

John 12:35-43

Jesus replied, “My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. ³⁶Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light.”

After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them.

³⁷ But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him. ³⁸ This is exactly what Isaiah the prophet had predicted:

“Lord, who has believed our message? To whom has the Lord revealed his powerful arm?”

³⁹ But the people couldn’t believe, for as Isaiah also said,

⁴⁰ “The Lord has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts—so that their eyes cannot see, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and have me heal them.”

⁴¹ Isaiah was referring to Jesus when he said this, because he saw the future and spoke of the Messiah’s glory. ⁴² Many people did believe in him, however, including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn’t admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. ⁴³ For they loved human praise more than the praise of God.

Background

Jesus is speaking to the crowds in the Temple during Passover. Many had seen His miracles, yet didn’t believe because He wasn’t the political Messiah they wanted. Some Jewish leaders believed but didn’t admit due to the Pharisees’ influence. However, true believers like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea eventually openly followed Jesus after His crucifixion.

John cites Isaiah 6, showing that Isaiah’s vision of God’s glory foreshadowed Jesus, affirming His deity.

Teaching Points

1. Acceptance of the light brings more light.

Jesus urged people to “walk in the light,” meaning to follow Him and embrace the moral truth He brings—goodness, righteousness, and truth. In John’s Gospel, light represents Jesus and spiritual truth, while darkness symbolizes sin and ignorance. Believing in the light makes us “children of the light,” growing more like Christ.

God gives everyone some light through conscience and creation (Romans 1:20). When people respond to that light, God reveals more. But rejecting it leads to deeper darkness.

The Magi are a great example. They followed the light they had. A star led them to Jerusalem where they received **more light** through Scripture: the prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Step by step, they responded to the light God gave and were ultimately led to the Savior. Similarly, believers must continue “walking in the light” to grow in goodness and truth (Ephesians 5:8-10).

2. Rejection of the light brings further darkness.

Jesus warned, “*Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you,*” meaning if people ignore or delay responding to God’s truth, they lose their way spiritually.

In verses 38-39, John quotes Isaiah 53:1 and Isaiah 6:9-10 to show that many rejected God’s message. Continued rejection hardens hearts, making belief increasingly difficult. This hardening isn’t God’s desire but a consequence of persistent refusal. Just as Pharaoh’s heart was hardened by his choices in Exodus, delaying faith only leads to deeper spiritual darkness. Don’t reject the Light or postpone trusting Jesus.

Application

1. There is a time for us to hide.

Verse 36 says Jesus withdrew and was hidden from the crowd. He was avoiding danger, and he also wanted to spend time with His disciples before the cross. Similarly, there are times when we need to “hide” or withdraw from distractions so we can have peaceful, meaningful moments.

2. There is a time for us not to hide.

Verse 42 says that many people, including leaders, believed in Jesus but didn’t confess Him openly for fear of being expelled from the synagogue. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were true believers, but in secret. Are we hiding our faith for similar reasons? It’s important to ask if we’re willing to openly live out our testimony, as there are times when we shouldn’t hide.