to Him, who recognize that He is good – will they benefit?

We know that what God reveals to us is good and right and we may want that path and yet it may still not be real to us. **Romans 7: 12** tells us:

Romans 7: 12

So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

The Law that God has given, whether it be through Moses or the law in our hearts, it is holy and righteous and good. God wants us to know His will, His way, so that we can be holy and righteous and good. So for those who want to live that way, it may seem that surely we will then be holy and righteous and good.

However, the apostle Paul also tells us in **Romans 7: 19**:

Romans 7: 19

For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

So although a person may want to do what is good, he may actually practise what is evil. Why is that the case? Such an experience can lead to a person exclaiming, "Wretched man that I am!"

So the apostle Paul put it this way in **Romans 7: 24-25**,

Romans 7: 24-25

24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

The answer he gives in **verse 25**: "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin."

The recognition of what is right is there, even the desire may be there and yet, the reality can still be a life of wretchedness. So he says the answer lies in the Lord Jesus Christ; it is through Him, through His life, through His power that we can then live according to that Light.

It must be the Light with life in us that will result in a life that is good and right before God.

So here the apostle Paul describes such a life in **Romans 8: 2**:

Romans 8: 2

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

It is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that will set us free from the law of sin and of death.

So, while it is good for us to pay heed to all that God has said, to appreciate who the Lord Jesus is, we must recognize that that by itself will not set us free from the law of sin and of death. There must be the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

So, how does this come about? Why is it that it is so difficult to live by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? We want the Light of life; we want to be like the Lord Jesus; we appreciate Him, but why is it we do not live like that?

If we ponder over our lives, if we look at the Scriptures, we look at lives around us, it may dawn on us that ultimately, the primary issue has to do with what we want to give ourselves for. This is the critical issue that we always have to face.

So, we can appreciate the Lord Jesus; we can ponder over who He is; we can even weep as we think of what He has done for us on the cross; we can even be very grateful to Him for all that He has done for us; we can even thank Him for all His mercies. But in the midst of all that, it is still possible for us to live for ourselves: to live by our own ideas, to do the things that we like, we prefer, rather than to listen to Him, to live by His life.

This is a problem that is very common and we need to consider how we can overcome this in our lives, so that we can properly benefit from the Lord Jesus as the Light of the world: In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

The Light in the Lord Jesus came from that life. If we want to be a light that helps other people to live meaningfully, we also need to make sure that the light that shines from us comes from the life of the Lord. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

So if we learn to benefit from the life of the Lord, and His life is abundant in us then in our love for people, in our concern for their wellbeing, in our dependence on God, in our service to others, that Light will shine from the life and then where others receive it with the right spirit, they will be able to receive the Light of life.

Yes, faith without works is dead. We can say we trust God, we believe Him, we recognize who He is, we appreciate Him, but that alone cannot save us. It cannot bring us into the presence of God to be accepted by Him.

Our faith in Him, our recognition of who He is – that the Lord Jesus is the Saviour of the world – must lead to a response in our heart where we take steps within our hearts to repent of our sins, to choose to trust Him, to choose to follow Him, to obey Him, to live by His power, to walk in His ways. These are the works of faith.

It begins in the heart and it is expressed in the lives that we live.

Works of faith that do not begin in the heart are just “works of faith” in the term but not in reality. Works of faith must come from within a heart that genuinely loves God and is committed to His will.

So it is good for us to ponder over this because each one of us, however much we may have grown or developed, we will need to constantly evaluate and consider how we are living our lives.

Yes, all of us who have good attitudes, we can appreciate God, we want to obey Him and we can marvel over who the Lord Jesus is. But this may not make a difference to our spiritual life, unless there is that commitment to Him, there is the preparedness to do His will: we are willing to truly follow Him.

The Lord Jesus said, "...he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

"...he who follows Me..." We have considered what it means to follow Him. So unless that is true, we may not have the Light of life as God intends for us to have.

To what extent are we truly following the Lord? To the degree that our following the Lord is genuine and deep and meaningful before God, to that degree the Light of life will grow within us.

God wants to impart to us His life, God wants to give to us the very best, but He cannot do so unless our hearts can properly receive that.

Can we receive the life of the Lord Jesus? Will our hearts correspond with that? Will we truly want to be like Him?

So these are aspects that we should ponder about: As we look at the life of the Lord Jesus, as we consider who He is and as we appreciate His holiness, His goodness, His grace, His sacrifice for the wellbeing of others, will we also learn to be like Him and be committed to do the will of God just as the Lord Jesus gave Himself fully to do the will of God at all times?

So then as we come before the Lord, let us ask Him to help us understand what it means to have the Light of life. Let us ask Him to search us and help us to understand: Do we have the Light of life? To what extent do we have the Light of life? How can we develop further so that this may increase in quality, in substance, in meaningfulness?

Let us spend time before the Lord to ask Him to teach us His ways and let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us to learn to respond well to God, what He wants of us and what He wants to give to us.