

Slide John 1:9-13

Sermon #5

True Light

Slide Children's Time – Ask children to come up to the front.

I want to talk to you this morning about the love of Jesus. Let me begin by reading what Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes (God) who sent me. Whoever welcomes God’s messenger because he is God’s messenger, will share in his reward. And whoever welcomes a good man because he is good, will share in his reward. You can be sure that whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of these my followers because he is my follower, will certainly receive a reward.” Matthew 10:40-42 (GNB)

Good morning children. Have you ever seen one of these? (Hold up a Welcome Door Mat) Where have you seen one of these? Usually we'd see a mat like this outside the door to our home, wouldn't we? A doormat has two purposes. Do you know what those two purposes are?

Well, for one thing, it is a friendly reminder for people to wipe their shoes off so that they won't track dirt or mud into your home. You mom doesn't like mud in her home – does she? And second, we put it outside your front door as a sign to let people know that they are welcome to come into your home.

Welcome -- what does the word "welcome" mean? It means to receive someone in a warm and friendly way. Are people always welcome in our homes? Do we welcome people into our home if their skin is a different color from ours? Do we

welcome people into our homes if they don't have as much money as we do?

How about in our church? Do you think that we make everyone feel welcome in our church? Do we speak to those people who are visiting our church that we do not know? If someone comes to our church and they are not dressed the way we are dressed, do we make sure that they are made to feel welcome?

Jesus said, "He who receives you receives me." If we turn that around, we will understand that if we do not welcome others into our homes and into our church, it is the same as if we are refusing to welcome Jesus. We wouldn't do that, would we?

Well, let's put the welcome mat out -- and let's be sure that we mean it!

Let me pray for us. Dear Father, help us to remember that when we refuse to welcome others to our homes and to our church, it is the same as refusing to welcome you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Go back to your seats and I will now speak to both you and your parents.

Blank My brothers and sisters, what are the greatest moments in all of history?

Many people when asked this question would respond, the discovery of fire or the invention of the wheel. Intellectuals might say the emerging of intellectual life and critical thought in Greece in the 5th century. Others might say the standardization of law brought by the Romans as they conquered the known world. A scientist might say the discovery of atomic energy. These times and events in history are interesting and certainly affected man's methods of living in the world. These events and many more are significant. But as Christians I believe there are two

answers. First is when God, the Word as we have been studying - Jesus is the Word and He is God. He is the God who created the universe and all that is in it and began what we call time and history. Second, is when God lowered Himself to come to earth as God incarnate – a man who was both human and God. For through His sinless life, teachings, death and resurrection Jesus Christ defeated sin and death and offered eternal life in fellowship with God to all who recognize Jesus as the Messiah or Christ, but not just this alone; salvation is for anyone who **believes in Jesus** and gives their life freely to Jesus as their LORD and lives for His glory by the power of the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit within the very soul of every saved person. These other events are interesting and many have changed man's ability to live better materially, but they are insignificant when compared to the coming of Jesus to the earth and His return in the future. Jesus brought spiritual change, bringing light of the eternal God into the very souls of mankind.

George Barna the Christian researcher conducted a survey that showed an estimated 74 percent of Americans Christians strongly agree that "there is only one true God, who is holy and perfect, and who created the world and rules it today." However, an estimated 65 percent either strongly agree or somewhat agree with the assertion that "there is no such thing as absolute truth." This brings us to our text of study this morning. Let me pray for our study of John chapter 1, verses 9 to 13.

The fact that, as we studied last week, John the Baptist had to dramatically point out the true light to the people who God choose to be His own, the Jewish nation, illustrates the world's blindness. John pointed out the world's spiritual blindness, both of the chosen people of God and of the gentile nations. Only truly blind people see no light when the light is shining. The Apostle Paul clarified this when he wrote

to the Corinthians saying, **Slide** “In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”^{2 Corinthians 4:4} The evil one works hard to not only keep unbelievers from recognizing there is a God and Creator, but he works hard to take Christians focus off of Jesus and place it on anything else. **Blank** The light of God is seen in all creation, men’s unbelief is inexcusable. This is referred to as the “General Revelation” of God. Jesus is the only true Light in this world, He is Light without a shadow and He is a Light that knows no night or darkness. This is what Apostle John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, is saying in verse 9, “There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.” This is God’s “General Revelation” to mankind. John defines the light as “true” in verse 9. This **Slide** Greek word **ἀληθινός** *alēthinos* is used only 28 times in the New Testament and all but five are found in the writings of John. It’s meaning is that the light of Jesus is true, real and genuine, and Jesus is the true source. **Blank** When Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai, as we may read in Exodus chapter 34. It was shortly after God had given Moses the tablets of testimony and his face glowed. Moses did not know his face was shining after having been in the presence of God. When Aaron and the other leaders saw Moses they were afraid to come near. Moses then covered his face. However, the light slowly faded. This is because Moses shining face was but the reflect of the light of God as the moon reflects the light of the Sun. God’s chosen people had seen many reflections of the power and light of God and yet, they struggled with their unbelief. When the priests entered the Holy of Holies they were near God but they were not in the presence of God. It was the Menorah lamp that had to provided the light for the priest to see. The writer of Hebrews makes plain that (God) “in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. **Slide** And He is

the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.” ^{Hebrews 1:2-3} The Word incarnate Jesus Christ is the only true source of spiritual light here on earth, all other light is but a reflection of Jesus. **Blank** So even those who never become children of God are accountable for the knowledge of God and His light revealed in Christ.

Making decisions in the dark can be costly and lead to regrettable results. Back in the days before electricity, a tightfisted old farmer was taking his hired man to task for carrying a lighted lantern when he went to call on his best girl. “You will never save enough to get married wasting lamp oil”, the old farmer said. “Why,” the farmer exclaimed, “when I went a-courtin’ I never carried one of them things. I always went in the dark.” “Yes,” the hired man said grinning, “and look what you got!”

It is because the world lives in spiritual darkness that John writes in verse 10, “**He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.**” John uses the word “world” 3 times in this sentence. **Slide** The Greek word κόσμος *kosmos* is used by John frequently and can have 3 meanings. First it describes the physical world: the universe, galaxies, stars, planets and the earth. Secondly it can mean humanity in general and finally, the evil earthly system dominated by Satan. **Blank** To paraphrase verse 10 we could say, “*Jesus descended into the physical earth to be among mankind and the evil system dominated by Satan, but mankind did not know who Jesus was.*” John tells us in his famous verse 3:16 that God loves the world. Far from being a statement of the approval of the world it is a testimony of the character of God. God’s love is to be admired not because the world is good, but because the world is so corrupt. In fact John’s statement deals with a world with no believers at all. Those who come to Christ at

the time of John and all through history and until this very day; are no longer of this world. In fact, they have been chosen out of this world. John records the very words of our Lord Jesus who said, ¹⁸“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love its own; **Slide** but **because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world,** because of this the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.” Despite the unbelieving world’s rejection of the true light – they will one day be forced to acknowledge Jesus as Lord. As we read in Philippians, “... God highly exalted (Jesus) Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, **Slide** ¹⁰so that **at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW,** of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:9-11 For those saved, we will bow before the throne of the living God and be in His presence for all eternity as He reveals more and more of His glory. But, for unbelievers they too will bow their knee to God as they finally recognize Him and for eternity are separated from God and His glory in horrible hell. **Blank** Just as manna provided in the wilderness was genuinely from God to feed His chosen people – Jesus is the true bread of life, and the true bread from heaven for those chosen by God. When Jesus showed us how to pray to God the Father in Matthew chapter 6, He speaks of our daily bread to sustain us day by day. If you seek God He will give you daily spiritual manna or bread to sustain you spiritually through the trials of life each and every day. The problem comes in the seeking. Are you letting the needs of the world outweigh your spiritual needs? When we let the needs of daily living get in the way of our spiritual nourishment we slowly die spiritually until we are no longer walking with the Lord. Then is it any wonder if

some Christians were to examine their lives they would look just like the unsaved world. **Slide** A.W. Tozer said, “The unattended garden will soon be overrun with weeds; the heart that fails to cultivate truth and root out error will shortly be a theological wilderness.” **Blank**

This is exactly what the Apostle John deals with next in verse 11. “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.” As shocking and tragic as the world’s rejection of Christ is, John turns in verse 11 to even a greater tragedy, the rejection of Christ by the chosen nation of Israel. The opening verses of John’s gospel already introduced us to two very significant themes: the glory of Jesus Christ and the depravity of mankind. One might ask is there not an exception to this depravity of mankind? What about God’s chosen people – the Jewish nation? They were given the Law, prophecies of Jesus’ coming and they were given John the Baptist to declare the coming of the long awaited Messiah. But, Apostle John says no, no there are no exceptions; all mankind is corrupt and spiritually dead, including the chosen people of God. In fact, it is the rejection of Jesus by the Jews that the depravity of man is clearly seen. You see knowledge is no guarantee of correct behavior. Let me share a story from our own country’s history.

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (doo-boyz) born February 23, 1868 and died not all that long ago on August 27, 1963. He was the great black educator, sociologist, and historian. He was highly educated; upon completion of studies at Fisk, Harvard and the University of Berlin, he was convinced that change in the condition of the American black people could be effected by careful scientific investigations into the truth about the black people in America. So he proceeded. His research was flawless and his graphs and charts impeccable. His results were presented in the great institutions of higher learning and throughout the world. After waiting several

years and hearing not the slightest stir of reform, Dr. Du Bois had to accept the truth about Truth: Its being available does not mean it will be appropriated. This is true of the Light, which came into the world – Jesus the Christ as well.

Towards the end of Jesus' earthly ministry in which He was received by many and then rejected by even more He explained the rejection of the Truth and the Light, the very God incarnate in the following parable. **Slide** If you would like you can turn in your Bible to Matthew chapter 21 beginning in verse 33. Jesus begins by saying, ³³“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. ³⁴When the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. ³⁵The vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. ³⁷But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ ³⁹They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers? ⁴¹They said to Him, ‘He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the *proper* seasons.’ ⁴²Jesus said to them, ‘Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER *stone*; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES’? ⁴³Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.” (Matthew 21:33-43) Did this parable wake people up and they changed the way they perceived Jesus? Some might have, but not the religious leaders. For a few verses later we read, ⁴⁵“When the chief priests and the Pharisees

heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. ⁴⁶When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, because they considered Him to be a prophet.” Jesus says the world will hate Him for He is the true Light and His light exposes the darkness and sin of the world. The world loves its sin. **Blank** If we, you and I, my brothers and sisters, reflect the light of Christ in living holy lives – then the world will hate us also. In times past the society was held at bay by the fear of their sins being exposed for the Church had influence over society. Today, however, the society now influences the Church and this has resulted in society losing its fear of sin and the Church’s willingness to allow sin to live within its community.

Verses 10 and 11 are grim and might lead us to be depressed. But then John writes verses 12 and 13 softening the rejection of the Word and the Light; which is Jesus. Hope springs for there will always be the believing remnant. Verse 12 begins with the word “but” and this marks a dramatic shift. The world’s hatred of God and its rejection of Christ in no way will prevent the plan of God from coming into being. Let’s read verses 12 and 13, 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, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” When verse 12 says, “*even* to those who believe in His name” the word “name” is not just a label, it is more, it is the very character of the person or in this case of Jesus, as He is God very God. The remnant who believe in His name then yield themselves to Jesus and are His brothers and sisters, children of God and joint heirs of the kingdom. Not that we are equal to Jesus, in fact, we have given ourselves freely to Christ as His servants and even more than that as His slaves who have given up all rights and gladly serve Jesus as our Master. Let me give you an idea of this concept of being grateful and willing slaves of Christ means.

Slide Acts 4:29 “You slaves may speak Your word with all confidence.”

Slide Acts 16:17 “These men are slaves of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.”

Slide Revelation 1:1 “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His slaves, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His slave John.”

Slide Revelation 19:5 “And a voice came from the throne, saying, ‘Give praise to God, all you His slaves, you who fear Him, the small and the great.’”

Slide Revelation 22:3 “There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him.” **Blank**

So unlike the history of slavery in the world of men oppressing other men. Or of slavery in America and its aftermath that Dr. Du Bois addressed, being a slave of Christ is a good and wonderful thing. We are blessed and enjoy being the covenant people of God, we are to shine the Light of Christ into the dark world knowing God has called some and we are allowed the privilege of being the ambassadors of Christ sharing His gospel with the lost.

John is simple and straight forward in his closing of this passage by stating that no one would come to believe in Jesus unless Jesus **gave** them **the right to become children of God**. We are saved entirely by grace as Paul so clearly said in **Slide** Ephesians chapter 2 verses 8 and 9, “**For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.**” **Blank** We now, John says in verse 13, as believers we were born again “**not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.**”

These three negative statements stress the fact that salvation is not obtainable through racial or ethnic heritage (**blood**) or personal desire, ability and works (**flesh**) or man-made systems of government or religion (**will of man**), but we are saved purely by the loving kindness and grace of God. Finally then, the phrase “**but of God**” means that salvation is impossible for any sinner to achieve. God must grant supernaturally a person’s spiritual life.

After studying this passage this morning here is the bottom line: Whom will you choose to serve? Will you serve the true Light that has come into the world – our Lord and Savior Jesus or the darkness of the world? There is no gray we must live in the Light or in darkness and the two have nothing to do with each other. Will you work earnestly to reflect the Light of Christ into a world that desperately needs to find its way out of darkness into the true Light of God.

I whole heartily agree with Apostle Paul when he wrote in Philippians 1:21, **Slide** “**For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.**” What is your choice?