Squishy Jesus
I Am The Light of The World
Brian Wood

Key Scripture:

John 8:12 (NLT)
12 Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

John 3:18–21 (NLT)
18 "There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. 19 And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. 20 All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. 21 But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."

John 12:44–46 (NLT)
44 Jesus shouted to the crowds, "If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me. 45 For when you see me, you are seeing the one who sent me. 46 I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark.

Psalm 32:8–9 (NLT)
8 The LORD says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.
I will advise you and watch over you.
9 Do not be like a senseless horse or mule
that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control."

John 1:1–5 (NLT)

TALK IT OVER

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What's your go-to move when the power goes out at your house? Do you sit in the dark and wait it out, or do you go searching for light?

Start sharing. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- **Read John 8:12**. What does this statement reveal about who Jesus is? Why would this claim have shocked His audience at the time?
- **Read John 3:18-21**. According to these verses, how do people respond differently to the light? Why do you think exposure can be both scary and healing?
- When has the light of Jesus exposed something in your life? How did it feel? What changed?
- **Read John 12:44–46** & **Psalm 32:8–9**. What kind of direction does Jesus offer through His light? How is it different from worldly wisdom? Where do you currently need His direction in your life?
- **Read John 1:1–5**. What does it mean that Jesus gives "light that brings life"? How have you experienced the life-giving power of Jesus?
- Brian challenged us to consider whether we're following the Jesus of the Bible or a "squishy" version we've created. In what ways are you tempted to shape Jesus into someone more comfortable or convenient?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Ask Jesus to light up, expose, guide or bring to life one area of your life. Write it down and share it with someone who can help hold you accountable this week.

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Jesus, You are the true Light of the world. Thank You for loving me enough to shine Your light into every part of my life. Help me not to hide from Your truth, but to welcome it—even when it's uncomfortable. Expose what needs to be healed, guide me when I feel lost, and fill me with Your life and hope. I want to know the real You—not a version I've made up. Teach me to walk in Your light today and every day. Amen.

Question: "What did Jesus mean when He said, 'I am the Light of the World' (John 8:12)?"

Answer: I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12) is the second of seven "I AM" declarations of Jesus, recorded only in John's gospel, that point to His unique divine identity and purpose. In declaring Himself to be the Light of the world, Jesus was claiming that He is the exclusive source of spiritual light. No other source of spiritual truth is available to mankind.

There are two types of light in the world. We can perceive one, or both, or neither! When we are born into this world, we perceive physical light, and by it we learn of our Creator's handiwork in the things we see. However, although that light is good, there is another Light, a Light so important that the Son of God had to come in order to both declare and impart it to men. John 8:12 records, "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 have the light of life.'" The metaphor used by the Lord in this verse speaks of the light of His Truth, the light of His Word, the light of eternal Life. Those who perceive the true Light will never walk in spiritual darkness.

We take a candle into a room to dispel the darkness. Likewise, the Light of Jesus Christ has to be taken into the darkness of sin that engulfs the hearts and lives of those who are not following Him. That's the condition behind having this Light—that we follow Him. If we do not follow Him, we will not have this light, this truth, this eternal life.

Physical light is necessary for physical life. The earth would certainly change very rapidly if there were no longer any sunlight. A forest full of trees with very thick canopies of foliage high above has very little plant life on the ground except for moss or lichen, which needs little sunlight. Plants will never move away from the light—they are said to be positively phototropic, drawn to the light. In the same way, spiritual light is necessary for spiritual life, and this can be a good test of our standing in Christ. The believer will always tend toward spiritual things; he will always tend toward fellowship, prayer, the Word of God, and so on. The unbeliever always does the opposite (John 1:5; 3:19–20) because light exposes his evil, and he hates the light. Indeed, no man can come into the true spiritual light of Jesus Christ, unless he is enabled (John 6:37).

Following Jesus is the condition of two promises in John 8:12. First, His followers will *never* walk in darkness, which is a reference to the assurance of salvation we enjoy. As true followers of the Light, we will never follow the ways of sin, never live in a state of continually sinning (1 John 1:5–7). Rather, we repent of our sin in order to stay close to the Light. The second promise is that we will reflect the Light of Life. Just as He came as the Light of the world, He commands us to be "lights," too. In Matthew 5:14–16 we see believers depicted as the light of the world. Just as the moon has no light of its own, reflecting the light of the sun, so are believers to reflect the Light of Christ so that all can see it in us. The Light is evident to others by the good deeds we do in faith and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The emphasis here is maintaining a credible and obvious witness in the world, a witness that shows us to be faithful, God-honoring, trustworthy, sincere, earnest, and honest in all that we do. Also, we should always be ready to give an account of the hope that we have (1 Peter 3:15), for the gospel Light we have is not to be covered, but made obvious for all to see and benefit from, that they, too, may leave the darkness and come into the Light.

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