

The Word Shining

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[0 : 00] Kids, you are excused to your King's Kids class, and if I could invite you to turn in your Bibles to John chapter 1.! It's on page 1053 of your pew Bible.

As Zach mentioned, we're going to be focusing on what's called the introduction or prologue of the Gospel of John leading up to Christmas.

So this morning, next week, the following week, on Christmas Eve, I'll be preaching sermons from John 1, 1-18. And so this morning, I'll be preaching through John 1, 1-8.

Hear God's Word. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

[1 : 07] The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to bear witness about the light that all might believe through Him.

He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. May God bless the hearing of His Word. Correct me if I'm wrong, but we all like to ooh and ah at Christmas lights.

Is it true? Give me an ooh and an ah. Ooh, ah. We bought our Christmas tree a little early than usual.

We set it up. It looks great. It smells great. And one of the things that I look forward to every day is waking up and walking into our dark living room, because December mornings in Wisconsin are dark.

And the first thing I do is I turn on the Christmas lights to our tree. And I step back, and I just savor it. The Christmas tree lights, they shine in the darkness of our living room.

[2 : 26] Now, it could be just sentimentality, but when I behold those lights brilliantly shining, I just linger.

There's this internal ooh-ing and ah-ing in that moment over light shining in our dark living room. We ooh and ah-ing in our Christmas lights.

And whether it's on Christmas Lane in Kenosha, or if you're driving by the jockey headquarters at night and you see those trees lit up, for some reason, the light shining in the darkness, it affects us. The reason why Christmas is about lights shining in the darkness is because Jesus, the Word become flesh, is the light of salvation shining in the darkness of this world.

Christmas isn't just about the birth of Jesus. It's about the coming of God's salvation. It's about the dawning of a new Genesis, a new creation, a life-giving salvation that's found in this person, Jesus Christ.

[3 : 50] So, the goal of this morning, when I preach through 1, 1 through 8, is to help you ooh and ah at the Word shining in the darkness.

Has your heart grown a little cold this December towards Jesus? Are you already bustling to get things done? And have already become a little distracted?

Are you a little ashamed to witness to Jesus? Well, this morning, I want you to behold His brilliance and believe in Him.

And there are four truths in this passage that I want you to see. The Word's nature, that's verses 1 through 3. The Word's life, verse 4. The Word's light, 4 through 5.

And the Word's witness. So, behold His brilliance, believe in Him, and live boldly for Him. And ooh and ah along the way.

[4 : 50] So, let's look at the Word's nature. In verses 1 through 3, we read, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.

So, when I say the Word's nature, what I'm talking about is defined and different characteristics of this Word, the Word.

What uniquely defines Him, defines Him. Did you notice in verse 1, the Word is repeated three times? In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And then that Word shows up in verse 14, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory. Glory is of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And then the idea of what's being said shows up in 18. No one has ever seen God, the only God, who is at the Father's side. He has made Him known. He has worded Him. He's disclosed Him.

[5 : 54] In the Old Testament, the Word of God was the primary way in which God related to His people. He spoke to them through His Word, through the prophets, through Moses, and through Samuel, and David, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Micah.

And the written Word of God always reveals the nature of God. It's a self-disclosure of who He is. But the Word of John 1.1 is not the written Word of God. It is the person God. The person Word.

And I want to help you see something in this stretch. That this Word, the Word, is not an it. He is a Him.

Just follow along with me. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him.

[7 : 07] And without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life. The Word, Him, was life. And the life was the light of men. Look at verse 9.

The true light, the Word, 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.

He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But all who did receive Him, who believed in His name. Jesus. Who believed in His name.

He gave the right to become children of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Verse 14. And we have seen His glory. Glory as of the only, the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

No one, 18, has ever seen God, the only God, who is at the Father's side. He has made Him, the invisible God, known.

[8 : 07] The first thing I want you to say here is, this Word, the Word, is a person. A He, a Him. And this person is the incarnate self-disclosure of God.

Do you want to see the Father? Look at the Son. The S-O-N. That might stir a little oohing and aahing in your soul.

Let's look at something else about the nature of the Word. He was in the beginning. In the beginning, verse 1, was the Word. Verse 2, He was in the beginning with God.

When you hear those words, in the beginning, you should be thinking of another book of the Bible that starts with, in the beginning, Genesis. Genesis. Genesis chapter 1.

And in Genesis chapter 1, 1, we read, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

You see, God is the creator of all things.

[9 : 17] And He created all things with just words out of nothing. And what John is doing here is he's placing this person, the Word, at the beginning.

At the beginning, He was there. What was He doing? Verse 3. All things were made through Him, the Word. And without Him, the Word was not anything made that was made.

We've got a positive kind of statement and a negative statement. All things were made through Him. They were made by Him. He is the agent of creation. Now, it's not just all things, big and small, animate and inanimate on earth.

But our solar system, the galaxy that we're in, the universe, all things were made through Him.

And negatively, He states, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In other words, no exceptions. He made everything, no exceptions.

[10 : 31] All of creation came into being through Him. No exceptions. Which means the Word, Jesus, is the creator.

And we see that again repeated in Colossians 1.16 and Hebrews 1.2. But here's what it also means. He is uncreated. He was at the beginning because He has no beginning.

All things were brought into Him. Nothing was made that was made. He wasn't made. He's uncreated. He is the eternal Son incarnate.

It's glorious. There's some ooh and aah going on here. Behold that! Brilliance. And this one who created all things.

Is it not amazing that He took on flesh and was born in a stable in Bethlehem and laid in a feeding trough? The creator of all?

[11 : 39] What kind of love is that? Next thing I want you to see is the Word was with God. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God.

And what's being communicated here is that the Word was distinct from God the Father at the beginning. Distinct. Two different people.

Yet, they are in relationship with one another. We see of that relationship in verse 14. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

And we've seen His glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father. And then in verse 18. No one has ever seen God. The only God who is at the Father's side with Him.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God. Distinct from God yet in relationship to God. This is getting at the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

[12 : 39] We see two of the three persons of the Trinity. The Father, the first person of the Trinity. And the Son, the second person of the Trinity. And in January, we're going to keep on going through the book of John.

We'll be introduced to the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit who plays a prominent role in the Gospel of John. The Word was with God. He was at the beginning with Him.

And He is distinct from God. And yet, He is in relationship to God. Father, Son. And the third thing I want you to see is that the Word was God. Not a God.

Not being God-like. But fully God. In verse 14, we read that this Word became flesh.

And dwelt among us. In Isaiah 7.14, we know of prophecy that spoke of this one to come as Emmanuel.

[13 : 44] God with us. It's kind of like this. You know on July 4th when you go to the fireworks show. And it starts kind of slow. And you're like, ooh-ah, ooh-ah.

And then the finale hits. And you're like, ooh-ah, ooh-ah. John is beginning with the Christological finale. You're supposed to be like ooh-in and ah-in from the get-go.

Because he's introducing the very topic, the focus of the entire Gospel. It is the Word made flesh. John begins with a brilliant prologue of Christological glory in which we're ooh-in and ah-in.

He was God. The creator of all. Distinct from but in relationship to the Father. That is amazing. Amazing. Amazing.

And the rest of the Gospel of John is the brilliant glory of the Son on display. And we're going to behold his glory. And we're going to believe in him.

[14 : 53] And we're going to live boldly for him as a result. So if you're approaching this Christmas season and you're kind of like, oh, I'm just a little spiritually dull.

A little cold at heart towards Jesus. Hey, just hang out in John 1, 1 through 3 for a while. Let the juices flow. Let the oohs and ahs come out.

And if you're distracted, camp right there for a while. Oohs and ahs. Behold his brilliance and believe him.

Believe who he is. That's the word's nature. Now let's look at the word's life. He's the source of life. I just want to focus on four words in verse 4. The first four words. In him was life. In him, the word. Who is the uncreated creator in the beginning.

[15 : 58] Who created everything distinct from God the Father. But in relationship to him who is totally God. In him was life. Given the reference back to Genesis 1 here.

And John 1. And given that everything was made through him. You might think that John, who wrote this gospel, has a certain kind of life in mind.

Created life. It's physical life of creation. From mountains to mitochondria. And we know that the word created mountains in mitochondria.

But John is also using that word life. He'll use it throughout the gospel in a different way. Let me introduce you to some of these uses of it. Remember this one?

For God so loved the world. That he gave his one and only son. That whoever believes in him shall not perish. But have eternal life.

[17 : 00] He's not talking about physical life. He's talking about a different kind of life. In John 6.35. We read this.

Jesus said to them. I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger. And whoever believes in me shall never thirst. That's talking about a certain kind of life. That satisfies your soul. It's not physical life. It's a spiritual life. A spirit. Holy Spirit. Given life. And this life. Doesn't begin for a Christian.

When they die. It begins at conversion. The moment you believe. You are given the gift of eternal life. Soul satisfying.

In John 10.10. Jesus says. I came that they might have life. And might have it abundantly. He's talking about. Not physical life. But spiritual life. And the they that he's talking about.

[18:04] I came that they may have life. Are his sheep. Those he shed his blood for. Those who would believe in his name. Those who are born again by his spirit. Will experience this abundant life.

It's not just a duration of eternity. It is a qualitatively different kind of life. 11.25. I'm the resurrection and the life. John 14.6.

I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me. He's talking about a relationship. John 17.3. And this is eternal life. That they know you, the only true God.

And Jesus Christ whom you have sent. Jesus is speaking about eternal life. As being in relationship. With the God of the universe. Having a personal relationship.

With the God of the universe. Having a life giving relationship. With the God of the universe. The word became flesh. In order to bring new creation life.

[19:09] To make you live. Having believed in him. In verse 17 of chapter 1. We are told explicitly.

The name of this one who is the word. For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. He is the source of all life.

Both physical and spiritual. And John is going to major on eternal spiritual life. In the gospel of John. And so the question that I want to ask you this morning is.

Do you believe in him? And I'm not asking. Do you believe he existed? What I am asking. Is do you believe. That he is the source.

Of all that exists. Do you believe. Do you believe. That your next breath. Comes from him. Do you believe. That the salvation.

[20:07] Of eternal life. Is in no one else. But in him. Behold his brilliance.

He is the source. Of all life. We all need. This spiritual life. That God gives. As a gift. Through Jesus Christ.

It is soul satisfying. That's where you're like. Ooh. Ah. I want some of that. Life.

Is found in the word. And then in verses four and five. We read about. The word's. The word's. The word's. Light. In him was life.

In the life. Was the light. Of men. The light shines in the darkness. And the darkness. Has not overcome it. The word. Jesus.

[21:07] God incarnate. Is the source. Of all life. Especially. Spiritual life. Eternal life. And we learn in verse four. That this life. Was the light. Of men.

And we got to ask the question. Well what does that mean? What does it mean. That the life. The word. Was the light. Of men. Now remember. There's this creation motif. Going on here. In John chapter one.

And in Genesis chapter one. The first thing that God speaks. Into existence. Is. Let there be. Light. And there was light. And it was good.

And then from there on out. In the days of creation. God speaks. Into existence. One thing. After another. And he brings order.

Out of the darkness. And day by day. He brings order. In fullness. Of life. It's a creation event. Where God.

[22:06] Brings things. Into life. Into existence. And it sets up a pattern. John is.

Is riffing off. Creation account. To talk about this new creation. The dawning of a new creation. A salvation. Found in Jesus alone.

This. This dawning. Of salvation. At the birth. Of Jesus Christ. Is shining. Into the darkness. Of a sinful world. This light.

Began shining. At the moment. Of his birth. And it's shining. Into the darkness. Our darkness. Today.

The darkness. Of mankind. The darkness. Of sin. Sin has brought about. A dark chaos. Into our lives. We all have personally. Experienced. The chaos. Making power.

[23 : 04] Of sin. It messes everything up. Messes up. Our relationship. With God. It messes up. Our understanding. Of ourselves. It messes up. Our relationship. With other people. And it definitely.

Brings about. A messed up. Chaos making. Relationship. With this creation. Under frustration. Our sin.

And the sin. Of our parents. Adam and Eve. Ushered. This. Chaos making. Darkness. Into. Our existence. And it renders us. Spiritually dead.

Spiritually dead. Blind. Not inclined. In the least. To God. Or his ways. We're living. In the darkness. Of death. And it is. A chaos making.

Experience. Who is reigning. Over that. Is the lord of that. Chaos making. Satan. But Jesus Christ. Has rendered him. Defeated. In Isaiah.

[24 : 02] Nine. Two through seven. Zach opened. Our service. With it. Isaiah. Speaks. Of. This coming light. That will shine.

Into. Deep darkness. And the result. Of that light. Shining into the darkness. Is rejoicing. It's joy. It's gladness. It's a multiplying.

Of the nation. And do you know. What. That. Light. Shining. In the darkness. Would be. Or who it would be.

For. A child has been born. Given. Unto us. And. And the government. Will be upon his shoulder. And his name.

Will be wonderful counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting Father. Prince of Peace. And. In the fullness. Of his. Government. Of peace. There will.

[25 : 02] The increase of that. There will be no end. The light. Shining. Into the darkness. According to Isaiah. Nine. Is this. Child. That would be born. And given. Do you see.

That. The light. Shining. In the darkness. Into. Our darkness. Today. Is the eternal light. Of life. The light.

Of salvation. And the word. Become flesh. He is. Our salvation. And he's shining. Bright. And that shining.

Is a making known. Of who he is. To all mankind. The apostle Paul. Picks up. On this. Creation. Language. In 2nd Corinthians. Chapter.

4. Verse 6. Zach is going to close. The service in it. Listen to this. This is the apostle Paul. For God. Who said. Let light. Shine out of darkness.

[26 : 01] Has shown. In our hearts. To give the light. Of the knowledge. Of the glory. Of God. In the face. Of Jesus Christ. Give me an ooh.

And ah. Ah. Okay. I think I'm a little more excited. About this.

Than you are. That was like. Waking my dad up. After Thanksgiving. Uh. Ah. Well.

Christmas. Is far more. Than celebrating. The birth. Of Jesus Christ. It is that. But we are celebrating. The dawning. Of a new creation. The dawning.

Of salvation. And we are to behold. His brilliance. This light. Shining into our darkness. And believe him. And live. As a result.

[26 : 57] The gospel of John. Is the shining forth. Of the glory. Of Christ. The light of life. And it's this one.

Who became flesh. And his light. And his light. Is shining. Into our darkness. Brings me to the fourth point.

This morning. The words witness. In verses six through eight. There's a shift. In this passage. We've been looking at the word.

And then in. Verses six through eight. It shifts. To the witness. A witness to the word. His name is John. John the Baptist. I like to refer to him.

As JTB. JTB. So we read. There was a man. Sent from God. Whose name was John. JTB. He came as a witness.

[27 : 58] To bear witness. About the light. That all might believe. Through him. He was not the light. But came to bear witness. About the light. John the Baptist. JTB. Appears in every one. Of the four gospels.

And he appears. Early on. In all four gospels. Matthew chapter three. One through three. Mark chapter one. Two through four. Luke chapter one. Sixteen through seventeen. And then in three. Four. And he will appear later. Multiple times. In the gospel of John. But especially in John one. Nineteen through thirty four. Every gospel. Tells us. That John the Baptist. Was the fulfillment. Of a prophecy. In Isaiah forty. You want to turn there with me. Isaiah is in the Old Testament.

If you're in the Psalms. Go right. Psalm forty. Verse three.

[28 : 56] A voice cries. In the wilderness. Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert.

A highway for our God. And he goes on. Every valley shall be lifted up. And every mountain and hill be made low. And uneven ground shall become level. And rough places a plain.

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. Light shining. Light shining. And all flesh shall see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

John the Baptist came as a witness to the light. He was not the light. But he came to bear witness to the light. The word. Jesus Christ.

The incarnate self-disclosure of the glory of God. God. And I just want to let you know what he said. John. We see what he says about Jesus.

[29 : 57] In John 1. 23. We read this. He's been. He's being asked. Who are you? Who. Are you the Christ?

I'm not the Christ. Are you Elijah? No. Are you the prophet? Nope. So they said. Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself? He said.

I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord. As the prophet Isaiah said. We just read that. But then he goes on to say.

In chapter 1. Verses 29 through 30. The next day. JTB saw Jesus coming toward him. And he said. Behold the Lamb of God. Who takes away the sin of the world. He goes on to say.

This is he. Of whom I said. After me. Comes a man. Who ranks before me. Because he was before me. And it sounds like a riddle. But it's not. This is he.

[30 : 56] Of whom I said. After me. Comes a man. Jesus was born six months. After JTB. Then he says. Who ranks before me. In other words.

He is of. Greater rank than me. Even though he was born after me. And the reason why he has. A greater rank than him. Is because. In verse 30.

Because he was before me. What he's saying is this. It's no riddle. This one. That's coming after me. Whose. Whose. Sandal lace.

I am not worthy to untie. He's the eternally existent. Son of God. Who took on flesh. He's from eternity. And so he is announcing.

The coming of the word. Become flesh. The dawning of God's. New creation. Of eternal life. Into the darkness. He's saying. He's God.

[31 : 52] In the flesh. And I've prepared his way. This is the one. In whom is salvation. Here's what that means for us. When we behold.

His brilliance. And we believe. He is who he is. We will be emboldened. In our witness. We'll be saying things like.

You know what? I am not worthy. To untie his sandal. He's greater than me. He ranks before me. I am. I am a creation. He is the creator.

He is. From eternity. To earn. From eternity past. To eternity future. I. He created me. He must increase. And I must decrease. But then you're going to be like.

Let me tell you about him. Because we want others. To behold his brilliance. And believe in him as well. And live. And experience.

[32 : 51] The life giving. Restored relationship. With God. That Jesus alone. Provides. We want to go tell it on the mountain. That Jesus Christ is Lord. The word. The word is shining.

Into the darkness today. And we have. We have brothers and sisters. We have family members. And friends. Who are presently. Under God's wrath. Living in darkness. And we get.

To boldly witness to them. Of this one. Of this word. Become flesh. We get to say. Behold. Him. Behold his brilliance.

And believe. And in believing. You will live. Experience. This abundant life. Maybe you're in this room.

And you've. Didn't know that Jesus. Is God in the flesh. And that he created all things. You can believe that. And live.

[33 : 53] In John 1. 1 through 8. John shows us the word's nature. He's a person. He's in the beginning. He's the uncreated creator. He's distinct from God. But in relationship.

With God. And he's fully God. We've seen the word's life. That he is the author of it all. The light of salvation. Shining.

The words. Is light. The dawning of a new creation. And what JTB shows us is. We're to witness to that.

Did you notice that at the end of verse 5. That darkness will not overcome the light shining. The darkness will not. It cannot sin.

The devil. The world. Cannot overcome the light of life. He has overcome the world. The word is shining now. And will shine always.

[34 : 50] Even in the new Jerusalem. Revelation 21. 22. Where this city has no need of sun or moon. To shine on it.

For the glory of God. Gives it light. And its lamp. Is the lamb. The word incarnate.

Behold his brilliance. Ooh and awe. Believe in him. In his name. And live for him boldly. Happy incarnation.

Let's pray. God in heaven. What mortal could think up this? You are altogether glorious.

Father. Son. Holy Spirit. Altogether. Glorious. Lord Jesus. We thank you for shining into our hearts.

[35 : 54] That we would see the light of the glory of God. In the face of Jesus Christ. And we are oohing and aahing. Would you cause us. To worship you.

This Christmas time. And that we would enter January. Not worn out. But refreshed. Revived. Looking to the sun. In your name we pray. Amen.