

Shedding Light on The Light

(John 1:6-13)

(preached 4/29/18; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

Introduction

Take your Bible and turn with me to John 1 and follow along with me as I read the first 13 verses of John's gospel...

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 [a]He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not [b]comprehend it. 6 There [c]came a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 [d]He came [e]as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8 [f]He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. 9 There was the true Light [g]which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His [h]own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were [i]born, not of

[j]blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Let us pray.

July of 2018 will mark 4 years of ministry here at Pine Grove, and I have so many pleasant memories of my time here...

So many sweet times with the flock here..

So many sweet times with my family here..

But my time here is also marked by one very unpleasant experience...

And that is the morning that I woke up at the parsonage and realized that my arms had shrunk over night...

When I went to bed that night, my arms were long enough to allow me to see my phone screen with near perfection..

But one morning I woke up and my shorter arms prevented me from being able to hold my phone far enough away to read it.

Many of you have had the same experience I am sure, but it was really disturbing to me..

I soon discovered that it wasn't my arm length, it was my failing eyesight...

I, like nearly every person ever born, was experiencing the effects of presbyopia, which is the medical term to describe farsightedness as a result of aging...

Like most people, I went and bought some reading glasses and for the most part, they allow me to regain the sight I had lost..

However, my curiosity got the best of me and I simply wanted to know the cause of this failing vision..

Simply put, the lens of our eye becomes less flexible and the result is that less light is able to enter the eye and what does get in is often focused beyond the retina which makes the image blurry to the brain...

You see, less light into the eye at short distances causes trouble for the brain...

In fact, I remember when I began to notice my failing eyesight, I really thought that some light bulbs had gone bad in the bedroom light..

That is how much a little less light getting through the lens to the retina causes blur vision along with other factors..

Light is so important to having proper vision...

I remember when my dad would come in my room while I was reading and turn on the light for me, telling me that he didn't understand how I could see anything..

I am now that dad..

Anyway, light is essential to properly working eyes and so many other things in the world...

And last week in the opening verses of his gospel, John compares Jesus to light...

Christ is even going to Himself the light of the world...

So what does that mean?

Well last week, we learned that Jesus Christ as the light of the world is a source of life in the world...

Jesus gives physical life to all people, but for those who respond to the light of his message of salvation, Jesus also gives spiritual life...

Christ as the light is also an unstoppable force in the world...

John wrote in verse 5 that the darkness of evil cannot overcome the Light of Christ...

Now all of this is symbolic language that John uses to help us understand exactly who Jesus is...

Think of it this way...

How can John describe the indescribable Christ?

How can John begin to explain the unexplainable Jesus?

And so what he does is use figurative language..

He calls the Word, the Logos, which created the world and sustains the world...

He calls Jesus the Life, which bring physical life to the universe...

And John also calls Jesus the Light, which brings understanding to the world....

In a sense, Jesus as the Word created the universe....

Jesus as the life brought life to the universe..

And now Jesus as the light brings understanding to the universe...

This is the indescribable Jesus...

And all throughout his gospel, John is going to describe Jesus in figurative ways...

Now, we understand the use of symbolic language...

If we see a mom in Walmart with 5 or 6 kids with her, we would tell others..

“Yea, I saw this lady with an army of kids around her.”

We understand that it isn't an actual army, but it helps people understand that this lady had a lot of kids with her..

If we say that we cried a river of tears, we don't mean to be taken literal...

We simply want people to understand that we cried a lot..

If we tell someone that we need help finding a needle in a haystack, we don't mean that we are searching in a barn full of hay...

We just want them to understand that we need a lot of help finding something that is hard to spot...

John felt the same need as he wants us to understand the fullness of Christ...

So, he uses metaphors...

Jesus is the Word..

Jesus is the life..

Jesus is the light..

That doesn't mean that Jesus walked around with a bright light glowing behind him...

In fact, the Bible says that Jesus was quite unremarkable in his appearance...

The only time, he became a true light was at the transfiguration where he showed his glory to Peter, James and John...

Other than that, Jesus was a literal light, but Jesus acted a light in the world...

So far, he is the light of life that brings spiritual life to spiritually dead people.

He is also the light that overcomes the works of evil...

But John is not quite done because the light of Christ is going to bring understanding to us in 5 more areas of our life in verses 6-13...

So, let's begin to look at verses 6-8 as the light of Christ reveals the mission of man...

I. The Light Reveals the Mission of Man (6-8)

Let's look back at the beginning of verse 6...

6 There [c]ame a man sent from God, whose name was John.

This is not the John who wrote this book, but this is John the Baptist..

We looked at him briefly a few nights ago in regards to baptism, but in case you were here, John is a NT character but he is actually an OT prophet...

His ministry was predicted in OT as a forerunner to Christ..

His mission in life was simple...

Declare to the world that the Messiah had arrived ,and John did just in and around Israel...

And many Jews responded to his message and came out to the Jordan River to be baptized by John in preparation for the arrival of their Messiah...

Now, verses 7-8 make it clear that John the Baptist was not the Messiah but simply one who testified about His coming..

Verse 7..

7 [d]He came [e]as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8 [f]He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.

In case you ever wondered about what is the meaning of life?

Simply put, man's purpose is to know God and to make Him known to the world...

That is it....

Everything in your life should support that mission...

The mission of man is to point the world to salvation in Jesus Christ as the only Savior from sin..

That was John's mission in 30 AD, and it is everyone's mission still today..

You exist to testify of the existence, goodness, and salvation of the Lord that has come in the name of Jesus Christ...

John the Baptist was not the light, but he was designed to point others to the light of Christ..

I want you to notice something at the end of verse 7...

John write that John the Baptist testified about the light so that all might believe through him..

The him at the end is not Christ...

John purpose was to testify about the light so that all might believe through John's testimony...

And that is how God works in the world.

He saves people through the testimony of others...

Someone was once said that we are to live like we are the only one in the world who holds the truth about salvation in Christ...

In other words, live and preach like the good news of salvation is only available through your words and actions...

Live and preach thinking that no one else will ever tell a soul about Christ...

And if we live like that, we will be incredible witnesses for Christ..

Look, the light of Christ reveals man's only mission in the world...

You don't exist to work...

You don't exist to get married..

You don't exist to come to church...

You exist to know God in a saving way and to make that salvation known to others...

Now obviously, works helps us with that task...

Marriage can help us with that task...

Church attendance can help us with that task...

But if you lose your way and wonder what to do in life, the answer is clear..

Know God in a saving way and then testify of His salvation..

The Light of Christ coming into the world also reveals a second truth in verse 9...

II. The Light Reveals the Gospel of God (9)

One important aspect of properly interpreting the Bible is to understand the idea of progressive revelation...

In other words, the entire Bible wasn't written in one day..

The OT was written in the time period between 1500 BC and 400 BC..

The NT was written from 45 AD to 95 AD...

God simply decided in his wisdom to reveal His truth over time...

For instance, Adam and Eve didn't know the entire story of how Jesus would be born in 5 BC and die on a cross in 33 AD...

They only knew that God would one day bring someone to crush the head of the serpent that had led them into sin...

Even David as great as he was didn't know all the details of how Jesus would come into the world...

He knew more than Adam and Eve...

He knew this Savior from sin would come from his line...

But even David as great as he was lacked all the information...

The same would be true for all the prophets...

Even John the Baptist who came right before Jesus didn't know everything...

He knew Jesus was the Lamb of God who would take away sin, but he didn't know all the details...

And he would die before seeing it all play out...

This is simply how God purposed it to be....

Those before the cross simply believed in what God had promised to do and they were saved by a future belief in a coming Savior...

So what is saying in verse 9 is extremely important to understand in terms of what the Light of Christ brought into the world...

Which was simply this...

The Light of Christ brought full understanding of God's plan to save guilty sinners..

Verse 9 simply says...

9 There was the true Light [g]which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

In other words, the arrival of Christ, the life of Christ, the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the ascension of Christ is the entire plan of God to save the guilt sinner...

There is no more guess work into how God is going to rescue sinners...

Jesus is the full picture...

On our TV, we have both standard definition and high definition channels...

If you ever watch a standard definition channel for any length of time and then turn to a high definition channel, it seems so clear...

This is the reality of the coming of Christ...

The blurriness of how God is going to crush the head of the serpent and save the sinner is now crystal clear to the world..

The world is now enlightened...

The mystery is now revealed..

Jesus came, lived perfectly, died unjustly, rose miraculously and ascended triumphantly...

And the sinner who turns from their sin and trusts in Christ will be forgiven of all sin and given eternal life..

The light of Christ coming into the world has given us the full picture of salvation...

We have a clear view of the gospel of God...

And guess what that means?

We have an incredible obligation to believe...

Though people in the OT who never believed in God will be accountable for their unbelief...

I cannot imagine the accountability of someone who knows the whole story and still rejects it...

May God have mercy on those people, which brings us..

To a third truth illumined by the light of Christ found in verses 10-11....

III. The Light Reveals the Sadness of Sinners (10-11)

Let's read verses 10-11..

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His [h]own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

I love the show Undercover Boss...

Though I am sure that much of it is staged, it is still an interesting show as owners of businesses go undercover in their own businesses to see how employees do their job and interact with fellow employees and customers..

In one episode, the owner of Family Dollar stores was working in a Family Dollar warehouse and ended up getting fired by the company for operating a forklift in an unsafe manner...

Think of Christ...

The owner of the universe comes into the universe He created and is rejected by the people that He created...

Even though there were no grounds for rejecting him....

To make matters worse, he was rejected by the people who knew He was coming...

The Jewish people had the OT...

The knew the promise of a coming Messiah..

They knew that God was sending a Savior for sin...

Yet, when he came to his own people, they rejected Him the most...

In fact, Jesus' own hometown rejected him...

He grew up for 30 years in Nazareth, and when he began his ministry, he came to Nazareth to preach and they tried to push him off a cliff...

Talk about being rejected by your own people...

Christ was rejected by his own hometown and even by his brothers and sisters at first..

This is the sadness of the sinner...

Truth comes to them and they know only hold their hands over their ears, they are ready to toss the truth off a cliff...

The Creator of the universe...

The Creator of all people..

Was rejected by those He created...

The light of Christ that came into the world revealed the hardness of the sinners heart to truth....

The people of the world drowning in their sin were tossed the lifesaver of the Christ, but they tossed him aside...

That is the sadness of man's depravity...

He is so blinded by his own sin that he rejects the only light that can end his blindness...

A fourth truth revealed by the light of Christ is found in verse 12..

We can call this...

IV. The Light Reveals the Benefits of Belief (12)

Let's read verse 12 again....

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

Though the majority of the world rejected the Light of Christ, all did not...

Many received his message and believed it..

And the benefit of belief is that they were the right to be called the children of God...

There are many phrases that we hear in the church that aren't quite biblical even though they sound biblical...

One of those incorrect phrases heard in and around the church is that everyone is a child of God...

Yet, nowhere in the Bible is that taught...

It is true that we are all made in the image of God..

It is true that we were all made by God...

But it is not true that we are all God's children...

In fact, no one is born a child of God...

That only comes through belief in the gospel of Christ, and we see that truth right here in verse 12...

Only those who properly received the Light of Christ by believing in Him are given the right to be called a child of God..

As precious as your little and grandchildren are, they are not children of God until they repent and believe the gospel...

In fact, the Bible says that we are “born again” at salvation...

In fact, Jesus is going to talk about this very thing with Nicodemus in John 3...

Furthermore, the Bible also says that believers are adopted at salvation in the family of God...

And the Bible is also clear that only God’s true children will spend eternity with Him in heaven...

No one is born a child of God...

The only way to be a child of God is to be “reborn” through belief in the name of Christ...

That is a clear benefit of belief in Christ, and that benefit was only brought to light by the appearance of the Light of Christ coming into the world...

A final revelation that comes through the Light of Christ is found in verse 13...

We can call this...

V. The Light Reveals the Grace of God (13)

In verse 13, we arrive at the greatest truth of the Light but we have the least amount of time to think about it...

Let's read about it...

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were [i]born, not of [j]blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Light of Christ coming into the world reminds us of a truth about God that is often easy to forget, and it is this...

God is by nature a saving God...

Christ came into the world to save sinners, and we all love that salvation...

But what does that salvation message tell us about God?

That He desires to save people bound in their sin...

God is not a God with fire in his hand ready to cast down on the guilty sinner...

Rather God is a God with a hand out to rescue the guilty sinner..

Do you remember the father of the prodigal son?

The son left home, blew his inheritance, hit rock bottom and decided to head home and ask for mercy...

And what did he find when he got back into town?

Was it a father who was ready to discipline him and fill his ears with a bunch of “I told you so”?

Was it a father who was sitting on the porch with his arms crossed ready to lay out a bunch of conditions in order for his son to come home?

No, what the prodigal son found was a father on the edge of town running to him with a hug and an offer of forgiveness..

There were no 10 steps to win back the father’s favor...

Instead there was a call to kill the fattened calf and have a party because the lost son was home and the father was eager to restore him to his place of honor in the family no questions asked...

That is a picture of the saving nature of God in the story of the father of the prodigal son...

The light of Christ came into the world not to condemn the world further but to offer forgiveness to those who would believe in Him...

Most people know John 3:16, but they forget John 3:17 which is a glorious reminder of why Christ came...

16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His [e]only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

In other words, the Light came and it clearly revealed man's sins but not to offer judgment of them but rescue from them...

This is the overwhelming grace of God in verse 13....

Believers are those who have been born again not because of being born into a certain bloodline of a family tree...

Or not because they worked really hard to believe...

Or because someone talked them into it..

But rather believers are born again because it is God's will to save and so he gives them the gift of faith...

The believers of verse 13 are evidence that God is by nature a saving God...

And the light of Christ coming into the world is evidence that God wants to save people....

The light of Christ is proof positive that God is filled with grace and is eager to extend that grace to the guilt sinner...

This is his nature ever since man plunged into sin in the garden...

And Christ's coming to the world is final proof that God is out to rescue the sinner...

Conclusion

So what does John want us to know about the light of Christ?

First, the light brings spiritual life...

Second, the light overcome the darkness of evil..

Third, the light shows us our mission in the world to testify of Christ.

Fourth, the light gives us the full picture of God's plan to forgive sin.

Fifth, the light reveals the hardness of man's heart that cause him to reject his only way to be saved..

Sixth, the light announces the benefit of believing in Christ..

And then last but not least, the light shines brightly to help us celebrate the saving nature of God...

God is by nature a Savior...

And the light of Christ coming into the world opens us that wonderful truth for all to see...

As I said when I introduced this passage, my eyes are not what they once were...

They are not functioning as well because the lens of my eye is growing older....

In fact, it has been there for more than 44 years at this point...

And age leads to the breakdown of a lot of things...

And when the lens in your eye breaks down, the world around you gets little dimmer...

But do you know why my the lens in my eye ages?

It ages because the body around it ages..

And do you know why my body ages?

IT ages because of sin...

Now my sins are forgiven in Christ, but sin still has a temporary effect and the effect of sin is ultimately physical death...

When I read the obituary column, the cause of death is always the same...

Sin.

The wages of sin are death...

Every trip you take to the doctor...

Every ache and pain that requires medication is a reminder that sin is killing you physically...

When people seem to focus on their failing health, they are really telling the world that sin has done a work on their body...

Now the sad reality is this...

For some of you, sin will not only kill your physically, it will also kill you spiritually...

And there is no medicine to prevent that death, except to repent and believe the gospel...

All of us in here are slowly dying this morning physically...

And unless the rapture takes us, we will all taste physical death...

However, the good news is that none of us have to die spiritually if we will simply repent of our sin and believe in Christ...

That is what John wrote this gospel...

He wants to convince you that Christ is the Son of God
and he also want to convince you that you can life by
believing in His name...

Come to the light of Christ today...

Let us pray.