

December 24, 2025 - John 1:9-14 - "Somethin' about this Light"

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- [0 : 00] It's kind of a bittersweet moment because we've been going through the Gospel of John and! sticking in smaller portions of the text in the first chapter of John.
- ! And I think it's been shaping for us in the church. I think it's really helped to shape us, and I don't think it's any significance that as we're shaped by the Word and by the truth, we're naturally, we respond as people who are consumed with the truth.
- We know what we've been saved from, being darkness and brought into Christ's marvelous light by our faith. And this has been something spectacular about this series, if I can use Les' word, spectacular.
- It makes me think that every life is shaped by something, though, whether we recognize it or not. Every life is shaped by something.
- We all live under the pull of whatever we trust, whatever we value most. And if we want to be honest, there really is no such thing as neutrality in life, right?
- [1 : 36] There's always something shaping us, whether we like it or not. Especially regarding the good news of Jesus Christ as well.
- That is a shaping reality. Something that is hard to even admit that you're neutral in. And what we often call neutrality is usually just loyalty to something that we just don't want to admit, right?
- It sounds thoughtful just to be neutral, not to be on this side or that side, just kind of remain in the middle. But much of the time, it's simply a way to avoid commitment while trying to protect what we love more.
- And Christians and non-Christians fall for the facade relatively easy. This isn't just non-Christians or anything like that. Neutrality for a Christian shows up in selective obedience, not whole obedience in the Christian life.
- We call something complicated in Scripture when Jesus has spoken clearly. We don't want to move from our neutrality that we might seem.
- [2 : 53] So we don't offend our friends and our family members. Or neutrality for non-Christians can sound like openness. You know, they don't want to just, they can't really weigh their anchor on the claims of the Bible.
- They delay surrender, hoping the question won't have to be faced. But eventually, we know that it will one day.
- And the problem is this. Whatever we build our lives on eventually shapes us. Whatever we build upon our lives eventually shapes us.
- And after it shapes us, it consumes us. It is the shaping reality. Biblically speaking, there are only two ultimate directions that that shaping can go.
- Biblical reality. Either darkness slowly pulls us in, or Jesus graciously brings us his light.

- [3 : 56] Two directions. And so I got to ask you tonight, what or who is consuming your life tonight? Is it darkness or is it light?
- And as the first light of dawn spills upon the dusty Galilean streets, the opening chapter of John illustrates the transformative power when the light of God penetrates a world that prefers shadows.
- This is the opening of our series in the gospel of John for Advent. And it is through this divine illumination that he invites us out of darkness and into a full life of clarity and truth.
- I'd like for us to consider a passage tonight. If you want to turn to your Bibles, if you have a Bible app or your own physical copy, turn to John chapter 1.
- And I'm going to read a portion of Scripture here. John chapter 1, starting in verse 9.
- [5 : 28] This is John's account. John chapter 1, verse 9.
- This is God's Word.
- What I want us to see here is that the light in this first section, the light that pierces the darkness around us.
- Thinking proximity around us, I want us to see the light that pierces the darkness around us. And that's looking at verse 14 that I just read.
- John writes, John opens his gospel with the one who was with God and was God.
- [7 : 00] This became flesh. This one is the light who became flesh. He didn't merely appear as human or put on a costume.
- We see here, he became what we are, yet without sin, yet without ceasing to be who he always has been. That's a lot of words.
- It's confusing. But he became the eternal one, entered into time, subjected himself to time. He knew hunger.
- He knew sorrow. He knew betrayal. He knew exhaustion. He knew pain. Not theoretically, but personally, he knew.
- John says that he dwelt among us, reaching back into Old Testament sayings and phrases. God dwelt with the Israelites in a tent, but now he's tabernacled, dwelled with us among his people, in a body, proximity with people around.
- [8 : 08] And you see, the light of Jesus does not remain distant. The light of Jesus moves in. God doesn't love us from far away.
- He doesn't. He comes close enough to carry us. God doesn't. What love of God this is to come so near to us.
- And look, when light moves in, something unavoidable occurs. What's the purpose of any light?
- It's to illuminate, to shine, to notice things that darkness tries to hide. And so the unavoidable occurs when the light comes.
- Light reveals something. Light exposes what darkness tries to hide and brings clarity where we often prefer excuses. And most importantly, it reveals who God is.
- [9 : 19] Compassionate, kind, just. His mercy, his authority, it reveals all of these things embodied in this light that has come.
- We often think that Christmas is just polite sentiment. Kind of just the fluffy holiday season where everything's good.
- But according to the Bible, and according to what God has been doing since the very beginning of time, is that this was a holy invasion upon earth, upon his creation.

God lights the world from the inside out. God lights the world from the inside out. And yet, John is also painfully honest.

He writes a little bit later in John 3, verse 19. He says, The light has come, praise the Lord, and the people love the darkness rather than light.

[10 : 28] This is not a lack of intelligence or saying that people are dumb. Right? No, there's upheld intelligence. There's upheld dignity in this.

But he says, Some love the dark rather than the light. They love concealments. They love the false sense of safety that the darkness provides.

Darkness offers comfort but delivers captivity. There's the nature of darkness. Darkness is like ivy that's creeping along a doorway and providing what might appear as beauty while silently closing you in so you cannot escape.

And maybe that's you today. Maybe this is you. Jesus gives you authentic hope today. Not manipulative or shame-based hope, but gracious and clear.

Consider Christ's words in John 8, verse 12. I am the light of the world, he says. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

[11 : 46] I am the light of the world, Jesus claims. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

There's something about this light, isn't there? There's something about this light that exposes. There's no neutrality when the light comes.

There's no neutrality now. If you've been hiding from truth or living by your own definition of truth, there's an invitation tonight to come to light, the light of Jesus Christ.

Not to be humiliated, but to be healed by the light. Light reveals what darkness pretends to protect all the time.

And Jesus doesn't say just admire him and appreciate him. But he says, walk with me. That because of Christ's proximity with us, we maintain our proximity to him.

[13 : 01] Word that John gets into his letters as abiding with Christ. And when we do, the light sustains our hope. Nothing that we do can sustain that hope.

And it is everlasting hope in Christ. And now John won't let us think the problem is only out there, like around us.

But darkness isn't merely around us. It is naturally within us. And the light doesn't only pierce this world and come into our worlds and pierce our worlds, but it also purges us.

A very personal aspect. And we see that in the second section, going back to verse 9. And John writes, The true light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

Look with me in verse 9. The true light which gives light to everyone was coming into this world. Now that doesn't mean that everyone is automatically saved, right?

[14 : 15] It means that no one can escape that confrontation when the light comes. We can't escape it. Here we understand that God has not left humanity without witness, without something to believe in.

He's proved us something to believe in solely and wholeheartedly. And the light shines and every single heart must respond. There's no neutrality in that.

And yet John says, He came to His own and His own did not receive Him. People who should have received Him rejected Him. You see, our greatest problem is not ignorance then, but it's resistance.

As Romans 1 talks about suppressing the world, suppressing the truth. We do not merely lack facts. We literally resist and reject authority by nature, naturally, in darkness.

It's like refusing to open the curtains on a sunny day. My wife always gets on me about opening the curtains on a sunny day. I forget about them, but it's a big thing to her.

[15 : 28] And who knew? But it's not that I refuse to open the curtains. It's that I'm not even thinking about it. But for the sake of my illustration, for those who refuse to open the curtains, refuse to let the light shine in and just keep the curtains closed, we know, number one, the sun doesn't fail in that situation, right?

The sun's still shining. But the heart is resisting light, right? And so some might say, well, I don't believe in God because I just don't see enough evidence.

Really? You think all this came to be out of nothing? By chance? Looking up at the starry sky and the galaxies within galaxies and the endless miles throughout the galaxies and the universe.

You want to say that this just happened to occur? Have you ever even looked at the human body so intricately woven that if I hurt my finger, the amount of processes and neurons that spike to my brain saying, that hurts?

Within a split second, you think all of that came to be by chance? You have got to be kidding me. It takes more faith to believe that it all came by chance, right?

[16 : 55] It's like we try to manage our own truth. And friends, if that is you, that God just hasn't given you enough evidence, and you're sort of just managing your light and darkness and your own truth, you have to realize that you cannot manage darkness, but darkness manages you always.

Now, others might say, we live in the popular day today where others might say, well, I'm spiritual. I'm spiritual, but I'm just not a Christian.

I like the idea of light. I just don't like the Lord who commands my life. But that kind of light always stays vague.

That kind of light always is undefined. It comforts, but it never confronts. And if it never confronts, it will never save.

And while there's still others who carry wounds outside of the church and inside of the church, maybe Christians who have hurt you, you say, well, Brent, you don't know what I've done, what that pastor did to me, and all the evil things that occur within God's house.

[18 : 15] Say, Christians have hurt me, so I don't trust the church or the God who they claim to love. And they fail to display. We must say, yeah, the pain is real.

There is real pain in this life, and especially, unfortunately, from a place that is to care for the broken and the outcast. But closing the curtains on Christ because people failed you leaves you sitting in cold shadows.

The problem is not that the light is unclear. The problem is that our hearts cling to shadows that we believe that we can control.

We guard our autonomy. We guard our preferences. We guard and we hold on to resisting exposure.

But here's the sobering truth, friends. Refusing the light does not make darkness any safer. It only makes us less aware of how trapped we really are within the darkness.

[19 : 28] Refusing the light does not make darkness safer. It only makes us less aware of how trapped we really are. Now, John gives us one of the most breathtaking promises of Scripture.

One of the most breathtaking promises. He says in John 1, 2 through 13, that we said, To all who did receive him, he gave the right to become children of God.

Born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. You see, light does not simply diagnose and expose and confront, but it transforms us.

It creates new life, a new nature, a new standing with God. We're not saved by our human efforts.

We're not saved by our decision or our heritage. We are born again by the sovereign grace of God. And Jesus says in John 8, 34, Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

[20 : 44] But if the Son sets you free, you will be what? Free indeed. Jesus doesn't make bad people better.

Bad people better. He makes dead people alive. Freedom isn't pretending that darkness isn't real. Freedom is letting light defeat it.

That is freedom. Freedom. And when that light exposes, John declares, You are a child of God. By the will of God. Your past doesn't define you.

Sin does not own you. And shame does not speak the final word. If you are walking in the light, the journey is not something that you grow out of either.

But you grow deeper into that. We began by saying that every life is shaped by something. There's something about this light, isn't there?

[21 : 49] But we know it's certainly true in this passage. That whatever shapes us will eventually consume us.

It's the good news. And it's also the bad news of the gospel. And John has showed us why. Because when the light came, the world did not simply analyze him.

They either received him or rejected him. There was no neutrality in that. There was no neutral ground then.

There is no neutral ground now. The most loving thing that I can say to, maybe if you're not in Christ tonight, is that apart from Jesus, there is no hope.

When our life ends, there are two roads. Eternal life or eternal death and judgment. The only safe place is to stand in the light.

[22 : 55] So if you have been hiding, step into that light. If you've been resisting, surrender to that light. If you belong to Jesus, I encourage you to continue to walk boldly deeper into that light, closer to that light.

May this Christmas be a reminder for all of us to refuse shadows and gladly entrust our lives to the light of the world, Jesus Christ.

Holy surrender. What will consume you? Darkness or light? Let's pray.