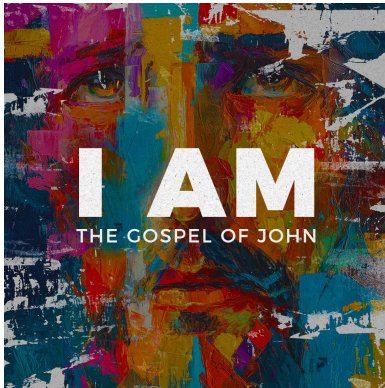


Title: Seeing is Living
Series: I Am
Speaker: Josh Parrish
Date: August 23, 2026



Key Texts: John 8:12-30, Exodus 3:13-14, Exodus 13:21-22, Numbers 21:8-9

Introduction

In this passage, Jesus stands before the crowds and declares, “I am the light of the world” during the Festival of the Tabernacles - a festival commemorating the wilderness years when God led the people of Israel, who were living in temporary shelters, by a pillar of fire. Jesus is not offering a poetic metaphor; he reveals that the pillar of fire was pointing to him all along. He goes even further, echoing the exact words God spoke to Moses at the burning bush: “I Am.” Yet, the religious leaders, who know the scriptures better than anyone, still do not recognize God when he is standing right in front of them. They have all the information about God, but they miss him entirely; they do not know

him. This week we will explore that tension together as we consider Jesus’ invitation to move from information to relationship – from believing to truly seeing him and living in light of who he is.

Icebreaker: Who is someone in your life you truly feel known by - not just someone who knows facts *about* you, but who really knows you? What do you think makes that relationship feel special, or unique?

Discussion Questions

1. Read **John 8:12-30** aloud. Jesus makes quite a few “I am” statements in this passage (he says “I Am” 6 times). What stands out to you from this interaction between Jesus and the Pharisees? Why do you think the Pharisees are frustrated or confused by these statements?
2. Read **Exodus 3:13-14** and **Exodus 13:21-22**. How do these verses add weight to the claims Jesus makes in this passage? How do Jesus’ words connect with Israel’s story in the wilderness, and how does this help us learn more about Him?
3. Josh made a distinction between having information about God and *truly* knowing him. He said “we can be religious without ever being in relationship with God.” How might this resonate with you? What do you think might make it hard (i.e. religious background, past hurt, assumptions about God) to truly see and know Jesus today?

4. Read **John 8:25-30** and **Numbers 21:8-9**. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we are hopelessly enslaved to sin. Sometimes we, like the Israelites, can be resistant to the idea that we need help, and that we deeply need Jesus. To believe in Jesus means we exalt him and lean on him, rather than leaning on our own strength. Is there an area of your life right now where you might be striving to fix or manage something on your own, instead of looking to Jesus and his finished work on the cross? What are some practical ways that you can turn from self-reliance and look to Him?

5. Josh closed out the sermon with the phrase “Believing is Seeing; Seeing is Living.” Where might there be a gap right now between what you say you believe about Jesus and how you’re actually living? Is there something in your life right now (i.e., busyness, self-reliance, selfishness, a numbing habit) that you might honestly bring before the Lord in prayer with our group this week?

Key Takeaways

- Jesus’ declaration, “I am the light of the world,” directly ties him to the pillar of fire that led Israel through the wilderness. Jesus’ use of “I am” echoes God’s own name revealed to Moses - explicitly depicting an intimate unity with the Father.
- Knowing about God is not the same as knowing God personally. It is possible to have deep religious knowledge, and even a lifetime of devotion to scripture, without truly *knowing* God.
- Believing is seeing, and seeing is living - real faith isn’t just an intellectual agreement; it is meant to reshape how we actually live.
- Like the people of Israel in the wilderness, we are invited to trust and follow God one step at a time, even before we fully see the outcome. And like the Israelites looking to the bronze snake in the wilderness for healing and life, we are invited to look to Jesus, lifted up for us on the cross.

Practice: Attentiveness

This week, set aside a few quiet minutes each day to sit with Jesus the way you would with another person you really want to know. Ask, “Lord, will you make yourself known to me today?” Invite Him to reveal what He may want you to notice about him, and even about your posture toward him. Resist the urge to fill the silence with your own words, or to move on too quickly. If your mind wanders, let Jesus’ words anchor you: “I am the light of the world.” Close with this prayer: “Jesus, light of the world, I look to you. Help me to know you, not just know about you - and to believe, see, and live in light of who you are.”

Throughout the week, when you notice yourself striving or trying to fix something on your own, practice pausing and turning your attention to Jesus – just as the Israelites looked to the bronze snake for healing and hope. Ask Jesus to make himself known to you – not just information about him, but an experiential knowledge of his presence, his character, and his voice.