

Questions for reflection, application, and discussion

1. Throughout John 8 Jesus makes several claims that are absolute in nature, including that he is the light of the world (not just a light), and that only by abiding in his word can we know the truth, and can we discover true freedom. These claims were offensive to his listeners back then, leading to the debate recorded in John 8.
 - a. Our postmodern culture teaches that spiritual and moral truth is relative, and rejects any claim to absolute truth as arrogant and offensive. How should we understand Jesus' claims in John 8 in the context of our contemporary postmodern culture?
 - b. How should we talk about and/or teach about Jesus and his claims in our culture who rejects such statements of absolute truth?
2. It is common today for people to argue that Jesus and his ministry were defined by his love and acceptance of everyone, and therefore anyone who claims to be a follower of Jesus should be loving and accepting of everyone and their beliefs. In John 8:43-55 Jesus tells the people arguing with him, *"you are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your fathers desires."* He calls them liars and tells them that while they claim to know God, they do not know God.
 - a. How are we to understand Jesus' words here? Are they inconsistent with his love, compassion, and grace?
 - b. How do we understand Jesus' words and spirit here, in contrast to his grace show to the woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8:1-11)? How should we understand it in contrast to his words in John 3:17, where he said that he did not come to condemn the world? What should we learn from Jesus' example and teaching?
3. In the second half of John 8 the people opposing against Jesus gave several arguments contesting Jesus claims to be the light and the source of truth, and against their need for Jesus. In his message Pastor Mike said that people still use these same arguments today for while they don't need to embrace Jesus and his teaching.
 - a. Their main arguments were that they didn't need Jesus because of their birthright as Jews (for us, it may be as Americans or born into a Christian family), because of their religion, and because of their righteousness and moral justification. In your experience which of these have you heard people use most often?
 - b. How would you respond to each of these arguments?
4. In his message Pastor Mike talked about the promise of following Jesus that Jesus teaches about in John 8. What is the promise of following him? Do you believe Jesus' promises? What impact do these promises make on you?
5. Throughout John 8 the religious leaders arguing with Jesus were careful in their accusations, knowing that Jesus was surrounded by supporters. However, when Jesus said in John 8:58, *"before Abraham was, I am,"* they exploded in rage, and picked up stones with the intent of stoning him to death.
 - a. Why did this statement in John 8:58 result in such an extreme response? What was Jesus saying and/or claiming in this statement?
 - b. If what Jesus was saying and/or claiming in John 8:58 is true, what does that mean for you? Practically, why is this such an important statement?