

Celebration Services (August 23rd & 24th, 2008)
"The Light of Life"

John 8:12-30

INTRO ... "Maintaining Biblical Distinctives/Partitions" Post-modernism's activity of blurring distinctives and absolutes

Post-modernism rejects absolutes and certainty and embraces unknowability, mystery, and tolerance (based on possible rightness).

... The Observable Impact on Society —

o MEDIA ATTITUDES

“ Epistemological and moral relativism dictate that the supreme god word of postmodern culture is tolerance. ... The following excerpts from the new *Phil Donahue Show* illustrate today's preaching climate. Donahue's guests were Rabbi Boteach, Dr. Al Mohler... and Dr. Michael Brown. ... **Donahue:** [to Mohler] "Do you believe Jews can go to heaven?" ... **Mohler:** Southern Baptists, with other Christians, believe that all persons can go to heaven who come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And there is no discrimination on the basis of ethnic or racial or national issues... **Donahue:** You cannot possibly look a person in the eye and say, if you don't come to Jesus, if you don't change your faith, you're not going to heaven. Reeks of prejudice, and also stirs the soul to evil behavior, in my opinion... **Boteach:** Reverend Mohler, however intelligent of a scholar he may be, is a spiritual Neanderthal with repulsive, revolting views... **Donahue:** I'll respect your religion, Reverend Mohler, if you respect mine. But please don't tell me that you know what's good for me. There's an arrogance to that... **Mohler:** Well, all I know is that the only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ, and that all who are there come by his grace and mercy alone. There is nothing in us to merit salvation. And so humility has to be the Christian posture. ... **Donahue:** There is nothing humble about telling me I'm not going to heaven if I don't believe in Jesus. That's not humility. That's arrogance... **Mohler:** It would be if this were our message. But if that is what the Son of God said himself, if that is the truth, then it would be hateful and it would be intolerant not to tell you what we believe to be the truth. I can't compel anyone to believe in Christ, but I do have the responsibility, with gladness and joy, to share the good news of the gospel... **Boteach:** We've been burned at the stake because of your repulsive, nauseating views... **Brown:** Listen, very simply, you want to respect my faith? The core of my belief is that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, and we have to go tell everybody... **Donahue:** You can tell me about it. But you can't stand there righteously and tell me you know what's good for me. And you sure as hell can't tell me that there's only one way for me to get to heaven. Nobody is that smart, nobody... **Boteach:** you should be ashamed of yourself and it's time that you finally change. Quoted in "Preaching to a Shifting Culture", p. 185

- o Blurred Distinctions between RIGHT & WRONG
- o " " " MEN & WOMEN
- o " " " RELIGIONS

Postmodern Theme Song: "Everything is Beautiful in it's Own Way" (Ray Stevens, Grammy Award Winning song from 1970)

It's Hard to be a Postmodernist and Receive from John 8

v. 12... **Darkness contrasted with Light** — Darkness isn't Beautiful in its Own Way

- v. 21-23... **the Contrast of Above with Below** — Being earthly, natural, or demonic (Below) (Jam 3) isn't "Beautiful in its Own Way"

“ Jesus cuts through their misguided speculation by declaring that he and they emerge from two entirely antithetical realms... the contrast is not between a spiritual and material world, but between the realm of God himself and realm of his fallen and rebellious creation, the ‘world’ which hates Jesus because he testifies that what it does is evil (Jn 7:7).” **D.A. Carson**, “The Gospel According to John”, [PNTC] p. 342

Do You See the World This Way? ... or are most people “pretty good”?

— The World is Divided into 2 RACES — IN ADAM ... IN CHRIST

Do You See People That Way? Or do you see American vs Asian ... Black vs White

- v. 24... **the Crisis of those who do not believe in Christ** (Will die in their sins) — isn't "Beautiful in its Own Way"

- v. 42-44... **Fatherhood of God contrasted with the Fatherhood of Satan** — Being the Spiritual child of Satan isn't "Beautiful in its Own Way"

Jn 8:12

THE FACTS ABOUT LIGHT AND DARKNESS IN THE WORLD

1. The ABSENCE of LIGHT – The Condition & Nature of Darkness (Matt, Eph 4,

“ These words imply that the world needs light, and is naturally in a dark condition. It is so in a moral and spiritual point of view: and it has been so for nearly 6,000 years. In ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, in modern England, France, and Germany, the same report is true. The vast majority of men neither see nor understand the value of their souls, the true nature of God, nor the reality of a world to come! Notwithstanding all the discoveries of art and science, “darkness still covers the earth, and gross darkness the people.” (Is. 60:2)” **J.C. Ryle**, “Expository Thoughts on John”, vol 2, p. 84

- The CONDITION of Darkness

- **The Darkness is AROUND YOU**

Matt 4:16 “the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.”

- **The Darkness is IN YOU**

Matt 6:23 “...but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.”

Eph 5:7-8 “Therefore do not become partners with them; 8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light...”

- The NATURE of Darkness — Disorienting... Confusing... Unclear...

Prov 4:18-19 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day. 19 The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know over what they stumble.

Ps 82:5 They do not know nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness

Eph 4:17-18 "Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

Luke 22:53 While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours."

***It's Our Understanding of Darkness that Drives Our Appreciation of Light
Life Really is Lived in a Dark Room with the Devil Constantly
Rearranging the Furniture***

2. The SOURCE of LIGHT What Can DISPEL this Darkness?

"I am the light of the world"

- ***THE light vs A light*** ... Jesus statements carried implications that revealed EXCLUSIVITY
- **Jn 8:24; Jn 14:6**

— ***Does the Narrowness of these Statements Make Them WRONG?***

.... No, but Postmodernism has made them Difficult To Accept

“ During my nearly two decades in New York City, I’ve had numerous opportunities to ask people, “What is your biggest problem with Christianity? What troubles you the most about its beliefs or how it is practiced?” One of the most frequent answers I have heard over the years can be summed up in one word: *exclusivity*.” **Timothy Keller**, “The Reason for God”, p. 3

... There' Only ONE WAY to Turn the Lights On — Apart from Christ (no matter how “enlightened” man claims to be) man continues in darkness

Deut 28:28-29 The LORD will smite you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart; 29 and you will grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in darkness, and you will not prosper in your ways; but you shall only be oppressed and robbed continually, with none to save you.

3. The Promise of Light ... “Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life”

What is the "Light of Life"?

2 Cor 4:6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”.

Rev 21:23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

What is the Nature of This “Light of Life”?

a BLACKLIGHT and a Medicine Bottle reveals a fluorescent writing —

Everyday these issues of life are being Explained to Us by: **OPRAH ... DR. PHIL ... RUSH LIMBAUGH ...**

Ps 36:9 For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.

- The BENEFIT of This → a PROMISE to Hold On To

Isa 60:1-5 Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. 2 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. 3 And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. 4 Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. 5 Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

Isa 2:5 O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

- The IMPLICATION of This → a CONSEQUENCE for those who do not follow