

## COMMUNION SERIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN CRUCIAL STATEMENTS FOR CLUELESS SPECTATORS

John 8:12-30

With the Presidential elections just one week away, we keep hearing many statements from the aspirants day after day through their TV ads. Their words range from the sensible to the ridiculous. Who is believable?

In our passage, Jesus would make a claim that many people in His day choked upon. Was it because they did not understand, or they refused to understand? Like today, it is often both. Even when God speaks clearly, when the message is hard to swallow, we have developed the skill of hearing without listening.

Our passage is about Christ presenting Himself again as God and Messiah. And whether you are sure about your personal relationship with Christ or not, the validity of Jesus' claims mandates that His followers validate their faith. Notice how Jesus takes people all the way from a clear claim to Deity, to a clear presentation of the Good News:

### 1. AN OUTRAGEOUS CLAIM (8:12-20)

- By asserting that He was the Light of the world, Jesus claimed to be God. This was disputed by the religious leaders on a legal technicality. (vv. 12-13)
- Jesus rebutted their argument by exposing their ignorance. (vv. 14-20)
  - *You have no idea where I come from or where I am going.*
  - *You judge by human standards.*
  - *My other witness is the Father (but) . . . You do not know Me or My Father.*
- "Ignorance of the law excuses no one." Ignorance about Christ in this case was totally inexcusable because He was never remiss in telling the truth about Himself (cf. 8:26). Are you aware of Jesus' claims about Himself? What have you done with them?

### 2. AN OMINOUS CAUTION (8:21-27)

- *"I am going away . . . if you do not believe that I am the One I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."* This may sound harsh but knowing the heart of Christ for sinners tells us, this was meant to lead people into repentance and faith.

- Was Jesus ever unclear about how He presented Himself? In response to the insult “who do you think you are?” He said “just what I have been claiming all along,” Remember that John didn’t record everything Jesus did and said (John 21:25). But John 5:17-24 is a very clear instance of Jesus’ claim to be both God and Messiah.
- Often, like in this case, the problem with really hearing God is not the message or the messenger, but the recipient. Are we like these stubborn people, who blame everyone except ourselves, when we “hear” but do not “listen”?

### 3. AN OFFERED CHRIST (8:28-30)

- It’s hard to get past these words: “When **you** have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the One I claim to be”. The same crowd before Him would be responsible for His death. But Isaiah 53:5-6 reveals this: that “you” is us.
- Did the people genuinely believe? Verse 30 says “many put their faith in Him.” It’s easier understood, if we paraphrase that to: “*He became popular with many.*” This popularity was not what Jesus sought. Popularity is the wrong kind of “faith” and is not the same as true discipleship. The rejection of Jesus that follows in 8:31-59 by this same group indicates that this was not saving faith.
- Do you count yourself a full-pledged follower of the crucified and risen Christ? It comes with an expensive cost: dying to self, and whole-hearted surrender to Christ’s Lordship. We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone. It comes with a call to discipleship and its corresponding cost. You can only be certain of your salvation by its effect on your life.

#### **Final Thoughts:**

The validity of Jesus’ claims mandates that His followers validate their faith. As we prepare for Communion today, make sure that your heart is completely God’s. If you have any doubt at all, let the elements pass you by and talk to one of our pastors and elders after the Service. It’s a joy for us to share the Good News.

If you are certain of being a disciple of Christ, let the Lord’s Table today inspire you to continue following Him faithfully, whatever it may cost you. May you find your delight in the Light of the world.