

Hope You Can Believe In

8/02/2020

Scripture: [John 8:12-30](#)

Series: [Meet Jesus](#)

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Please open your Bible at John 8. We are looking at verses 12-30, and I want to begin with the last verse. “As he was saying these things, many believed in him”, (John 8:30). Now here is a verse that demands our immediate attention. Whatever happened in the verses leading up to this one, the outcome was that *many* believed in Jesus.

Any Christian who is interested in reaching the world for Jesus will be drawn to these verses. What did Jesus say that led many to believe in Him? What did these people find compelling? There must be something here for us to discover about leading others to faith in Jesus.

These verses give us the opportunity to watch our Lord Jesus as He leads people to faith in Himself. What we have here is a kind of masterclass in evangelism, led by the Savior Himself.

I want us to learn five things from the example of Jesus today.

If you want to lead others to faith in Jesus: Don’t be afraid of opposition. Bring a message of hope. Identify the urgent need. Point people to Jesus. Invite people to believe.

If you want to lead others to faith in Jesus

1. Don’t Be Afraid Of Opposition

Everything that happens in these verses is drawn out by an attack on the words of Jesus. “Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). When Jesus said this, there was immediate opposition: So, the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true” (v13).

That’s pretty hostile and everything that follows, down to v30 where many believed, arises from this opposition to Jesus. v13, The Pharisees launch an attack on Jesus. v30, Many people believe in Jesus! Thank God for this attack on the truth!

Notice it does not say that many Pharisees believed. Nicodemus believed, and later a Pharisee by the name of Saul of Tarsus believed. But they were the exceptions. For the most part, the Pharisees were relentless in their antagonism towards Jesus.

What is so striking here is that despite this relentless opposition from the shapers of the culture, many people believed! These people knew that the Pharisees had very little to offer and when they heard what Jesus offered, they believed.

Sometimes we wonder how the Gospel will advance when the tide of secularism is so strong.

But God can use opposition to the gospel to bring many people to faith.

The world always rejects Jesus but what does the world have to offer? Are godless people really satisfied? Have they found what they are looking for in life? Has the great tide of secularism brought light, and love and purpose into people's lives?

When you present the claims of Jesus, you can be sure of opposition. But God may use this to bring many people to faith.

If you want to lead others to faith in Jesus

2. Bring a Message of Hope

i. God has made Himself known to us in Jesus

"I am the light of the world" (v12)

The words "I AM" are full of significance. When God sent Moses to deliver His people, Moses said, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' What shall I say to them?" (Exodus 3:13).

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:14). The words, 'I Am' are written all over John 8. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," (v12). "Unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins." (v 24). "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he." (v28). "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am'" (v 58).

When Jesus said "I AM," the Pharisees knew what this meant. Jesus was claiming to be God in the flesh and that's why they picked up stones to throw at him (v59). So, the chapter that begins with the Pharisees wanting Jesus to throw stones at the woman caught in adultery, ends with the Pharisees picking up stones to throw at Jesus.

"I am the light of the world..."

John tells us three things about the nature of God

God is spirit (John 4:24)

God is love (1 John 4:8)

God is light (1 John 1:5)

And when Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." He is telling us that He is God with us.

Here's our message of hope

i. God has made Himself known to us in Jesus.

ii. Jesus will lead us, even in great darkness

I am the **light** of the world," (v12)

When God brought His people out of slavery, He saved them by parting the Red Sea. But how would they find their way to the Promised Land? They had no maps, they had no GPS.

They found their way through the desert because God led them. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a **pillar of fire** to give them **light**, that they might travel by day and by night (Exodus 13:21-22).

God “*went before them.*” During the day, God’s led them through a pillar of cloud. And when it was dark, the light of God’s presence was with them in the pillar of fire.

John takes up that picture at the beginning of His gospel when he says. The light shines **in the darkness** and the darkness has not overcome it (Jn 1:5). The darkness remains, but God is with us in it, And He will give us sufficient light to find our way.

“*The Lord went before them,*’ all the way to the Promised Land. Sometimes they followed in bright sunshine. Other times they followed in great darkness. But day and night, God was with them and even on the darkest night, they had enough light to keep moving forward.

When Jesus says, “I am the light of the world” He is telling us that there is hope, First, because God has made Himself known to us in Jesus. Second, because Jesus will lead us, even in great darkness, and bring us all the way home.

- i. God has made Himself known to us in Jesus
- ii. Jesus will lead us, even in great darkness

iii. Jesus is the light for all people

“I am the light of the world.”

Jesus is the light for everyone. He did not come to give light only to people of a particular culture. His light is not restricted to people who have lived a particular kind of life. John says, the light that *gives light to everyone was coming into the world* (John 1:9).

So, if you find yourself in great darkness. If you cannot see the way forward. If you are saying, ‘where do I go from here?’ How do I get to something better than this? Jesus is the light for you.

iv. If we follow Jesus, we will have the light that we need

“Whoever **follows** me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life” (v12).

Think about the pillar of fire in the darkness. The light moved and God’s people followed. If they had stood still when the pillar of fire was moving, they would find themselves in darkness. But as long as they followed, they would stay in the light.

Whoever follows me... will have the light of life. If you fly west, you follow the light of the sun. If you could go fly at sufficient speed, you would always be in the daylight.

That's the image here. If we follow Jesus we will not be in darkness. We will have the light of life and Jesus will lead us all the way into the light and joy of God's presence in heaven.

So here is our **message of hope**. God has made Himself known to us in Jesus. Jesus will lead us, even in great darkness. Jesus is the light for all people. If we follow Jesus, we will have the light that we need.

If you want to lead others to faith in Jesus

1. Don't be afraid of opposition
2. Bring a message of hope

If you want to lead others to faith in Jesus

3. Identify The Urgent Need

A common response to the claims of Jesus today is that He is good for people who feel that they need Him. You will have spoken to people who say, "I'm glad that works for you, but I don't need this."

When I was in high school, there was a trend for Christians to wear bright red stickers on our school uniform. They had slogans like, "Jesus is the answer," which of course provoked the response, "So, what is the question?"

If you want to lead people to faith in Jesus, you must be clear about why we need Him, why we must believe in Him, and what will happen if we refuse to come to Him.

Notice what Jesus says to those who reject Him.

a. You Do Not Know God

You know neither me nor my Father," (v 19). Now remember He is speaking to the Pharisees, (v13). This must have been a different group of Pharisees because the ones who had brought the woman to Jesus had all gone away one by one. But others arrived and continued the hostility to Jesus. These are the teachers of God's people, they talk about God all the time. But Jesus says, 'You don't know Him.'

We like to think that we know God and that we are on good terms with Him, but Jesus says to those who reject Him, "You know neither me nor my Father (v19). You have not seen God, and you do not know God.

a. You do not know God

b. You Cannot Enter Heaven

"Where I am going, you cannot come" (v21). Jesus is speaking about heaven which is His home. He says here, "*you are from below I am from above* (v23). You don't belong to heaven and heaven doesn't belong to you.

There is no such thing as a right to heaven. I have no right to your home. You have no right to your neighbor's home. And none of us have a right to Jesus' home.

Jesus says to those who reject Him, "Where I am going you cannot come."

c. You Will Die In Your Sin

"I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin" (v21).

Why does Jesus say that the Pharisees will seek Him? Having rejected Jesus, they will go on looking for the Messiah. Have you ever lost your wallet, your keys, your cell phone or your glasses. They are on your bed, covered by some clothes. You look at the bed quickly, but you don't see the what you are looking for. So, you leave the bedroom and you try the kitchen, the living room and the bathroom.

You keep searching but you cannot find what you are looking for because you missed it where it was! That was what happened to these Pharisees. Jesus says, 'you will seek me'. You will spend the rest of your lives looking for the Messiah, (cf John 7:34). And you will never find the Messiah, because 'I Am He' and you have rejected Me!

If you reject Jesus, your life will be a long and futile search. You will always be seeking and you will never find. You will always be asking and you will never receive. You will always be knocking, and the door never be opened for you. What a tragedy that would be: To reject Jesus and then spend the rest of your life, searching for the peace and joy that only He can give.

Jesus says to those who reject Him, "you will seek me...**And you will die in your sin**" (v21). What does it mean to die in your sin? To die in your sin means that you take the guilt of your sins into your death with you.

Don't fool yourself by saying 'my sins are not many' or my sins are minor. What matters most is not whether your sins are few or many. What matters most is not how far down the scale of wickedness your sins might have been. What matters most is this: Did you die in your sin or was your sin taken from you?

There is only one Person who can take your sin from you. And to those who reject Him, Jesus says, "you will die in your sin."

Something of incalculable importance hangs on your response to Jesus. Without Him, you do not know God. Without Him you cannot enter heaven. Without Him you will die in your sins.

When Jesus said these things, "*many believed in Him.*"

If you want to lead others to faith in Jesus, don't be afraid of opposition. Bring a message of hope. Identify the urgent need.

If you want to lead others to faith in Jesus

4. Point People to Jesus

“I am the light of the world,” (v12). “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He,” (v28). Jesus is the answer to our urgent need.

i. We did not know God

But Jesus came to make Him known. He says, *If you knew me you would know my Father also* (v19).

ii. We could not enter heaven.

He says “*You are from below. I am from above* (v23), But He came to open heaven for us.

iii. We would have died in our sin,

But Jesus came to take our sins from us. He lived the perfect life. He is the only person who could ever say “*I always do the things that are pleasing to Him* [the Father] (v29) But when He was “lifted up” on the cross (v28) He bore our sins as if they had been His own.

Our sins were laid on Him, and Jesus carried our sins into His death so that we would not carry them into ours. These verses are all about Jesus. Who He is: *I am the light of the world* (v12). What He has done: The *Son of Man... lifted up* (v28).

Jesus made the Father known. Jesus opened heaven’s door. Jesus bore our sins in His body on the tree.

If you want to lead others to faith in Jesus:

Don’t be afraid of opposition. Bring a message of hope. Identify the urgent need. Point people to Jesus.

If you want to lead others to faith in Jesus

5. Invite people to believe

“Unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” (v24)

I love that word “unless.” It means you don’t have to die in our sins. There is something you can do. You can believe that Jesus is who He says He is: The Son of God, the light of the world, the Savior of who trust in Him.

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever **believes** in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

“Whoever hears my word and **believes** him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life” (John 5:24).

“These are written so that you may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by **believing** you may have life in his name” (John 20:31).

Here is the promise of Jesus: If you believe, you will **not** die in your sins. And when Jesus said this '*many believed in Him*' (v30).

I invite you to believe in Jesus today. If you will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not be in darkness. You will have the light of life.

If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not die in your sins. When the lights go out for you in this world, you will be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

You may say, how do I know if I believe in Jesus? Those who believe in Him follow Him.

Follow Jesus and He will lead you all the way to heaven where night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their **light**, and they will reign forever and ever (Rev. 22:5).

Prayer

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Follow the Lord Jesus Christ and you will not walk in darkness. You will have the light of life.

Father, Thank you for Your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank you that He was 'lifted up' to die on the cross for our sins. Thank you that He rose from the dead and that He lives forever. Thank you that He is our light even in the darkest night.

Help us to believe in Him: To trust Him and to follow Him today and every day, until faith is turned to sight and we enter the glorious light and joy of Your presence. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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