



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 8:12; Exodus 13:21–22, 14:10–20; Numbers 9:15–23

"The Light of the World"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] This morning the subject of the exposition of the word of God is one verse in the 8th chapter of the Gospel of John. And in the light of that I would like to read two or three passages from the Old Testament that touch on that particular text. So will you turn with me to Exodus chapter 13, verse 21 and verse 22 for the first of these passages. Remember the context of Exodus chapter 13 is the children of Israel's deliverance from the land of Egypt. And one of the ways in which God gave them direction was by means of the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire. And Moses writes about it in verse 21 and 22 of chapter 13. "And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."

And then in chapter 14, the next chapter, verses 19 and 20. As the children of Israel make their way out to the Red Sea with the Egyptians following after them we read, "And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night."

And then the last of the passages from the Old Testament, in Numbers chapter 9, verse 15; Numbers chapter 9, verse 15. And here Moses gives some instruction to the children of Israel concerning guidance by the pillar of cloud and fire. And when we read this passage the word for commandment is simply a reference to the movement of the cloud. We read in verse 15 of Numbers chapter 9,

"And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was always: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not. And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed. And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the LORD they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses."

Now the one verse in John chapter 8; John chapter 8 and verse 12. Remember the context; it is the Feast of the Tabernacles. And in the midst of the feast, among the saying that Jesus gave is this remarkable "I am" statement in John 8:12. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

The subject for this morning is the very obvious one from the passage that we have read in the Gospel of John chapter 8, "The Light of the World." We who are Texans and read the daily newspapers have no doubt been impressed by some of the things that have happened in just the recent past. A couple of days ago in one of our newspapers, one of the headings on the first page was, "Four days, thirty-seven bodies." August is the cruelest month in Texas. It is hot, humid, and now horrible. In the space of four days at least thirty-seven homicides were added to the state's grizzly lore. It was a very interesting article, I thought, because near the end of the article questions that individuals have had were being asked and answers were sought. Why now? Why so many? Someone gave the very illuminating answer that tensions are building up in Texas. Others gave other, it seemed to be also, rather senseless explanations.

And then recently we have been, of course, reading about the death of one of the legendary movie actors who many of us have seen many times on our screen. It seemed to me such a pitiful kind of thing, the things that were said about this man. There was no funeral. The body would be cremated, which is not always, of course, but usually an expression of no hope in the resurrection of the body. Many other things were said in one of the articles that I read. One of the newspaper reporters asked this individual how did he rate himself as a father. He said, "I rate myself zero." We certainly can give him good marks for candidness. He said, "How the hell can I judge myself on that matter. I don't think of myself as a good father. I was in a business where that wasn't always possible. I had a choice of being a good father or giving up the business I loved." And of course after many marriages it's obvious which decision he made.

The rash of deaths by violence, without any rational explanation it would seem, the seemingly trivial emptiness and hopelessness reflected in the thoughts of a dying beloved actor have underscored the sadness of a shallow life un-illuminated and unsupported by the life-giving word of God. If men only knew the power of the word of God, we might ask.

Some years ago I read a story of a New Hebrides chieftain who was sitting peacefully reading the Bible when he was interrupted by a French trader who had come to the place. "Be," he said in French, "Why are you reading the Bible? I suppose the missionaries have got hold of you. You poor fool. Throw it away. The Bible never did anybody any good." And replied the chieftain calmly, "If it wasn't for that Bible, you'd be over there in my kettle by now." [Laughter] There are some benefits that come from the word of God.

One of the stupendous claims that Jesus Christ makes is made in John chapter 8 and verse 12. "I am the light of the world." This is the second of the great "I am" statements in the Gospel of John. He has already said, "I am the bread of life." He will in a few moments say that he is the "Good shepherd" and that he gives life to the sheep. He will say that he is the door, and that if men enter through him they will have everlasting life. And he will say that he is the resurrection and the life. He will also say that he is the "Way, the truth, and the life." And finally he will say that he is the true vine. This is a great statement, "I am the light of the world."

We've already commented on the fact that it is a statement in the style of deity. For remember, in the Old Testament when Moses asked, "Who shall I say is giving me instruction when I lead the children of Israel out of Egypt from their bondage?" And God said to him, "My name is I AM, I am who I am." He cannot define himself. If he were to define himself, he would limit himself. For definition is a limitation. And so he can only say, "I am who I am." And that statement is the statement around which many of the great statements of the Old Testament are built. "I am he," we often read later on. "I am." And when Jesus Christ comes on the scene and begins to speak about God, he uses the style of deity. He says, "I am." We've already had not only, "I am the bread of life," but we had the statement when he was walking on the water and came to the ship and they

were very much frightened, he said to them, "I am, so be not afraid." The Lord Jesus claims to be the I Am of the Old Testament, the one who is the beginning and the end, the one who is the first and the last, the one who is the Alpha and the Omega, I am he. So when men heard the Lord Jesus says, "I Am," they couldn't help but reflect that this person is making claims for deity.

It's a remarkable thing, and so far as I know it has never been done," that these assertions of the Lord Jesus have stood on the pages of Scripture for eighteen to nineteen hundred years, in a world which is quick to detect conceit and arrogance and to seek to expose the hollow pretense of such. Yet no infidel has ever thought of assailing the Lord Jesus Christ for these magnificent sayings that he made. If these sayings were not true, then the Lord Jesus must be the most arrogant man who ever lived. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "I am the resurrection." "I am the bread of life." "I am the light of the world." "I am the good shepherd." "I am the doorway to eternal life." If he was only a man, whoever made more ridiculous statements, more arrogant statements, more conceited statements than these? And I think that one of these reasons that these statements have never been attacked is simply because men, deep down in their hearts, know somehow or other that they're true. And they seek as hard as they can to suppress these great thoughts that the Lord Jesus Christ has given. Men do suppress them, suppress them successfully in the sense that they pass out of this existence without the saving knowledge of him who is the light of the world.

This particular statement assumes great significance when we consider the important of light. Light is essential for life. Without light, well flowers would be colorless, would they not, even if they grew? But animate and inanimate creation would fail. The world would hasten back to its primeval chaos if we did not have light. I did hear a story about some fellows who were debating what was the first profession in the Bible. A surgeon said, "I think the medical profession is the first profession mentioned in the Bible. God created Eve out of Adam. It was a work of anesthesia and then the work of a surgeon. So it's obvious that the medical profession is the first." And engineer said, "No, it was not the medical profession, it was engineering. Just think of the engineering joy it was to create things out of the chaos that God had made. Engineering was the first of the

professions." A politician was standing by and said, "That's nothing. Who do you think created the chaos?" [Laughter]

Well, if we did not have light, everything would move back to the chaos of the beginning. The light given off by the sun rules our daily life. Most of us work when it is day and rest when it is night. Sunlight is the source of the energy for all of the plants, and without the sunlight every living thing would starve to death, because all living things are dependent upon the food that the plants make or upon other living things that in turn eat that food. The changing patterns of the sunlight not only are necessary for life itself, but also determine the seasons by which things grow. Light is absolutely essential for life. Light also in travel in everyday life directs traffic, guides automobiles, lights streets, guides ships by lighthouses and light ships. In the home it is used for study and reading and working in areas in the kitchen and shop. In health it creates vitamin A in food, helps plants to grow, combats disease. In other words, it's essential.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." Now, in saying that he means that he is the source of life, and he also means that he is the guide of life. Light essential for life, and light essential for the preservation and continuation of life. Now, let's look at this statement, this magnificent statement, and I want you to notice first the significant circumstances in which it was made. John begins the 12th verse of the 8th chapter by saying, "Then spake Jesus again unto them." Now, that means simply that he began another part of his discourse, but one thinks about the 7th chapter. Both of these chapters were gathered around events that took place around the Feast of Tabernacles, and the outstanding statement of the earlier part of the week was when Jesus stood or rather the outstanding statement of the whole week was when on the last day, the great day of the feast, he stood and cried and said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." But in the midst of that week he also spoke unto them and said, "I am the light of the world."

Now one might ask the question immediately, did the Lord Jesus have any particular reason in the occasion itself for saying, "I am the light of the world." Why did he say, at this precise

moment, that he was the light of the world? Some have suggested that since the candelabra of the temple areas, they were placed in the court of the women, were a significant feature of the celebration of the feast, that he said it in the light of that fact. The candelabra were lighted on the first day or so of that feast. And on those first days or so, they shown all over the city, because the light was reflected off of the top of the temple areas so that anyone in Jerusalem who had a courtyard outside of their houses would have the light that came from the candelabra in the temple area. And so some have suggested that the Lord Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," in the light of that significant lighting of the candelabra in the early days of the Feast of the Tabernacles.

But of course one must remember that they were only lit at the beginning of the feast and they were not lit later on. And this statement is a statement that seems to suggest a continuation of light. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." And those candelabra were stationary objects, not moving objects suggested by "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." Someone has said, "Well the absence of the light in the latter days of the week would accentuate his claim." That is that he stood up in the relative darkness of the last days of the feast and said, "I am the light of the world." Perhaps so, but it seems better to me and to other commentators to think that the Lord Jesus has something else in mind when he says, "I am the light of the world." Now remember he has said he was the manna on which the children of Israel fed as they went through the wilderness. He has said that he was the rock, which Moses smote and out of which came rivers of living water. And he is also now saying that it would seem that he is the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud by which the children of Israel were guided through the wilderness. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." And I'm inclined to think that that is what our Lord had in mind when he said again, "I am the light of the world." I am the fulfillment. I'm the antitype of all that was signified by the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire.

Well now, let's look at the statement itself. There's a singular claim that is made in this statement. It is the claim of absolute essentiality for not only light but life itself. And I say it's

remarkable because it's made in the style of deity. "I am the light of the world." This is one those statements in the Bible that you can look at each individual word, almost the articles, even the definite articles are important. First of all, I; now that's emphatic in the original text, and the reason for it is simply this, when Old Testament men, when the Jewish men who studied the Old Testament, when they thought of light they thought most likely of the Law of Moses. The revelation of God, for the revelation of God was said to be light. There are many texts that speak of that. One can, for example, think of Psalm 119 and verse 105 where we read, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." So the term light was a term that was used to characterize the Mosaic Law. Jesus was simply saying, because the Jews prided themselves upon the fact that God gave them the revelation of God, I, not the Law, am the light of the world. The Law pointed forward to me, but I am the light of the world.

Now he says, "I am the light of the world," not I point you to the light as great religious teachers have sometimes sought to say. Nor I bring you the light, but I am the light. In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ in his being is himself the light of the world. What do you think of when you think of the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you think of the Son of God who came to offer the atoning sacrifice on the cross at Calvary? That is one of the things that flow out of the fact that he is the light of the world.

Now he says, "I am the light of the world," not a light. The definite article is very important. "I am the light of the world." Now when you put these things together so far, "I am the light of the world" they combine to make this statement either the wildest words of audacity and self-deluded egotism that human lips have ever uttered, or words of unmistakable divinity. Alexander McLaren used to like to say, "Jesus Christ was his own great theme." I've got some good friends who've tried to fulfill that text. They are their own great theme, but of course when they move out of [our] presence we laugh at them behind their backs. Sometimes we say to them, why do you talk so much about yourself? But Jesus Christ talked about himself; he was his own great theme. And of course, that's what we want him to be. On the Emmaus Road when he preached he took of the things that

had to do with him and the Old Testament and he preached them to those disciples on the way to Emmaus. He was the text. He was the preacher, he was the sermon. And that's right. We know that's right. We sense that that's right. That's the way it ought to be, and when the preacher intrudes himself into the message we feel that we've lost something. "I am the light of the world." He was his own great theme, fatal to any other human being, but perfectly right and proper for him.

Now the text has to do with light, "I am the light of the world." When one studies the history of the term light one is impressed by the complexity of the idea. For example, it was important in the celebration of the feast of the tabernacles. In the ultimate celebration of that feast reference is made to the light, so it was characteristic of the celebration of the feast to have some emphasis on the idea of light. Later on in Zechariah, as the prophet there speaks about the ultimate celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in the kingdom of God on the earth, it is specifically stated that there should be light in the evening. So in this Jewish celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles they lighted the candelabra in the evening in order to look forward to that great event. In pagan religions the light was the sign of God manifest. How appropriate that is for Christ, for he was God manifest in the flesh Paul says. In Judaism light accompanied the theophanies of the Old Testament. It was also the symbol of divine instruction. The word of God is said to be the light of God. But the most significant sense of the term light has to do with the great Messiah.

One looks back in the Old Testament and notices some rather interesting statements. I've found them extremely interesting. And the servant of Jehovah, 42nd chapter of the Book of Isaiah and the 6th verse the prophet speaking about the ministry of the Messiah the servant of the Lord says, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness and will hold thine hand and will keep thee and give thee for a covenant of the people for a light of the Gentiles. So we notice that he's to be a covenant for the people, the people of Israel and a light for the Gentiles, that is for the nation and for the nations. Now we turn over to Isaiah chapter 49 and verse 6 and we read in the second of these great servant of Jehovah passages and he said, "It is a light thing that Thou, the Messiah, shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will

give thee also for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Now you can see that light is something that is specifically said to represent the Messianic ministry not simply to Israel but to the Gentiles, to the ends of the earth. The greatest passage of all in which light is connected with the Messiah is Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 1 and verse 2. Now I know you've read by this passage many times, and perhaps you'll wonder, what in the world could there be in this passage that could be significant? Nevertheless the prophet says in Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 1, "The dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles." Then he says, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them the light has shined."

Now the prophet has given us a picture of the ministry of the Messiah, and he gives us a picture of the ministry of the Messiah as beginning in Galilee of the Gentiles and that this light is a great light. One might wonder why bother about a text like that. Did you know that Matthew, when he wrote his gospel, singles out that particular passage in the ministry of the Lord Jesus and sites it? This morning after the meeting someone who was in the service at 8:30 said, "You know, I've read through that often, and I never really paid too much attention to those words in Isaiah chapter 9. I know I had seen that they occurred in Matthew chapter 4, but I never really made much of a connection with them and didn't realize how significant they might be.

Now the Lord Jesus came from Galilee and he is the one who fulfilled that prophecy, the great light. And Matthew writes in Matthew chapter 4 and verse 14, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulun, and the land of Nephthali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." A great light, the Messiah, that's what our Lord is saying. I am the light for the world.

Now when he says that he's the light he means simply that he's the Messianic king promised by the word of God and therefore, he is the one who is to shed a great light not only upon Jewish peoples, but also upon Gentiles as well. And he will do this not by pointing to the light, not by bringing light, but by being the light of God.

One last thing, I am the light of the world. Now if one reads those texts from Isaiah chapter 49, 42, chapter 9, it's quite plain what is meant by light of the world. Listen, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles that Thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." The almost uniform sense of the term world in the Gospel of John is a reference not to everyone without exception but to everyone without distinction. In other words, the ministry of the Lord Jesus is for Jews and for Gentiles. For God so loved Jews and Gentiles that he gave unto them his only begotten Son. One only has to study the Bible and study it carefully in order to understand its meaning. So when he says, "I am the light of the world," he means this salvation is a salvation that is for Jews and it is for Gentiles. He does not in any way suggest that the ministry of the Lord Jesus is an effectual atonement for everyone. One only has to read the Bible to see this, but so often we don't read the Bible. We don't really study it. That's why when we come to Zebulon and Naphtali we skip over that and miss some of the things that the New Testament stresses. "I am the light of the world," and Jews and Gentiles shall receive the ministry of the Messiah is what he means.

Now look at the satisfying consequences. "I am the light of the world." As the light he provides a guide into life. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness. That's a very strong statement in the original text. It could be rendered something like, "By no means ever at all shall he walk in darkness." So he's a guide into life. He's a guide into life by pointing out to us our sin, pointing out that we have broken the law of God, pointing out that we are condemned, pointing out our unsaved state. He also reveals the high standard that God requires of every man, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and thy neighbor as thyself." Have you done that? Can you say that you meet the standard of God's righteousness and

holiness? Don't answer, I'll answer for you, of course not, how ridiculous. Why, you've broken his standard so many times that you can never recall. You are guilty. You are condemned by God, not by the preacher but by God, by his word. And if a significant relationship with God is not established, you shall not have eternal life.

The Lord Jesus reveals also the way of salvation through his atoning work that he accomplished on Calvary's cross. It is by that that men are able to receive a righteousness from God that completely satisfies him, earned by the merits of a Savior who loved men and gave himself for them. So he's a guide into life, a magnificent guide into life. Israel's possession of the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night mark them out as the people of God. The Egyptians didn't have that. The Egyptians after Pharaoh raced out after Israel in order to destroy them. They discovered through their ultimate death that the angel of the Lord was with Israel, and he simply moved himself from the head of the company to the rear of the company and the Egyptians were not able to penetrate. Furthermore, the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire abode over the Israelites, and they had light. The Egyptians had utter darkness. In other words, the thing that marked out Israel from the Egyptians was the possession of the light, the pillar of cloud, the pillar of fire. They had God with them, and they had God with them as their guide. The thing that marks out one man from another today is the presence of God the Holy Spirit who has united certain individuals with Jesus Christ and they are marked out from the whole of the world as the people of God. Are you in that company? Can you say, "I belong to the people of God? I have the light. I have the light who is the light of Jews and the light of Gentiles."

Not only that, he says that is he a guide through life. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." I think that possession implies continuance. There are other things in the New Testament that make it plain that this light is a continuous and an eternal possession of a certain group of people, the people of God.

Now, think of the movements of the Shekinah. Israel went out into the wilderness and God said, "I'm going to give you some words about how you're going to be guided. You're going to be

guided by the cloud. Now when the cloud stays in one place, you stay there. When the cloud moves, you move. It doesn't make any difference whether it stays in one place a part of a day or a day or a week or a month or even a year, if it stays there, you stay. If it moves, you move." Can you imagine an Israelite? He comes out of his tent in the morning, which way does he look, down? No, he looks up. Is the cloud still there? Incidentally that's a good way to begin our lives, to look up at the beginning of the day, look up to the Lord. They looked up. If the cloud was moving they said, "Get ready, we've got to go." They had to be ready to move on a moment's notice. You see, they were pilgrims. They were sojourners on the earth. That's what we are. There are some people that are Christians, professing Christians so tied down they couldn't move in five or ten years. They'd have to get rid of their possession, the things that they have. They're unable to be useful, because they are utterly tied down to things here. In the New Testament more than once we are told that we are strangers and sojourners on the earth, and we are pilgrims. We're here for a time, for a duty.

Now, of course, we have something better than a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. We don't rush out to look for a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. By the way, the pillar of fire had fire within it, and it was there all the time. In the daytime it was there too, because fire was the symbol of the presence of God. They just couldn't see it in the daytime because of the sun, but at night the presence of God that accompanied Israel was there. He was always with them. He guided them. It's like our Lord who said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." And so in the journey through the wilderness, illustrative for us of the journey of life, he was with them, and he is with us.

Now, however, there is a great difference. We don't look at an outward light, an outward cloud, but we have inward cloud and an inward light within, the presence of the Holy Spirit. Do you know what is the significant feature of a believer? He's led by the Spirit of God. The Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 8 says, "Those who are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." This is the possession of every believer, the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Now often we don't follow him, but he guides. Every believer has the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that's the mark of the son of God.

So in days of doubt, he's our guide. In days of trial he's our guide. In days of difficulty, he's our guide. In days of trial he often is our cover and our shade. In days of darkness he's our light.

Now, I'm old enough to remember traveling on a Pullman. One of the great features of traveling on a Pullman was to go through some of the tunnels. I can remember my father saying, "Now it won't be long before we'll be going through the tunnel." And you know, when you sat in the Pullman cars and you were going through the tunnel, about a mile before the tunnel came the lights would flash on. And then as you would pass through the tunnel you had light. And at the end as you came out into the light, the light stayed on for just a brief time. That's the way the light is with us. And so when we pass through the experiences of life we have the light with us. It's like going through the darkness but having the light at the same time. "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Mrs. Booth when she was dying used an expression that I like. She said, "The waters are rising but I'm not sinking." That's the way we face the death that we all must face if the Lord does not come. He's a guide into life. He's a guide through life. And he's a guide into life eternal.

Well, let me close because it's a few minutes before twelve. You notice the universal provision, "I am the light of the world," both Jews and Gentiles. There is, of course, a vital limitation here. He says, "He that followeth me." Now, what does it mean to follow him? Well fortunately in chapter 12 our Lord makes a statement that identifies its meaning. He says in the 46th verse of the 12th chapter, "I am come a light into the world that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." So he lets us know that to follow him is to believe in him, to believe in him is to follow him. Well they may be distinguished in this way, one is the root, belief, the other is the fruit, to follow. The followers have faith. The faithful will follow. Let me repeat that. The faithful will follow. Now that's evident from other passages that our gospel writer gives us. Giving the words of the Lord Jesus, John 10 and verse 27 he says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." The sheep do follow. Now, of course, they follow like a little child follows its father.

If you could see this on some sand you would see it. A father says, "Come on, let's go over there." And his steps are very purposeful, very direct. He moves in a straight line, and there's the little child following. He wanders off this way. He sees something over there that interests him. He wanders off over here, he wanders off over there. Finally the father turns around and says, "Come on." And then they have to retrace the steps and get him and bring him back into the way. That's the way we follow, but we follow. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." We must remember that. So to follow them is to believe, to believe is to follow. One is the root, the other is the fruit. They are indissolubly bound together. Blind Bartimaeus, having received his sight began to follow the Lord Jesus. When Matthew was called Jesus said to him, "Follow me."

Matthew was so thrilled by that that he decided he was going to have a big feast. So he made a big feast and invited all of his friends and said, "I've been searching and seeking and looking and studying and now I've found the great light, the Messiah." Amazing fellow, you know, he was glad because he was saved. Some people give you the other impression. Yes, I'm a Christian and now I'm going to be forced to live this kind of life. It makes me sour, disagreeable, embarrassed about the fact that I have eternal life. I never say anything to anybody. I'm afraid I might upset them in my business or at home or when I'm in the grocery store or wherever it may be. I best keep quiet, some unpleasantness might come. There might be some division. He was so glad that he had a big feast; a marvelous privilege to follow Jesus Christ. Think of it. Think of it, my dear friends, to follow Jesus Christ what greater privilege could a man have? Make you sad? You ought to be the happiest of all peoples when the spell of the Lord falls upon you. And Matthew was like that.

One final word, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." Trusted and followed, he's the light. Turned from, forgotten, he's darkness – that, I'm afraid, is the realm in which many Texans are living today, in which many people are living today. They don't know the light. I like the story of the little girl who was looking at one of Holman Hunt's paintings. She had a book which had a lot of Christian art. She was turning pages looking at them, and finally she came to a page. Her father was over reading the newspaper finding out how the Cowboys had done the night before.

And she was looking at this particular page, and she became very much entranced with it. You remember the picture; it's the picture of the Lord appearing as if he were a king. And he has a lamp that's kind of bejeweled expensive lamp. And he's knocking on a door which is overgrown with bramble bushes and all kinds of vines, obviously has been entered in a long time. It doesn't have a handle on the outside. Mr. Hunt trying to get over the truth that kind of door is opened from within. He was painting the picture of "I am the door." And he was talking about the Lord as the door.

Now, he was standing knocking. "Behold I stand at the door and knock." And finally she turned to her father and said, "Why don't they let the nice man in?" Her father said nothing. He was still wondering how they had done against the Bills. Later on in a few moments she said, "Why don't they let him in Daddy?" He still was behind his newspaper. And then after a little while she burst out into laughter. And she went over to her father, fell on his arm and looked up, and said, "I think I know why they wouldn't let him in. They weren't hearing. They were all down cellar."

Our Lord is the light of the world. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness. He shall have the light of life." Come to the light. Come to Jesus Christ. Come out of your darkness, come out of your fears, come out of your guilt, come out of your condemnation, come to him who is the life and light. The light is essential to life. May God help you to come to him who has offered the atoning sacrifice for Jews and for Gentiles.

[Prayer] Father, how good Thou art to us to give us these marvelous words from the lips of the Messianic life and light, the Lord Jesus Christ, the servant of Jehovah, who accomplished the atonement by which we are brought into relationship to Thee. O Father, if there are some...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]