##### **I am the Light of the World**

### Text: John 7:40-52 & 8:12 (NIV)

1. **One of my favorite animated movies is the Incredibles.** In a scene early in that movie, Mr. Incredible’s alter ego

[*Bob notices the little boy on the tricycle staring at him for the second day in a row*]

And says, ([**Bob**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0005266/?ref_=tt_trv_qu)) “Well, what are \*you\* waiting for?”

[**Little Boy on Tricycle**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1384126/?ref_=tt_trv_qu) **responds**: “I don't know. Something amazing, I guess.”

[**Bob**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0005266/?ref_=tt_trv_qu): [*sighs*] Me too, kid.

1. **Do you ever feel like that, like you are waiting for something amazing?** Well, so were the people of our story – They were waiting for Jesus to do something, say something or prove something. They wanted to know who he was. Certainly I feel like we as the church are at times waiting for something amazing to happen. We have a God,

“who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,” (Ephesians 3:20-21 NIV2011)

1. **In the beginning of John chapter 7, Jesus’ brothers wanted him to go to the festival to show off these “works” that he has been doing around Galilee to make a public display, to give proof of his identity.** What better place than the temple in Jerusalem. The center of all religious life. And the religious leaders were waiting for Jesus too; they wanted Jesus to prove he was a blasphemer (Someone who claimed to be God) – the most punishable of all crimes. Some people believed that Jesus was “a good man,” others a prophet, some thought he was the Messiah and yet others thought he was a deceiver. The Pharisees said,

“Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.” (John 7:52)

Even their own guards were amazed,

**46**“No one ever spoke the way this man does,”

But they hadn’t seen anything yet…

And Nicodemus who had come to Jesus a few chapters earlier was still trying to figure out what to think. Everyone was wondering exactly who was this Jesus.

The battle lines had been drawn and everyone was waiting for something amazing to happen.

1. Before we go any further, let’s set the stage. The festival of tabernacles or booths as it was known has been going on for almost a week, It was the climax of the Jewish festal calendar. **The festival was a week-long celebration commemorating the forty years Israel wandered in the wilderness, most importantly, God’s provision for his people and His presence.** As we read in Exodus

**21**By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. **22**Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. (Exodus 13:21-22 NIV2011)

**Ultimately, it was a celebration of God dwelling in the midst of His people.** It pointed to their ultimate hope… and ours as well…dwelling in the presence of God.

1. During the festival the people would set up booths (tents) and sleep in them remembering the time that their forefathers did the same. **But, perhaps the most memorable feature of the celebration was a giant candelabrum that was set up in the court of women in the temple (in front of the treasury).** Throughout the night, young men from the priestly families would scurry up and down the ladders to refill the four enormous oil basins that fueled the four wicks made from discarded priestly garments that were rolled up and used as the wicks. The flames were huge and lit up the entire city of Jerusalem throughout the night till dawn. **The candelabrum was a symbol of God’s presence in the midst of the people, reminding them of God’s presence in the pillar of fire during the Exodus journey.**
2. **In high school I worked for a lumber yard, and we had a scrap pile lumber, pallets broken doors and what not**. One day, I loaded up the back of my Ford Ranger with as much wood as I possibly could, drove out to the lake and built a giant bonfire, added a little liquid boy scout to get it going… When my friends drove up Mitch said, “Well! You weren’t hard to find. We’ve been able to see the fire since we got out of town.” I was ten miles out of town down dirt roads.
3. **That’s the kind of light these torches kicked off. The kind that lights up a dark city…**  as the Rabbis wrote in the Talmud “There was not a court in all of Jerusalem that was not illuminated by the Candelabrum.” It gave people a sense of what it would be like to enjoy the “Continuous day” in the presence of God that Zechariah prophesied. (Zechariah 14:7 NIV2011)
4. It is in this setting, in front of the candelabrum that represented the presence of God that Jesus makes His radical claim,

**8:12**“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

1. And then Jesus spoke… I am. As you know those words is the personal name that God gives himself. A name so sacred that the Israelites would not dare to utter… and Jesus claims this name himself. I and only I…**am what you have been waiting for. I am what you have been longing for.** That fire has become flesh and has come to walk in your midst. You didn’t know it, but what you have been remembering, commemorating with the giant candelabrum. It is partial, imperfect, provisional and temporary… I am the light. In me, the hopes of the Festival of Booths are realized. As the author of Hebrews writes,

The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being…(Hebrews 1:3a NIV 2011)

1. And yet, people don’t always recognize Jesus. Just as much back then as today. He didn’t come in all His glory shining like the Sun **like Peter, James, and John saw him on the mount of transfiguration.** He doesn’t come overtly, but subversively to subvert the powers and ways of this world, to overcome the darkness. Just as we sing at Christmas,

Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see
Hail the incarnate Deity

The Pharisees missed it. They didn’t like their power challenged or questioned. They were certain that the prophet would not come out of a back-waters no name place like Galilee… But Isiah prophesied:

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

**2**The people walking in darkness
    have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
    a light has dawned. (Isaiah 9:1-2)

1. A new light has dawned, the light of the whole world has dawned in Galilee. He is the Christ the Messiah. If they were waiting for something amazing to happen, if they were waiting for Jesus to do something, say something, or prove something. **These seven words were it.** Not once but twice he points to His real identity as God and the long awaited redeemer. **In this simple statement, he refutes the Pharisees and gives us a better understanding of who he is.**
2. I know the story like you know the story… but have you ever wondered like me… Why doesn’t Jesus blow the doors off? Why doesn’t Jesus just show them? You know reveal who he really is, take off the veil and let them see.
3. He has to go to the darkest place to overcome the power of darkness.

There in the ground His body lay,

Light of the world by darkness slain;

Then bursting forth in glorious day,

Up from the grave He rose again!

And as He stands in victory,

1. **He is the light of the World.** (The light in John Chapter 1:4, 9-12 & 3:18) Note the universality. It reaches out far beyond the bounds of Israel to the entire world even to you and me… and yet how personal “Whoever follows me”. The light does the drawing to itself, not we; He makes us follow…
2. Light, helps us to clearly see the world around us. But Jesus says more than that “we shall walk in the light” to be sure this is true. **But this will happen because this light will actually penetrate us and become part of us**. “(He) will have the light of life.”(8:12b) This is a case where the metaphor used is really inadequate to express the spiritual reality. Natural light never becomes part of our inner being it only shines outwardly around us. Jesus the light of the world is doing far more.
3. **Because this light penetrates us, it becomes part of who we are, it also brings into effect its permanent affect which is life.** Life now and life in eternity. Light and life go together in nature. Where there is light there is life. So too in the world of the spirit.
4. This light in us Changes who we are. In Him, we become something new a new creation.

**14**“You are the light of the world … let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16 NIV 2011)

God is still doing amazing things. He now does them through simple and ordinary people. You and me who have the light of life in us. It is still the festival of booths. God is dwelling in the midst of this world in His body the church…And we wait an even more glorious day… in the light of the lamb in eternity, the new feast of booths when we will dwell in the presence of God forever. (Rev. 21)