

**John 1: 6-13; “Christ the True Light”, A 2nd Sermon for This Christmas Season,
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on December 10th, 2023
In the Morning Worship Service.**

The only source of spiritual light in this whole world is Jesus Christ our Lord. All the people in the world are by nature lost in the darkness of sin. Jesus is the Light of the World. Light, in the Scriptures, is a word picture for truth as it is found in God Himself, in all the 3 Persons of the Divine Trinity. Truth is then illumined by our God in the words of Scripture. Light is then found in us when we believe in Jesus Christ. He illumines our darkness. He shines in us to give us understanding of what we should do to glorify God in how we should live our life.

Light came into the world in Christ’s incarnation. That is what we are told here. In the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His coming into the world, there was revealed the greatest manifestation of spiritual light that the world had ever seen. This is what verse 9 is referring to. “That was the true Light which gives light to every man”; that is, by His coming into the world, He gave to all men the greatest and most complete revelation of God Himself that had ever been seen by men.

His coming into this world, and what He did for fallen, sinful, and helpless mankind, is still shining on now, day by day. And it shines forth, more particularly, when the gospel and the Word of God are proclaimed by the power of the Holy Spirit. So, this morning, we want to look at our response to Christ’s light, and His response to us. Let us see how wonderfully beautiful, glorious, and powerful, the light of Christ is.

1st of all – The witness of John to the Light, and Christ’s response to him. (verses 6-8)

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.” “This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.” “He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.” You can see very clearly, can’t you, the distinction that is being made here by John? Christ is called “that Light”. All the other men in the world who have come to know and understand this distinction, of Christ being the light and we deriving our light from His light, we are witnesses to the Him, the Light of the world. We have received spiritual light, and now we understand that our Lord is the source of all spiritual light.

We should proclaim this glorious truth to others around us. Let me ask you if you as Christian are doing this? Do you proclaim to others that the Lord Jesus is the Light of the World? Do you say that all men are in the darkness of sin in their nature? Do you say that they are sitting in darkness, until He, Christ, the Light of the World shines upon them and in them? John was the first preacher to publicly bear witness to Jesus. He was the first to publicly point Him out to others around him as being the promised Messiah. But even John himself did not come to know this truth, for sure, that Jesus was the Christ, until it was revealed to him.

We are told that it was revealed to him as he went about preaching to the multitudes of people who came to listen to him. He preached about repenting and having faith in Christ. John preached repentance and faith in relation to the One who he knew was coming after him. He was called by God to be the forerunner of the Christ who was prophesied of in the Old Testament Scriptures. John had received spiritual light from the greater Light of Christ. Even the greatest of godly men, in the Old Testament times, received their light from Christ. John the Baptist was not “that Light”. But he did have much to say about the true Light. And in that regard, He became by the grace of God – A burning and a shining light for Christ.

Jesus even says this of him in John 5, verses 31-36, if you will turn over there to see it. Jesus is speaking to some of the Jews who were seeking to kill him for healing a man on the Sabbath, and for saying that God was His Father. He says – “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.” “There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true.” “You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.” “Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.” “He was a burning and shining lamp,(or

light it says in the KJV) and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.” “But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish – the very works that I do – bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent me.”

What a commendation of greatness Christ gives to John here, that he is a burning and shining light. He preaches the truth concerning Me, Jesus says. And he does so with great burning earnestness and passion for truth and righteousness. But even though John had great light given to him by Christ, yet he still had his doubts at one point in time, over whether Jesus really was the promised Messiah. If you will turn with me over to Matthew Chapter 11, verses 1 and 2 you will see this. “Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.” “And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’”

This is truly amazing, is it not? That one who had been given so much light, should still have doubts about Jesus? This should show us that there may still be areas of darkness and doubt, even in the greatest of believer’s hearts. These are thoughts that need to be driven away by the light. We should pray that Christ would give us light day by day. Because even in John’s heart and mind, there was this darkness of doubt, at this one point. His doubts about whether Jesus was the Christ, they came because things weren’t working out well for him personally in his experience. He thought that if he were beloved of the Lord, then why would he be imprisoned for his preaching?

Jesus answered this in verse 4, and said to those who were sent to Him from John – “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ‘The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.’” “And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.” “As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see?’” “A reed shaken by the wind?” “But what did you go out to see?” “A man clothed in soft garments?” “Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in king’s houses.” “But what did you go out to see?” “A prophet?” “Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.” “For this is he of whom it is written: ‘Behold I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before you.’” “Assuredly I say to you, among those born of women there has risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

I find it very interesting, that on the very occasion on which John manifested his greatest unbelief in Him, that Christ gave him his greatest commendation. Why? Because the Lord is greater than our hearts, and He knows all things. He knew how great a prophet and a holy man of God that John was. And yet he was not “that Light”. Jesus knew that John needed more light shined into his heart so that his doubts and fears would all be taken away. He needed a word from Christ Himself. Look at the miracles that I have done, Jesus says to him. And the poor who have the gospel preached to them. And do not be offended because of Me.

We should learn from John’s experience that each of us needs to live up to the light that we have been given. You are witnesses of that Light. Have faith in Christ the Light, for you may at certain times still sense some darkness lurking in your soul. Have the faith of David in Psalm 18: 28, when he said – “For You will light my lamp; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.” And In 2nd Samuel 22: 29 he goes even farther and says, “For You are my lamp, O Lord; the Lord shall enlighten my darkness.” So I want you to see, dear believer, that your whole faith and witness is continually upheld by the Lord being your light, and the Lord giving you light.

2nd – The World’s incomprehension of the Light, and Christ’s response to it.

(vs. 10 & 11)

“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.” “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.” The physical world was made through Him, but this is not speaking of the physical word in its broadest sense. John is speaking here of the fallen world of mankind sinners. He is talking about people who were all made through Him, but

they do not know Him by nature. This is how the vast majority of the people in the world today are. They are without God and without Christ.

Turn with me over to Ephesians Chapter 2, verses 11 & 12. “Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

You can see here how strong the native depravity of all men is, apart from Christ. They cannot begin to conceive that their greatest need is Christ. The only way that any Gentile or Jew actually comes to have hope, is when they are brought near to God by Christ’s blood. His dying there on the cross is the basis of His shining His light into your heart. When Christ actually shines His light into your heart, then you see your need of truth and grace. What are you to do as a Christian, then, once you have been saved? What are you to do, when you see that the situation in the world today is as bad as it is, spiritually speaking?

Well, first of all, let us understand why Christ came into the world. Turn with me to 1st Timothy 1: 15 & 16. “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” “However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.” Christ’s purpose in coming into the world was to save sinners. Paul knew God’s mercy to him, when years before, He received a revelation of Christ as the Light of the world while he was traveling to Damascus with letters from the chief priests giving him permission to persecute certain Christians.

The light of Christ shone around him, and he fell to the ground, and he heard a voice speaking to him saying “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” “Is it hard for you to kick against the goads? In that moment the light not only shone around him, but in Him, for he immediately said, “Lord, what do you want me to do?” The Lord Jesus had great things for Paul to do. Paul tell us this in 1st Timothy 1, verse 16 – “However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.”

I hope that you can see that our God and our Christ are perfectly sovereign in saving a person. All who will believe are known to Christ, and He will save them in the Father’s time. He will patiently teach them by shining His light into their hearts. But I think that we should also understand that our God will continue to be patient in His instruction to us. He will teach us the good and right way of righteousness, all through our Christian life until we reach heaven. It is not enough for you to simply be a religious person. St. Paul was very religious before he was converted.

But to know God and to walk with God, and to be fruitful in Christ’s service, you must learn to receive the Light of Christ day by day. You must receive the light which is given to you. “For the path of the righteous is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter until the perfect day,” it says in Proverbs 4: 18. Even though you know this, you must still seek, by prayer and faith, to live out all the truth of the Bible that you learn. You do this by walking in the Light. That is how you will become wise and holy.

3rd – Your receiving Christ, and Christ’s response to you. (vs. 12 & 13)

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right; that is, He gave them the authority, the honor, to become the children of God. The word “right” is Exousian (εχουσιαν) in the Greek. God gave them the right to become his children, even to those who believe in His name. John states that they were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. In other words there were Jews and even some Gentiles in those days of Jesus’ earthly ministry, who received Him as the True Light of the world. They received His teaching, and they followed Him. They beheld His glory, not only of the miracles which He did, but also the righteous character of His life.

Receiving and believing in Christ; resting in His finished work of righteousness and sacrifice, these are the primary acts of your heart and mind, when you want to be saved from your sins. But here in verse 12 we are explicitly told that the Triune God was at work in you before you ever believed, in order to bring you to faith in Jesus Christ, through the New Birth. You who believe were not born again after you first believed. Your faith did not bring you regeneration. It was regeneration, God's giving you life and light and power, this is what created saving faith in you. It was God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, shining light into your heart, which caused you to understand your need of Him.

It was God who made it clear to you through the gospel that He could save you, and that He had saved you, by His revealing Christ to you. Then when you believed He spoke to you through the testimony of the Scriptures, and the witness of the Spirit, so that you would understand and know, that He had adopted you into His family. You cried out – Abba, Father. You saw Him as Your Papa-God. You knew that you were God's child, and His son or daughter. But in this verse 12, John also goes on, to just as clearly say, that those who were born, were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. So, we all should understand that believing and receiving of Christ does inherently involve an act of your will, to obtain what you are seeking; that is, salvation.

But here in verse 13 we find that it was not an act of the will on your part that obtained for you the New Birth. But rather it was the act and the gift of God in regeneration which brought to you the power to believe, and the power to receive Christ in the acts of salvation. Notice how it reads – “Who were born,(that is, they were already born before they ever chose with their will to believe in Christ and the gospel). They were not born again because of their own blood-line. They were not saved and adopted as sons of God because they were special people or of noble of birth, or had been circumcised.

Nor were they begotten spiritually of the will of the flesh. That is you were not saved by the exercise of your corrupt will. That will of your Old Man never will choose Christ apart from your mind and heart being illumined. A person cannot choose Christ by the power of that old fallen will. It must be renewed by the Holy Spirit in true knowledge and wisdom and understanding. The will's resistance to the truth, and the hardness of your heart must be taken away. Your heart must be circumcised.

But when Christ, by His Spirit shines His light, you have your eyes opened to the truth of your sinfulness and Christ's being the only Savior of sinners. You see your need of Christ. The whole direction of your heart is turned to behold His glory. The gospel is always right there close to the Spirit's working in conversion. When Christ is presented in the gospel, to you the sinner, and this Divine work is performed upon your mind, you see Christ as the Light of the world, and you want to receive Him. You feel that You must believe in Him. Nothing will ever be so right and good and true and pleasant than this; to find the reality of Christ's power to save you from all of your sins.

Oh, dear Christian, this is why you can never lose your salvation if you have been born again and have believed in Christ. Your receiving Christ does not rest upon your free will. Your will, before you were born again was a perfect slave to selfishness and sin; perhaps even to sinful, proud self-righteousness. It was only free to choose in natural and physical things, but not in spiritual things. You would have always chosen, in conjunction with your darkened mind, to live resisting Christ's being the true Light. But when God shone the light effectually, everything became clear, and to you it became so very desirable to receive Christ. This was irresistible grace which was given to you.

You volunteered freely to come to Him for salvation in the day of His power; on the day in which you first received Him. And so, in conclusion, God's faithfulness to His own promise, and Christ's light are now continually shining on your path. He promises that He will guide you with His eye upon you. His word will be a lamp to your path and a light to your feet. You will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. And He will bring all you the way to heaven and to eternal life. In His light you will see light. The true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world, has now come to You with saving power. He will not let you forget it, for He is faithful.

