

Father, no ability I possess will make this passage take deep root in our hearts. Please God, I pray, that you would apply this to us. Help me Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

My desire for this message this morning is that this passage, through this sermon, would obviously apply to you. That it would seem relevant to you, and that it might shape your week and your life.

My reason for this is that John is not writing this gospel, eye-witness account, to make us only feel good, or only so that we might have right ideas about God, but as we read last week **“that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that by believing you might have life in His name” (John 20:31)**. That is John's goal, and so it is mine, that this might have a real effect on you.

So, would you open your Bibles and look at our passage in John chapter 1 verses 6-13. We're going to see 4 main things and how they can and will change our lives. First we are going to see that 'true light has come to us'. Second, 'How will we respond' we'll see 'who makes children of God', and fourth we will ask 'what Christmas will look like this year'.

'The true light has come to us'. Last week Akhil led us through the first verses of John, and it seemed as though John wrote about things almost too high and lofty for us to get a grasp on. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God". But in verse 6, John seems to lower his eyes, as it were, he seems to put his feet on the ground, because he begins with "there was a man sent from God whose name was John". And we can handle that, I mean it is big that this man was specifically sent from God, and we should be reminded that Isaiah said that this man would come as a **“voice cries in the wilderness,**

**prepare the way of the Lord” (Isaiah 40:3),** but his name was John. He has no last name. His name means ‘Jehovah has been gracious’ which is amazing when you consider the reason that he was sent from God.

Verse 7 tells us why he was sent: **“as a witness to testify concerning that light”**. In John’s name alone we find a beautiful gospel nugget. John was sent to testify that ‘Jehovah has been gracious’. He also tells us that John was sent so that **“through him all might believe”**.

What? I didn’t believe because of John who was sent! What does that verse mean?

Akhil made a great point when I asked him about this. We may not have believed because of John who was sent, but the people of Judea 2000 years ago did. Before Jesus entered the political and religious landscape on earth, John was making huge waves. Everyone knew John, and everyone thought he was a godly man.

And then verse 8 emphasises that he was not the light, but only a witness to the light.

Now initially I flew past this part of the passage, trying to race to the end but I noticed what John the apostle (not the same as John in the passage) was really doing.

The author has just gone from trying to describe what God is like before the world was made to saying this man John was born and lived on this earth and literally witnessed with his eyes that the true light has come to us.

You see, John has just gone historical mode. He has thrown down the gauntlet to all sceptics, and effectively built a solid base with which to build faith on. The author has laid out for all of us the biggest challenge there is, and at the same time one of the greatest encouragements for faith in Jesus. This *really* happened. The light that gave life to all mankind

has really come to us. That God, the word, the light, the life, has really come into the world.

So be bold in your belief that the True Light has come to us, and as you go through your week pray that God would provide you an opportunity to share with someone the most important history lesson they have ever heard: Of God coming to earth

Now, if this is true, and I hold that it is, no person on this earth can ignore this part of history. What do I mean by that? All of us, you and me, are forced to respond to what happened there in Judea. If the creator of human kind came to the earth like John the witness and John the author have both said he did, then no human can ignore it.

How has the world responded? How have you responded?

Have a look at verses 9,10 and 11: **“The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.”**

I don't know what to compare this to. The true light comes into the world to give light to everyone and they don't believe in him. He made the world, he is the people's Creator and they don't even recognise him. He comes to his world, his people, the KING, but they don't receive him. The Rightful King, the Creator of life and all that is good, the True Light that gives light to everyone, comes to his world and the world rejects him! More! They crucified him and went to the greatest lengths of their energy to humiliate and destroy him.

To this very day people are still rejecting him for who he is! I mourned Halloween to see so many little children more easily accepting devils and

monsters and representatives of every kind of darkness, rather than the True Light.

And my heart breaks that I have many dear friends from School and from University and the building site that will accept anything and everything but will argue until they are blue in the face that they don't need to recognise their Creator, their Rightful King. My heart breaks for my friends and those people, that they don't know him.

This passage is not hopeless but hope-full, and overflowing. Not just for us who have believed, but also for those who have not.

Consider those in your life who don't know Jesus, who have not received him and believed in his name, pray for them and when you see them, show your heart to them. When you talk to them put all your cards on the table and say I want you to know Jesus. I love you, He loves you. I want to encourage all of you to be disarmingly honest and loving, because I have been encouraged to do that.

Look at verse 12-13 and ask "who makes a child of God"

**"yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, He gave the right to become Children of God- Children not born of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husbands will, but born of God".**

Wow, what a promise.

Brothers and sisters we will spend all eternity learning what it truly means to be born of God and it is not our mission today to give a comprehensive answer to what someone born of God is like.

I want to focus on who makes a child of God. Look at the passage: can you see the person who makes the decisive act in making a child of God.

It is 'HE'! He gives the 'RIGHT' to become a child of God What does it mean 'right'?

I think this will explain it: The raspberry patch at Mum and Dads house is very precious, very sweet and sooo good. It is also not ours, we have no claim on it and gain nothing from its fruit. However when Mum say to Phoe and I that she is giving us the 'RIGHT' to approach the berry patch and pick from it, we run to the patch and must restrain ourselves from diving in.

When the True Light gives us the right to be Children of God, we are being given the right to the very source of all life and light in existence. The right to approach the Creator, The right to approach the King.

Would you look again at the passage with me, It is the 'He' that does the ultimate giving of the right to be Children of God. Who is He? Jesus! That means that based on the grace of Jesus all people could be children of God. Everyone.... Could be.

This grace is offered to everyone but God has put conditions on it taking effect. "Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in his name" There are two conditions here which the bible, not Joel Henderson, asserts must be met.

He must be received, not received as stupid. Not as boring, not as mythical, but as he is as the True light.

And His name must be believed in, not believed in as the head of an ideology or a moral code, but his name must be believed to be the name of God.

This is at one and the same time wonderfully easy and dreadfully difficult for a world of arrogance and pride.

It is by the right that Jesus gives us that we can be born of God. Natural descent and our decisions will not contribute to our being born of God, and neither will the will of a husband, wife or parents cause it to happen. By the right that Jesus alone gives can we become children of God, and God places on us great responsibility on us to receive Him and Believe in His name.

Check yourself: do you believe in the name of Jesus, have you received him as the True light of God, come to us?

Christmas will look like nothing if the church does not take hold of the right to be children of God, that we have been given, so I challenge you to celebrate Christmas loudly, passionately, with abounding and overflowing joy.

The final thing I want to ask is 'what Christmas will look like this year'.

Take a couple of minutes if you would and consider what the next two weeks looks like for you. Think on what you have heard, and ask God what He wants Christmas to look like this year.

Amen.