

This is Jesus: Light of the World

John 8:12; 9:5 March 8, 2020 **Bob Szoke**

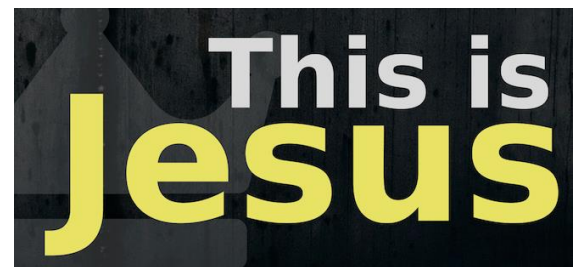
As I begin this message today, I want you to think about the many substitutes there are for the real things in our lives. We have so many substitutes that I think we see it as a way of life, for we are often willing to settle for “not the real thing.”

Illustration: In the late 80’s it was the introduction of generic products that began the challenge to the real thing. Here’s a list of a few that are “spin offs” of the original real thing foods.



- Thick Mints; Detos (instead of Doritos); Creme Betweenes (instead of Oreos); Kat Kot (instead of Kit Kat); Prongles (instead of Pringles); TCC TCC (instead of Tic Tacs); Jive (instead of Twix); Diet Dr Bob and Mountain Shoutin (instead of Dr Pepper and Mountain Dew); Mountain View (instead of Mountain Dew); Panburger Partner (instead of Hamburger Helper);
- These are just a few of foods that are available, thinking you won’t mind, or that it’s not a big deal if you don’t get the real thing.
- It was Coke that came out with the slogan, **“It’s the real thing”** back in the 70’s believing that people wanted the real thing and an escape from phoniness.
- And, the battle goes on. Go into any grocery store and you will still find this going on, substitutions which claim to be as good, but just not as expensive. **Aldi’s** has figured out how to do this, and has been able to build a whole industry around the idea that not everyone always wants the real thing or to pay for it.

We live in a world that is full of substitutes, other versions of things. Sometimes that is ok, but other times, it isn’t. Today I want to look at the **second of the I AM statements** which Jesus makes about himself, and let that statement direct us to who Jesus is. Jesus says, **“I am the Light of the World.”** Not “a” Light, not pointing to “the” light, nor a suggestion to The Light. In this text, Jesus will make an exclusive claim about who He is, and that exclusive claim must be a part of how and who we know Jesus to be. ***Thus, this is Jesus, the Light of the World.***



Background/context

John 7:14-17 Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. 15 The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" 16 Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. 17 If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.



The Feast of the Tabernacles.

- The Feast being referred to is the Feast of the Tabernacles. This feast lasted 7 days and was **a way of remembering and recreating the wilderness experience of when the Israelites left Egypt and wandered for 40 years in the wilderness**, on their way to Canaan. It was a remembering of the wilderness experience of trusting in God.

- Basically, all Jews were **"required"** to attend this feast, and it would be held in Jerusalem. It was God who first instituted this feast while the Israelites were still in the wilderness as a way of remembering all of what God had done for them during that 40 years.



- Basically, **for 7 days** the Israelites, observing this feast, camped out and lived in temporary shelters made of branches and leaves. It was as if reliving those days in the wilderness, and evoking a greater sense of worship, commitment and honor to God.

• On the opening night of the celebration, the Feast of Tabernacles, a giant menorah was erected in the Temple Court, that is, the Court of the Women. (The Court of the Women was accessible to women and men, but basically this is as far as women could go). Hence, its name.

- As to how many menorahs were present during the Feast of Tabernacles is unsure. There may have been 1, 2, 4? Scholars don't seem to all agree. **Rabbinic history tells us that each menorah was about 75 feet tall, with huge bowls at the top. Each bowl held 10 gallons of oil. The wicks that made these candles were made from the older no longer usable garments of the priests.** With great pomp and ceremony, the bowls were lit. From what is known of this event, scholars would say that the light from these menorah candelabras would light up the city of Jerusalem. At the end of the Feast, the light was intentionally extinguished. **The reason the fire from the menorahs was extinguished was because the Messiah had not come.**



- It has been suggested, and there's no real way to know, that it was at the time these huge lights were extinguished or sometime during the ceremony that Jesus made the proclamation that He is the Light of the World.

Old Testament Scripture and Light in Prophetic terms: (Why Light is an important symbol).

- Light was a term used when referring to the Messiah.
- Daniel 2:22 He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. (with God).
- Isaiah 10:17 The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame; in a single day it will burn and consume his thorns and his briers. The Messiah is referred to as the "Light of Israel."
- Isaiah 42:6 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles ... The Messiah would be a Light to the Gentiles.
- Isaiah 60:2-3 See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. 3 Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
- As we re-read these texts, the statement which Jesus makes, "I am the Light of the World" carries with it great meaning, depth and fulfillment of Scripture.



John 7:28-31 Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, 29 but I know him because I am from him and he sent me." 30 At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come. 31 Still, many in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, "When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?"

- The exclusive claim which Jesus says of himself in verse 29 is perhaps one of the most profound of all statements. Jesus says, "I know Him because I am from Him and He sent me."
- The three things of these few verses: (to get the full power of this statement)

Jesus' Exclusive Statements

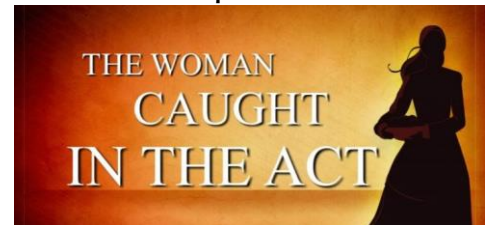
- **I know Him** (Jesus has always known, and always known perfectly the Father)
- **I am from Him** (as from the side of the Father)
- **He sent me** (same idea as when Jesus sent for the 12 in Matthew 10:5. Jesus is the one sent to people). Jesus was sent by the Father to people. Remember this when trying to understand why Jesus is the **Light of the World**. This is God's plan for us.

John 7:40-44 On hearing his words, some of the people said, "Surely this man is the Prophet." 41 Others said, "He is the Christ." Still others asked, "How can the Christ come from Galilee? 42 Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?" 43 Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. 44 Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

- Notice that the reasons for denying Jesus as the Messiah are not because of the miracles, his teachings, his example, his compassion, **but because he came from Galilee**. Again, another Bible study note that must be inserted is that those who oppose Jesus never bothered to ask about where he was from, but like fools assumed they know all they need to know. They are wrong, again.
- The people are divided. The division is a powerful one, for those who oppose Jesus will eventually overpower those who accept Jesus as the Messiah.

John 8:2-4 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.

- It is **the last day of the Feast of the Tabernacles**, and rather than accept Jesus as the Messiah, rather than acknowledge his mighty acts of power and grace, the Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees want to disprove Jesus in any way they can so they take the position of condemnation of the woman caught in adultery.
 - In a legal term, they assume that the **preponderance of the evidence** that this woman was caught in the act of adultery automatically assumes her guilt and judgment.
- I've always thought it odd that the man involved is nowhere to be found, and there isn't any accusations levelled against him. Perhaps the lack of her lover for the day tells us more about what's in the heart of the Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees than anything else. The text says **John 8:5-8** *In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."* 8 **Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.**
 - Perhaps, as the text says, because Jesus did not quickly respond, the accusers believe they have finally sprung the trap that will begin the demise of Jesus.



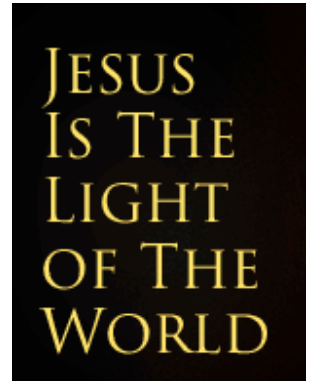
For Jesus to say all is ok, and to turn away would be to ignore the Old Testament Law. The Law states (**Deuteronomy 22:23,24 and Leviticus 20:10**) that both involved should be stoned. If Jesus says, **“stone her,”** then the wrath of the Roman Empire would be summoned. The Jewish leaders will elsewhere say (when it’s time to have Jesus crucified) that they do not have the power to put anyone to death. That was Rome’s responsibility.

- **They saw Jesus bow down and begin writing something on the ground. Perhaps the Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees saw Jesus as embarrassed.** (It’s true, those who believe they have the upper hand fail to see beyond what they believe to be the case).
- **John 8:9-11 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."**
 - **I wonder what it was that Jesus wrote on the ground with his finger.** I wonder what it was that was so powerful that it ended what looked like a perfect setup to trap Jesus.
 - **What Jesus wrote is obviously not as important as the fact that he wrote something,** and whatever it was it was enough to convince the Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees that what he wrote was enough to invoke grace, mercy and spare judgment.
 - **The fact that the older men left first is indication that something different is going on here.** We could ask about the lack of eye witnesses, the hypocrisy of the hearts of the accusers, and the lack of one to even throw the first stone.
 - **It has often been suggested that the eldest accusers were the first to leave (v. 9) because they recognized their own sinfulness more readily.** However, leaving in this order may simply reflect the custom of deferring to the elders. In any case, their withdrawal was in fact a confession of sin. Those who came to condemn ended up condemning themselves by not casting a stone.
<https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/John/Jesus-Forgives-Woman-Taken>
 - The woman is left alone with Jesus, who tells her to go and leave her life of sin. He doesn’t condone the sin but gives grace and mercy.



John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

- Thus the background for the second **"I AM"** statement, that Jesus is the Light of the World.
- It's Jesus who can lead people to the truth of their own sin and God's forgiveness.



We could reasonably spend more time looking at the background and history of the Feast of the Tabernacles, but I want to switch gears and talk more about Jesus. **This is Jesus, the Light of the World.** There are some things that will never be the same in our lives because of who Jesus is. **I'd like to ask a question at this point.** Most of us are Christians and this statement is so profound that we can only now begin to think it through. The majesty of Jesus, His wisdom with which he interacted with the leaders to show their answers to be foolishness or bitterness, and his great love for people are all things we think through.

But, there is one question that I need to ask right now. That question, **"Because Jesus is the Light of the World, what is it we NOW see?"**

- **Illustration:** I like light. I was thrilled to pieces when LED lights came out, and as I've seen the prices drop even more, I am even happier. At home, we had at one time, a single light in our garage. To find something at night in our garage was not the easiest thing I've ever done. Then about 7 years ago, I had a friend come and install more lights in the garage, so that now if you walk into my garage at night, it's like walking into daylight! That light enables me to see things I ordinarily wouldn't be able to see. I'm sure it's the same with you. If you are looking for something in your closet, and there's no light in it, if you are like me, you'll either forget about finding it, complain because you can't immediately find it, or go get a flashlight so you have enough light. Having light is important, for it enables us to see what otherwise we might not see.
- The light is about making things visible which we either couldn't or wouldn't see before. The light is about exposing that which was in the dark, or that which was hidden. The light is about making things clear to see, and to pursue.

What I'd like to do is to spend these remaining minutes of this message helping to answer this question because this is who Jesus is: **Jesus is the Light of the World.** **Because He is the Light of the world to us, what is it that we NOW see? What are some obvious things we now see, and how does that help us?**

Some answers:

1. **What it is that we now see? In the crisis and dark times of our lives, or the lives of our friends, we see that Jesus is there.**

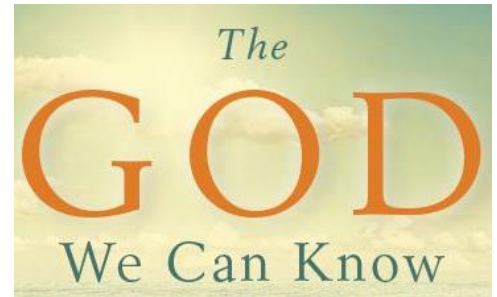
- a. In the story of the woman taken in adultery, **John 8:1-11**, there is perhaps no more crisis in her life than what she was experiencing at that moment. **The crisis is real.** Her life is in jeopardy.
 - i. It's no doubt one of the most embarrassing moments of her life to stand before a group of men who are accusing her, while apparently letting her lover go free. Unfair!!
 - ii. The pain of that moment is something that I hope no one has to endure, but with a bit of imagination, it's easy to perceive what all she was going through.
- b. The whole dialogue appears to be one sided, appears as if this crisis moment will be her last, and beyond the embarrassment is a level of fear she'd perhaps never known.
 - i. It's a horrible situation. While some would say, "She gets what she deserves," and the yelling and screaming in her ears, all of which was derogatory, seem to have overpowered this whole situation.
- c. **Yet, in the midst of all this is Jesus, calm, peaceful, and full of compassion.** Jesus is there, not moving away from the situation, not congratulating anyone on what they've just done, neither is he standing there as the judge to condemn her.
- d. The point is, Jesus is there, and as we read the text, Jesus counsels her as he says, **(John 8:11) "go now and leave your life of sin."** He sees in her what they didn't see in her, a person whom God loves.
- e. Let's talk about the crises that we and our friends go through. **Let me ask the question if the Lord is absent?** The obvious answer is, **"No, He is present, we know that."**
 - i. **What does that change about the crisis?** Because Jesus is the Light of the World, what is it that we now see when either we or someone else is in a crisis?
 - ii. We see that God still cares, and the sinfulness with which we have lived, as horrible as it is, may or may not bring us to know that the consequences of sin. **But, we are not abandoned in our sin.** In those moments, when all seems to be falling apart, when chaos seems to be the only thing that works, the Lord is there.
- f. **What difference does that make, because we now see this?**



- i. It makes the difference of whether or not we have peace and what we will do next. **Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.** The reason we can endure the crisis and move forward is not because we are so emotionally strong, but because the peace which comes from Christ changes that. We see that because we are living in the Light of the World.
- ii. Perhaps no better example of someone in whom peace now exists is this woman. She found in Jesus what no one else could give her, she found in God something that no one had ever told her about. Forgiveness. No one had told her that!
- iii. **It makes a difference as far as guilt and forgiveness is concerned.** The woman caught in adultery was probably not at all thinking about anything other than how sorry she was...whether it was sorry she got caught by religious people, or sorry that this whole way of life had so now ended like this. **In the crisis time of ours or the sin of others,** I am reminded of **1 John 2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.** Knowing this forgiveness is available doesn't give us a license to sin, but it is held out as a way to keep from holding ourselves in guilt, punishing ourselves with depression and rejection. Forgiveness in the crisis is not easy, for there may be consequences which are unalterable, but forgiveness is promised. Consequences may yet happen, but we proceed through the crisis with a forgiven heart. **Restoration is one of the things we now see because Jesus is the Light of the World. We see that Jesus is Savior, not judge. (John 12:47 "As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it).**
- g. The point is, the crisis is an event, not the end. Christ is with us, not holding himself out as judge, but as Savior, the one who loves us with an eternal love.
- h. **We see that we are not in the crisis, alone! Jesus is with us.**

**WHAT
DIFFERENCE
DOES IT
MAKE?**

2. ***What is it we now see? We see that God is not as complicated or unknowable as we thought. We thought we had to jump through a lot of hoops to know God, or to be fancy, super intelligent, super holy or be someone who would impress God.*** (I'm not sure where that idea came from, but we can become so discouraged by sin and ideas of people that we think God won't have anything to do with us, he's unreachable, except to whack us!)



- a. **Illustration:** I think there is a level of confusion with which most people look at faith, Christianity and spirituality. They see all the different churches and ask questions such as, “Which is the right church?” Or they think on the other hand, “Don’t all religions lead to the same place?” And wrongly these same people assume that it’s all too complicated, so just do the best you can and it will all work out. **WRONG!**
- b. I think that’s how some people look at God, that they just can’t make up their mind on what to do, how to do it, and if to do it. There appears to be so much confusion out there in the world about who God is, how to get to him, what church is right, which churches won’t abuse your pocketbook, etc. There is a lot of confusion in the world about God. I ask, **“Why is there so much confusion?”**
- i. **Isn’t God’s word available?** Sure it is. **Is it that hard to understand?** No. (I always refer to Mark Twain’s comment anyway, “It’s not the parts of the Bible I don’t understand that bother me, it’s the parts that I do.”)
- ii. **What’s so hard?** Jesus is the **Light of the World**. Because He is the Light of the World, what is it now we see?
1. **When we see Jesus, we see and know about God. John 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.** Jesus came to make God known. We see God! What we need to know about God, Jesus has made known to us. **A lot of questions are answered, if we will listen and hear the answers.**
2. **When we see Jesus, we know what God is like, what’s important to Him, what He thinks and wants for us as His creation, etc. John 14:8-9 Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” 9 Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?** The answer to the question, “What is God like?” has an answer. God is like Jesus. That

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

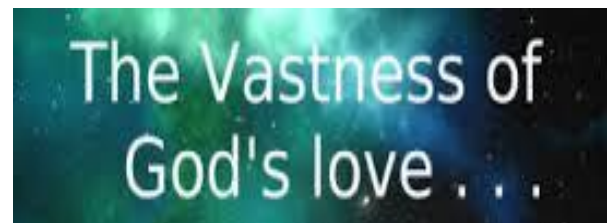
may not be what we want to hear, because we think it's all too complicated. But, Jesus came to make God known, so that we will know.

3. *John 12:44-45* Then Jesus cried out, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. 45 When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me.

c. *What difference does it make? When we see Jesus, we see God. Lots of answers about who and what is God like. That's a huge difference!*

3. *What is it we now see? We see that God's Love for us is much greater than we'd ever considered.*

a. We read *John 3:16*, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life...and even memorize it, but do we grasp the intensity of this verse?



b. Consider for a moment the book of Jonah in the Old Testament. *This book is about Jonah, but not really.* Let me explain.

i. As we recall the story of Jonah, God calls him to go to the great city of Nineveh and preach because its wickedness has come before Him. I will be the first to say I'm not sure I understand all that, but what I do understand is that God is concerned that wickedness will consume those people, but if Jonah goes there and preaches, they will repent.

ii. Jonah decides he doesn't want to have any part of that and so he heads in the other direction. The story goes that he is eventually found out that he doesn't care about what God cares about, and a giant fish is provided. He is swallowed up and finally regurgitated on the beach where he then finally goes into Nineveh and preaches.



iii. *As we look at the story of Jonah, do we see first the story of a stubborn man who doesn't care about people, or do we see a God who is passionate and full of love for His creation? Do you see Jonah running or God in pursuit of people?* If you say both, then let me ask you to pick just one. Because as we pick just one, and hopefully it is the passionate pursuit of God for His

creation that then gives us understanding of **John 3:16** where it says **“for God so loved the world.”**

1. I was listening to a podcast from Lincoln Christian University this week, and Dr. Nolan Thomas made the comment that *it’s about God’s reach of grace to a most unwilling people by a most unwilling servant.*
- iv. Because Jesus is the Light of the World, do we see this? Do we see and come to a greater understanding of God’s great love for people? All people?
- v. **Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”**
 1. This was Jesus’ purpose and mission. He was sent from the Father because of the Father’s great love for people, a love we can’t fully comprehend.
- vi. **1 John 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! ...**
 1. Let me just use a word picture here to illustrate the idea of the love of the Father being **“lavished on us.”** I’ll use the term **“costly love,”** as the way to illustrate this.
 - a. Costly love is when we see how much someone loves us and what that love costs. Bumps, bruises, sacrifices, hurt, rejection. Jesus loves us and it’s costly.
 - b. Costly love is also understood in terms of how little we deserve that love. How we’ve treated those who loved us is something we’d rather not talk about. We offend, criticize, and in all respects become very undeserving. That is what costly love looks like.
 - c. Costly love is understood by the greatness of the benefits of being loved. We are helped when we don’t deserve it, we are loved when we’re ugly, we are given freedom when all we deserve is prison, we are rescued when we made our own mess and really deserve to stay there. Costly love has benefits for those loved.
 - d. Costly love is free for us, free for the taking. NO ONE coerced Jesus into loving us, and it’s costly, but we understand it as grace.
<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-depth-of-christs-love-its-cost>
 2. **Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** God didn’t wait till we were



ready, didn't wait till we were not busy, didn't wait till we got our act together, but while we were at our worst, He sent Christ to die for us.

- c. **What we see now because Jesus is the Light of the World is God's love, deeper and clearer each day.** We can only wonder why we never saw it before.
- d. **What difference does this make? This enables us to see others, to value others regardless of the life they are living. This motivates us to love others. This compels us to bring this Light of the World into the lives of others, regardless of sinfulness.**



- 4. **What is it now we see because Jesus is the Light of the World?** I'm sure there are many, many, many more things that we now see that we didn't see before. Perhaps this is where we need to end this message. I ask you to think and to continue answering the question, **“What is it you now see because Jesus is the Light of the World, and has exposed things like: As the Light of the World...and the difference it makes in our lives...**
 - a. *If Jesus exposes our sin, he also exposes God's restoration and forgiveness.*
 - b. *If Jesus lights the way to the Father, He also shows us the Father in all His glory, power, redemption and restoration of our lives.*
 - c. *If Jesus points out the darkness in our lives, He also shows the advantages of living in the light and seeking truthful living.*
 - d. *If Jesus exposes the darkness of sin and its horrible devastation of life, He also shows the Light and how to live in it and why we should.*
 - e. *If Jesus exposes the lies of this world, He also Lights the way to see and know the Truth.*
 - f. *If Jesus exposes the powers of darkness, He also shows the stronger Power of the His Light and how it will never be quenched.*
 - g. *If Jesus exposes that sin will be judged, He also illuminates what that He is the Savior and the One who can rescue us from judgment.*

Conclusion:

This is Jesus.

To the artist He is the One Altogether Lovely.

To the architect He is the Chief Cornerstone.

To the astronomer He is the Sun of Righteousness.

To the baker He is the Living Bread.

To the banker He is the Hidden Treasure.

To the biologist He is the Life.
To the carpenter He is the Sure Foundation.
To the doctor He is the Great Physician.
To the educator He is the Great Teacher.
To the farmer He is the Sower and Lord of the Harvest.
To the florist He is the Lily of the Valley.
To the geologist He is the Rock of Ages.
To the horticulturist He is the True Vine.
To the judge He is the Righteous One.
To the juror He is the True Witness.
To the jeweller He is the Pearl of Great Price.
To the editor He is the Good Tidings of Great Joy.
To the oculist He is the Light of the Eyes.
To the philosopher He is Wisdom.
To the Printer He is the True Type.
To the servant He is the Good Master.
To the student He is the Incarnate Truth.
To the toiler He is the Giver of Rest.
To the Sinner He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.
To the Christian, He is the Son of the Living God, the Savior, the Redeemer and Lord!
<https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon-illustrations/65407/on-quotes-by-michael-brown?ref=TextIllustrationSerps>

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator; If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist; If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist; If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer; **But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.** <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/c/christ.htm>

Jesus is the Light of the World. Because He is the Light of the World, what it is you now see about yourself and those around you? What do you need to do because Jesus is Lord, and He is the Light of the World? Who are those you know that need the Light of Christ?

