

The Word Rejected & Received

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[0:00] You may be seated. Children, you are excused to your King's Kids class. And if you would please open up your Bibles to John chapter 1. It's on page 1053 of your Pew Bible.

Last week, this past week, I picked up my daughter Mary at her school out west on 50. It's dark, traveling back eastbound on 50, getting to the bridges before Menards.

You know where I'm at? And I look up into my rearview mirror and behold, flashing red and blue lights. This was not my first experience with that.

And of course, the first thing I did was look at my speedometer. And then lo and behold, the lights have come up onto my left. What? What's going on? It was an SUV. And the whole thing was wrapped in Christmas lights.

And it was like, you know, there's this rhythm going on with them as they're cruising along. Has anybody wondered where Christmas lights come from? What's the origin story of Christmas lights?

[1:17] And so, I, this week, did some vast research on the World Wide Web. And my theory was confirmed.

Christmas lights that shine in the darkness in Christmastime, they speak a word of the true light which came and is shining in the darkness, Jesus Christ.

The Word become flesh. God incarnate. He is shining in the darkness. Now, if you ask most people in the city of Kenosha, why do we have Christmas lights?

I'm guessing you'd get one of three answers. Tradition. The other one would be something like, man, I remember putting Christmas tree lights up with my dad or my mom, so there's a sentimentality about it.

Or more, it's kind of like, you know what? It just helps us get into the Christmas mood. Well, the origin of Christmas lights has largely been forgotten, disconnected by our culture from its origin story.

[2:40] The true Christmas light is the light of Jesus Christ. And he is shining into the darkness.

The true light is shining life into the darkness of the world. And so, this morning what I'm going to do is, I want you to follow with me in verses chapter 1 of John, 9 through 13, and I'm going to make three points.

The light radiating, the light rejected, and the light received. The light is radiating life this morning. So, the light radiating. Verse 9, we read, the true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. Now, if you haven't been with us for the last couple weeks, you might be thinking, light?

What is this light all about? Well, let's trace it back from verse 9. In verses 6 and 8, there's this guy named John, JTB, John the Baptist.

[3:53] And in verse 8, he's not the light, but he came to bear witness to the light. So, John the Baptist is not the light, but he's bearing witness to the light. Who's the light?

Verse 5, there's this light that is shining in the darkness. Verse 4, this light that is shining in the darkness to men is the light of life.

You see, this light is the radiance of life. Eternal life. And in verse 4, at the very beginning, you see, in him was life.

And the life was the light of men. Who's the he? We go into verse 3. The he is the creator of all things. In him, all things were made.

Without him, nothing that was made was made. So, this light is this life, who is a he, not John the Baptist, and the creator of all, in verses 1 and 2, in the beginning was the Word.

[5:00] And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. The light is the life, the creator of all, who is the Word. The greatest expression of God ever has walked the earth.

He's distinct from God, but he is fully God. The Word. And we learn in verse 14, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Verse 17, we are told the name of this person, Jesus Christ.

So, all the way back to verse 9, the true light is Jesus Christ. And he came into the world. He took on flesh.

The eternal second person of the Trinity became a man. That's who the light is. And he's radiating life into the darkness.

I want you to actually see one word in verse 9. Let's drill down a little bit more. It's the word true.

[6:06] The true light. Now, I'm guessing you hear the word true, and the opposite of the word true is false. false. But in the Gospel of John, in fact, in John's writings in the New Testament, John will use that word true in a little bit different sense.

In fact, we see it in John chapter 6 and John chapter 15 of the Gospel of John. It actually means ultimate. Full, ultimate reality of something.

So, in John chapter 6, I'm not sure if you remember, this, Jesus has just fed the 5,000. He comes across the lake. There's a bunch of Jews who are asking, hey, show us a sign. Just like Moses showed us the sign of manna, show us a sign, Jesus.

And in chapter 6, let me just read you how Jesus responds. Verses 32 and 33, Jesus then said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread bread from heaven.

For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. You get Jesus' bread bread and you're satisfied.

[7:35] And so what Jesus is saying there is that, hey, God gave the manna to Israel back in the day and he fed them every day, blah, blah, blah. I am the ultimate bread manna.

You partake of me, you'll never be hungry again. There's another use of true. It's in chapter 15, verse 1. Jesus says, I'm the true vine. And in Isaiah chapter 5 and chapter 27 in Isaiah, God is describing his people Israel as a vine that doesn't bear any fruit.

And so what Jesus is saying in chapter 15 is he's saying, I am the true vine. I am God's Israel and you abide in me and you will bear much fruit.

For apart from me you can do nothing. Both are talking about life-giving things. Bread, the vine.

And Jesus is saying, I am the ultimate, the true bread, the true vine. And so when we read here in verse 9, the true life, not only is he saying something in contrast to John the Baptist, he wasn't the light, the true light Jesus is the ultimate light.

[8:56] And what we learn from verses 1 through 5 is he's the light of life shining in the darkness. He is the radiance of eternal life shining into the darkness of sin and death that we all live in day in and day out.

The true light is Jesus' ability to impart eternal life to those who are dead.

Those who receive the true light, they are miraculously recreated. He is the recreator.

So the light shining eternal life into the sin darkness of the world is none other than Jesus. He's radiating his light of life today.

Hey, let me ask you a question. Just between you and me. Where are you looking for life? Where are you looking for that soul-satisfying life?

[10:08] Maybe you think it's the approval of other people. You're like, oh, I just want that person to acknowledge me and say, good job.

And you think that there's some kind of life in that. There's no life in that. Not ultimate life. Not Jesus' life. Or maybe you've got your heart set on the next thing that you're going to purchase.

And you're thinking, oh man, if I only get that, then, man, I'm going to be set. It's going to be, satisfy me. I'll be happy. You know what it is for me right now? I'll just be very candid. I'll just be totally honest with you.

I'm a mountain bike guy and I happen to fall into the wrong way of thinking once in a while. I think somehow carbon fiber handlebars are going to bring life to me.

I shared with you honestly, I thought pants a couple weeks ago were going to do that. And now I'm thinking it's carbon fiber handlebars. And you know what? That'd be great. But you know what? There's no life in them.

[11:13] What's your carbon fiber handlebars? What's your next purchase that you want that you think is going to give you life? There's no life there. Not Jesus' life. Not ultimate life. Not soul-satisfying life.

Or maybe this. Maybe you'd like to control things. Because you think if you can remove all risks, if everything's just right, there's life.

There's no life there. Your controlling things will not bring about life. The light of life, Jesus, that's where your soul satisfaction is.

He's the true light of life. And when He shines on you, you're given life.

The light radiating. Let's look at the light rejected. In verses 10 and 11, we are reading something that we already know.

[12:21] we already know that Jesus is not welcomed by all. We know that. Verses 10 and 11 make that clear. In verses 9 and 10, there's a repeated word.

It's the word world. And it's a very important word to define right. Whenever you're reading your Bible and you read a repeated word in a short amount of biblical real estate, it's usually emphasized.

something. So what does the world mean? Let me just read it to you. The true light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world and the world was made through Him. Yet the world did not know Him. What in the world is world? So maybe you're thinking, you know, in your brain right now, you have this iconic photograph, Earth rise, 1968, the Apollo 8 crew from the lunar surface took a picture of the Earth swirling white clouds, bright ocean waters, the tans and browns of land masses, not even the world.

That's not how John's using the world. When John talks about the world in most of his writings, whether that's John or that first, second, or third John or the book of Revelation, what John is talking about is something not nearly as positive, not nearly even as neutral.

[13:53] When John talks about the world, he's talking about sinful humanity in organized rebellion against God. In 1 John chapter 2, this will sound familiar to many of you, do not love the world or the things in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life. I don't know of any mountains that have the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life.

Those are human qualities. That's darkness. Sin darkness. It's not from the Father, but it's from the world. The world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

The world walks in darkness. The world is ruled by its desire for sin.

In verses 9 and 10, we read something with that definition in mind. John changes before your eyes.

[15:04] In verse 10, you see something of incredible irony. He was in the world, the true light, the creator.

And the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him. Anybody see Undercover Boss? You have a CEO of Fortune 500 company who comes and dresses up as kind of one of the grunts of the company for a week and he works with the grunts for a week or she works with the grunts for the week and at the end of the week, there's this kind of reckoning.

People get fired. People get bonuses and things like that. But what we're seeing in verse 10 is not Undercover Boss. It's incarnate God with irony. The very ones that the Word created, He comes to them and they don't recognize Him.

Remember, we just worked our way through the Gospel of Mark and in Mark 15, the Gentile, Pontius Pilate, he looks at Jesus first time and he says, are you the King of the Jews?

Didn't recognize Him. His Creator didn't recognize Him. It's very ironic.

[16:46] And then verse 11 goes even more specific. Out of all those in the world walking in darkness, His own people, the Jewish people, who should have welcomed Him as the Messiah King because they had the Old Testament bearing witness to them again and again and again.

There's one coming, God in the flesh, who'd rule on David's throne. And they did not receive Him. In Jerusalem, they yelled, crucify Him. So, most of the world, including His very own people, rejected Him, the true light.

And the same is true today. Most people living in darkness who are blinded by their sin, blinded by the evil one, will reject the light. They won't receive Him. Like people who are seeing millions of twinkling Christmas lights throughout the Christmas season, they don't put it together that they're pointing to Jesus.

Why would anybody reject the light of life? Why would anybody do that? You want to know a hard truth?

[18:13] Turn in your Bible to John chapter 3. We all know 316, but now with our working definition of what the world is, 316 should pop a little different.

For God so loved sinful humanity and organized rebellion against Him that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Look down at verse 19. Why wouldn't anybody receive Him? And this is the judgment. The light has come into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his works should be exposed. People reject the true light because they treasure the darkness more. It reveals the deadness of their condition. They're spiritually dead. They have no inclination.

[19:23] Our problem, our sin problem as a humanity is so deep and extensive we are rendered incapable of spiritually reviving ourselves.

we can't give ourselves life because we're dead. Do you know what an EKG machine is?

Echocardiogram? You get hooked up to it and it goes beep, beep, beep, beep.

Let you know there's a heartbeat. If you hook up a spiritual EKG to someone who is dead in their sin you strap it to them it's a flat line.

Beep, beep, beep, no heart for God at all. Spiritually dead. And then think about this.

When you have a bunch of spiritually dead people gathered together to accomplish things organizing it's not necessarily going to be pretty all the time is it?

[20:35] The world is sinful humanity and organized rebellion against God and it creates currents. So what this means is our spiritual depravity is worse than we think.

There's a warning here if in 336 Jesus says whoever believes in the Son has eternal life whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God remains on him or her.

if you haven't received the true light if you haven't believed in the true light not only are you in darkness not only are you dead in your sin God's just wrath remains over you the stakes are high and into this world the true light shines.

The light rejected our spiritual depravity is worse than we can think we can imagine but God's love is greater than we can fathom for God so loved the world that the true light shines into the darkness.

The light received verses 12 and 13 so all of humanity is in darkness all of humanity apart from Christ are dead in their sin but for some miraculously some receive the true light and are recreated they're given new life the light of recreation shines life in verse 12 we read this but to all who did receive him in contrast to those who did not receive him verse 11 but to all who did receive him you know that word receive in the original language it actually is the common use for welcoming people you receive people into your home you welcome them in you're like hey hey good to see you come on in welcome and when you receive someone when you welcome someone like that you're welcoming them that person for who they are and you're opening your life to them come on in take a seat let's start a relationship when you receive

[23:30] Jesus the true light you don't receive your version of Jesus you receive Jesus who is eternal creator savior revealer king of kings lord of lords the true light the true bread the true vine that's who you

receive now could you imagine Jesus comes up to the front door of your house knock knock you open the door a little bit you peek out who is it the true light what do you want to give you life forget about it close the door that's not receiving Jesus here's what it looks like to receive Jesus who is it the light of life come on in come on in all of who you are you are all welcome to all that I am mi casa esu casa come on in you can you have right because of who you are to every square inch of who

I am and that I have responsibility for it's it's all yours welcome that's what it means to receive Christ and in this verse John clarifies it even more he says but to all who received him who believe in his name who are believing in his name last week I used an illustration to help us understand biblical belief do you remember it so hey come on let's go hang out mid-February by Lincoln Park Lagoon and we're walking around the lagoon and I ask you hey do you think the ice will hold your weight and you're like yeah sure I believe it will hold my weight but what you're actually saying is I accept the possibility that that will hold my weight but when I say hey come let's go out on the ice together that's when you start to trust the ice that's biblical belief that's how it's being used here to trust in his name one commentator talked about his name as not simply like the name

Jesus but the totality of who he is so here's what happens when a new Christian steps out onto the ice of Jesus they're kind of timid at first is this going to hold my weight and he holds your weight but then as you mature in Christ you put the skates on and he starts skating and then you start doing moves because your belief in him is delighting in him who believe in his name it's joy when someone receives Jesus they something miraculous happens something out of this world happens we see it in at the end of verse 12 just the beginnings of it but to all who did receive him who believe in his name he the true light the word he gave the right to become children of

God that's legal terminology for adoption the moment a sinner believes in Jesus they're justified anybody remember that from August yes and they're also adopted which is another legal category you have you've been given all the rights and privileges of now being in the family of God all the rights and privileges which means you have 24-7 access to the father it's quite a privilege but there's something else in verse 13 in verse 13 we read those who are given this right who were born that's life language that's new life language that's the light shining into the darkness and when it shines on those who receive who believe something happens they're born of

God but did you notice the negatives he says who were born not of blood nor of the will of flesh nor of the will of man being born of God doesn't come as a result of your royal blood line being born of God doesn't happen as a result of the will of the flesh something of your ethnicity which side of the tracks you were born on it's not like white people have unusual access to be born of God over black people or brown people or yellow people or red people no did you read the beginning of verse 12 but to all who did receive him anyone any sinner who recognize that Jesus is the true light of life and receives him you take all those negatives together and you know what it means there's absolutely no human contribution to the miraculous work of regeneration of a sinner into a new creation absolutely none it's completely by God by his power by his grace only he is able to change someone dead in their sin and give them new life in Christ we are so dead in our sins that only [30:29] God only a miraculous work of the regenerating grace of God can give us new life that's what it means to be born of God and then that's what Jesus talked to Nicodemus about in John 3 when he says Nicodemus you must be born again brother a working of the spirit that is beyond us merry Christmas this is why the true light came into the world because we were dead in the darkness this is why if you were a Christian you are a walking miracle of God born of God nothing you have done you are a miracle of God's regenerating grace with all the rights and privileges of being a child of God called out of the darkness called into the family of light and that's why we read passages like John 8 12

John 12 46 that say you no longer walk in the darkness if you've received the light and there's nothing that we've contributed to this new birth so we've seen the light radiating we've seen the light rejected we've seen the light received so what does this mean for us it means the true light of Jesus Christ is shining into the darkness and how we respond is by doing this we step into the word shine and live step into the light of life and live receive him believe him and live if you're not a Christian and right now you're in this room and you have this profound sense that before God your sins justly

condemn you that God's wrath that remains over you is not a mistake it's just if you have that sense guess what

God is actually showing kindness to you that you would see those things your step is to step into the light of Jesus Christ is to receive him is to welcome him with arms open wide not as the baby in the manger but as the king of kings and lord of lords who is crucified risen and reigning and one day closer to his return you believe in his name you believe in all that he is it's it's this word incarnate that suffered all of God's wrath for all of your sin so that you could be born again if you're not a Christian here you're like I would like that how do I get that you invite Jesus in you welcome him you tell him you confess him you say something like

Jesus I welcome you all that you are the true light of life into all that I am welcome thank you for giving me life thank you for forgiving my sins help me to walk with you in the light it's a prayer it's a prayer of faith you're walking out on the ice now if you're not a Christian but a Christian let me call you to three ways to respond stop trying to find life in lesser things than Jesus stop stop looking for soul satisfying life in created things instead of the creator of all things if you struggle with the approval of man there's no life there but let me tell you this if you are like

Jesus you're my everything you are my life guess what happens to your desire to be approved by man you just don't care as much because in Christ God has approved you or if you're trying to find life in carbon fiber handlebars or really cool pants or whatever your thing is when Jesus is becoming your life you're like okay you know what carbon fiber handlebars aren't that big a deal you you experience contentment or or if you struggle with control when Jesus is your life you realize he's in control he reigns over all and in you trusting in him can live with things not being nailed down step into the word shine and live that's the first call second is this be sobered by the depravity of sin and don't be surprised by how dark the darkness is don't be surprised by the number of people who love the darkness more than the light

[36:38] I met with a brother this past week who was very angry over the direction of our country very angry I don't like it either but and I'm guessing many of you don't like the direction of our country what do you expect it when people love the darkness more than the light they're going to move towards the darkness do you know what our country needs most they need word shine brothers and sisters that they need the true light it doesn't mean we back out of political engagement but it means we prioritize the light so be sobered by depravity don't be surprised by the number of people who love the darkness more let's major on the light

Jesus third be amazed that you are a walking miracle of regeneration be amazed that the light shining of the darkness shone on you and you responded by faith and you were made alive thank you Jesus for that it's the gift that keeps on giving it's eternal life and that starts now rejoice give thanks be amazed at what he's done and walk in the light walk in the light brothers and sisters our time of walking in darkness we put enough time into that let's walk in the light as he is in the light and let's do that together and let's create our own currents and it was all out of love he he pursued you in your darkness not because you were so lovable but because he is so loving rejoice

I started talking about a sermon about Christmas lights every night in Kenosha there are millions of twinkling Christmas lights but people don't know that the Christmas lights are speaking a word of the true light that is shining in the darkness that has come that's shining his life into the darkness of our world today don't reject him step into his word shine and receive him and live happy incarnation let's pray God in heaven we do thank you so much for sending in love for us sending the eternal creator savior ultimate revealer king of kings lord of lords

Jesus to die in our place to give us new life so that we can claim the right of being your children thank you for making us alive God would you help us to walk in the light as you are in the light in your name we pray amen