

# December 7, 2025 - John 1:6-13 - "Somethin' about this Voice"

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[ 0 : 00 ] Will you turn with me to the book of John, the first chapter.

I'll be reading from verses 6 through 13. 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.

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.

He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

[ 1 : 09 ] This is God's word. Thanks be to God. Just a word to our tech guy or slide guy back there. I don't have a clicker today.

This just in. Well, praise God for his word. Praise God for these ordinances of communion to take, to remember his sacrifice, that we may experience even his presence in a spiritual way through communion and our physical union with one another.

It is a blessing to take communion. It is the Sunday that nobody wants to miss. But unfortunately, my wife and daughter had to miss today. Hi, honey, on the live stream.

Yep, I just called you out. I'm just kidding. But Aloe was puking. And so that was yesterday. She's doing much better today.

I told her to take some sermon notes today, so we'll see what she comes up with when I get home. But what? Maybe both. Now, there's a situation that happened once in our marriage, and my wife said to me once, where's Aerie?

[ 2 : 37 ] Now, we were at the Canfield Fair, and she says that.

I basically respond, well, where do you think with all the other kids? And then as I turn around to all the other kids, I'm like, where's Aerie?

Oh, no. I mean, you all laugh at me. Or we laugh at home alone. But like, where's Kevin? That's like a dying situation.

Like, when you lose your child, you're like, oh, snap. And so if you know anything about me, anxiety starts swelling up.

I start analyzing the catastrophic thoughts. Like, even to the extent, like, she's getting trampled by cows. Not just stolen by strangers, but trampled.

[ 3 : 43 ] And the panic sets in. And the racing heart. Do you know that feeling of losing a child? Or maybe being lost. I remember, even to this day, I'm 38.

I remember being like, maybe my girl's age, and being lost in the grocery store. It's a weird imprint in my memory. And she was literally lost among 60,000 people that day.

And then within minutes, praise the Lord, within minutes, through the brief space that I could see between people betraying their diets, I see my daughter, Ari, in tears, freaking out, with a very concerned adult parent.

We tell our kids, whenever they get lost, if they ever get lost, find a mommy and a daddy. And so she found a mommy, and the mommy was like, it's going to be okay.

And she was helpless, and she was crying, with this concerned parent trying to soothe her. And I immediately shouted out, Ari!

[ 5 : 01 ] And she hears it. She immediately responds. And she dashes. The parent's like, well, I hope, you know, the consoling parent is like, I hope this is the guy.

Not my problem anymore. But immediately, I shout out, Ari! She dashes. We run towards each other as fear and relief collide on that crowded walkway.

All of this, because she heard a voice. You see, before I even embrace her, peace had already begun in her heart.

Her anxious heart. Because the child has heard and seen the one that she loves dearly. That's the picture that Scripture gives us today in John.

Now, spiritually speaking, we're not the calm adults, composed adults, who have everything figured out. But spiritually speaking, we are the children.

[ 6 : 25 ] God is our Father. We're the children in the crowd, overwhelmed, surrounded in chaos, distracted, disoriented, longing for that voice that cuts through the confusion.

So God, in His mercy, sends a voice to us. It's the voice of John the Baptist. to those in the passage, which reaches even us here today in the Word of God.

A voice that rings out. It's a voice that's strong enough to rise above the noise. I mean, the fair is pretty loud, but Ari heard that distinct voice calling out to her.

It's a voice tender enough for lost children to recognize. It's a voice loud enough to lead us home. If last week was there's something about this word, today we see that there's something about this voice.

There's something about this voice. And it's not just vocal cords, right? there's something about this call.

[ 7 : 50 ] It's authority, a message, and peace that this voice proposes in the disoriented world.

It's like sound waves move like rays of light, piercing the dark condition of our souls. peace. And through this voice, we hear peace calling and we see peace coming.

I'm going to break this passage into three different sections today to help us grasp what is being unfolded before us and diving deep into the text together.

And we'll see that unfold in this passage, the point that we hear peace calling and we see peace coming.

I pray that we humble ourselves like children today under God's word to allow it to change our hearts today.

[ 9 : 05 ] Submit ourselves to his word as children. Let's start this by praying together. Father, thank you so much for your word.

Thank you for caring for us, calling out of the wilderness to humanity to prepare ourselves.

We pray even at this moment that the text calls out to every one of us, whether we are believers or unbelievers today.

We know that your voice does a work that only you can do and you call out to the ones you came to die for. Father, help us to humble ourselves as your children today.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. The first section, we see something unfolding here is peace that calls out to us.

[ 10 : 19 ] And we see this from verse six to verse eight. It says, there was a man. Clear change in the passage today from last week.

We go from cosmological to now there's a man. So now we're going into creation. There's a shift here. There was a man, in verse six, sent from God, whose name was John.

He came as a witness to bear witness about the light that all might believe through him. And so after the previous meeting of the uncreated one, now we meet the created one.

A clear shift in the text. He does this through a word that he used in verse three, a genito, which means and emphasizes something created. And now here there came to be, there was a man, John.

He was separate. separate. He was separate from not what is eternal, but from what was created. And he was set apart for a purpose.

[ 11 : 27 ] And God bless you. Despite the distinction here, the same related force is at work that was even at work in creation. So there's still this common thread that began to unfold in verse one through five that's continuing to actually be threaded through the passage today.

And it's this related force being at work. This related force is the work of God behind the voice, behind creation, and even before creation was God's work.

And even in creation was still God's work. And it's creating in the world, in the created world, a witness to the word.

simply to say, John the Baptist is a critical player in the unfolding, historical unfolding of the plan of God in redemption.

This is the word at work in the world through a voice. John is sort of like a witness along a long standing tradition of many other forerunners that go before God's plan to prepare people.

[12:44] You might think in the Old Testament like Moses or maybe all of the prophets, all of which were means of God's testimony to be bearing forth among creation.

They were merely vessels, right? And so there was a task here, the task of this witness. we might think of a witness in the court of law, even though it's not the context here, I'm just kind of like trying to explain what the emphasis, what the meaning is behind this witness.

When somebody sits on trial and they're brought into court to bear witness, bear testimony into the case, no witness in the court of law would ever testify to bring attention to themselves, right?

John wasn't bringing attention to himself, but these witnesses in the court of law are subpoenaed as someone with a valuable perspective on the case at hand.

John was, it wasn't about John, but it's about what John is testifying about, his purpose, his role.

And so the same is true for the task of this messenger, John the Baptist, who stands in history as the first lawful voice in creation that testifies under oath about this light that is coming.

[14:17] He says, the light has come in this passage. Prepare yourself. John reinforced that he's just a witness in verse 8.

that he is not the light. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. He has the right perspective and all by the way of his voice testifying about the light.

There's something about that voice. There's something about it. Through his voice, the light is identified. It's introduced.

It's unmistakably declared in the created world. Why? Well, verse 7, that all might believe through him or through this one.

This one who was before creation in the passage last week. witnessing didn't end though with John.

[15:36] Every Christian has a obligation by God to prepare his creation for the way of salvation.

It didn't just end with Moses or Elijah or Jeremiah. It didn't end with John the Baptist. It didn't end with Christ. It doesn't end until he returns.

Now, when has this role of witnessing in the Christian life become optional? at what point between 2,000 years ago and today has witnessing sort of been dictated upon your personality type?

Well, you don't like people that much, so you kind of get out a free card. Or you're not an extrovert. You're not like Carmen. You don't like to talk to strangers.

Right? Should the lack of robust theological training discredit John the Baptist's role in preparing the people of his day? Of course not.

[16:54] He was sent by God. It was merely vocal chords of which God's authority was ringing out through. And I got to hand it to you that I'm severely discouraged and disturbed by the level of comfort from a lot of Christians today who shrug off the fact that the world is actually going to great lengths to silence Christian.

Christian message, Christian traditions, anything, especially we're at Christmas time, Christmas season, the world goes to great lengths trying to silence even the Christmas message.

I mean, if you saw on the news this week, Portland, Oregon, I mean, it was called a tree lighting ceremony, right? Wonderful. They appeared to go way out of their way to leave out the reason for the season.

Not once, they didn't mention Hanukkah, they didn't mention Christmas, nothing. It was a tree lighting ceremony. Anyone who got to the mic referred to it as a tree lighting ceremony. It almost was so awkward to watch.

That is like, you could hear tree lighting ceremony, right? Christmas was never mentioned once and actually you kind of got insight into what they were actually trying to do because one of the speakers turned this into a Palestinian political rally, bringing out the flag and waving it.

[18:34] now if the ones who chant free Palestine are the ones in bondage of sin from our perspective because they don't believe in Jesus Christ, well, it hits on our side too.

Then the church that remains as a silent witness are equally in bondage to sin, to not speak against or speak for anything, to just remain silent.

And allow sin to just overcome. Sin of apathy or quite possibly apostasy. You see, John the Baptist's message was very confrontational.

We learn that through the synoptic gospels. The other gospels give kind of credence to what John was actually saying. And it was confrontational of repentance, preparation, a look at the heart. And it disrupted those who resist the authority and accuracy of his testimony. John's message was actually sharp to a world in darkness.

[ 19 : 47 ] And church, regardless of where you stand on the political stage, if you're a Christian, Christian, one affiliation here at Steel Valley Church, if you are a Christian, Christian, you have been sent by God himself in Christ Jesus through the Great Commission to all who believe in him.

And as a witness, that will disrupt and divide long before it ever unifies. The theological reality of the witness of God's authority and power behind our vocal cords.

and we see that in John the Baptist's regard. So I gotta ask all of us, where is our voice in our world today?

If there is a peace the church is commissioned to call out, where is our voice? God's love.

And this isn't to succumb to some sort of idea of Christian nationalism. I don't think anybody sitting here today would ever equate the United States of America to as significant as the nation of Israel.

[ 21 : 09 ] No, it's not Christian nationalism, but where is our voice regarding a light that is majorly viewed, as offensive, or even bigoted?

Well, perhaps if we understand a little bit about depravity, we can actually find our answer of why our voice is so offensive in our world today and call it all sorts of names.

We might better understand the resistance of that true peace. In section two, we see in verse 9-11, peace we refuse naturally.

And the true light arrives in verse 9. The true light arrives just as the eternal word of verse 1-5 had made itself known.

We see here that this eternal word as heralded by John the Baptist is preparing the world for the manifestation of the word.

[ 22 : 22 ] The word is coming. And I know it takes a little bit of holy reservation not to just unfold the cards, because we're going incrementally through these passages, so we can't necessarily say, well, Jesus, right?

John hasn't got to that yet. The author, John. But we see that he's preparing this manifestation of his word in the world.

In other words, cosmological now becomes historical. So, vastness now bound to history, bound to time, limited by time, space, and matter.

The word is coming here, and it's through this one in verse 10. We see a light in a dark world being manifest in verse 10.

The term here for world, cosmos, has some significant dimensions to it. One passage relates to cosmos in one way, another reversed to it another way.

[ 23 : 25 ] In other words, it kind of has this emphasis of broad, but then also can be significant and brought down to a limited emphasis. Broadly or specific, you might think of the church at large as a universal reality of the church, but then we have Steel Valley Church, which is like a little snapshot of the large reality.

That's how world is often used here. When he says this here, mankind or humanity may also be called the world as general.

like the world doesn't receive him. The world doesn't know him. Right? He was in the world, cosmos, and the world was made through him.

All things created were through him, yet the world did not know him. And now, God didn't say, let there be light. He created all things, and it's not like he stepped away.

kind of like spinning the dreidel. He said, all right, my work here is done, I'm going to get back to my game. He didn't say that. No, in verse 10, this one was in the world, and the world was made through him.

[ 24 : 50 ] It's a significant relationship with God as a creator being God as a sustainer in creation. It's both physical reality and living reality.

In verse 10, he concludes, but the world did not know him. Isn't that shocking? Did God not do enough to reveal himself to the world?

I mean, he created all things. Why is there an issue here? What excuse was there that they didn't know him? the sense of the verb know can also mean recognize.

It could mean respond. The world did not recognize him, or the world did not respond to him. You see, it's not that the world failed to perceive Him.

The world perceived him, but they did not perceive the light. They loved the darkness.

[ 26 : 01 ] No light. And it turns personal too. Not just the world in general, but in verse 11, it kind of goes to more specific, turns personal.

Those who were literally the property of God, the nation of Israel, the ones who should have been like, that's my father. I know him.

Right? The property of God failed to recognize or respond to him. And this is a sad theological category that's using covenantal language here of the Old Testament.

It's truly sad. And you hear this voice ringing out, and there's something about this voice.

There's something that God has done and is still doing and that's still confronting. I think no matter what department of the world you exist in, whether you are, you have, you're a Christian or an unbeliever today, how do we miss humanity's total depravity?

[ 27 : 23 ] How do we all of a sudden forget? Christians are sensing the rejection, getting slaughtered in Nigeria, right underneath the news's nose, and how do we miss all this stuff unfolding as if it's surprising to us?

How do we miss total depravity? I mean, it's even present in the covenant people of God. The word depravity means that because of man's corruption, there is nothing that man can do to merit saving favor with God.

There is nothing man can do to earn saving favor with God. No merits. And so humanity is totally depraved because of the effects of sin relating to Adam's fall in the garden.

So being total means that the depravity isn't just like a little personality issue. This is actually a pretty deeply rooted all aspects of humanity's nature and our being are lost.

We love the darkness by nature. I said last week if you don't believe! in original sin borrow some kids some young kids under the age of six for a little while I'll give you both of mine you'll realize real quick what original sin looks like right?

[ 28 : 57 ] Nobody had to teach them to misbehave no one needed to teach them how to pull each other's hair out and defy authority and to do all of these things comes natural the Bible says that that's because unless there's some change that occurs within all of our hearts even our own children we pray that our children come to know the Lord someday and there's nothing that they can do to save themselves just like there's nothing that I could do to save myself John Calvin says that all men are conceived in sin and born the children of wrath indisposed to all saving good propense to evil dead in sin and the slaves of sin and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit they neither are willing nor able to return to

God to correct their depraved nature or to dispose themselves to the correction of it however maybe deeper and more related to this passage that we have today we see depravity we understand why there is this resistance the light is in the world and the world doesn't recognize him they don't respond to him they look the other way you might say why the church says depravity sin's effects upon humanity and mankind the world by nature are unable to do good unable to understand good unable to desire good isn't this the world we live in you all looked at the world lately

I mean it doesn't have to be lately you can look at history go learn about some history go to the library open some books look upon all all humanity's history look in biblical history look even into the exodus it's been existing all along isn't this in our modern day how it translates more related to our world isn't this the source of hatred towards Christians in our subjective and individualistic culture today that everything is based on feelings and not necessarily upon truth and in a sense it's flipped feelings have become truth right maybe you're here thinking this preacher doesn't know me he doesn't know my experience

God is clearly evil you might be saying that that Christianity is a bunch of transphobic! homophobic homophobic all the obics everything just label them and that you have your experience with that and you're just doing your own thing because truth is subjective and the way of peace is being discovered your own way I think Lady Gaga had a song about that in other words truth is dependent upon me in our world well if that's you today I certainly may not know you but I can say for certain that within the first dozen of these verses in the gospel of John to resist God is to dwell in darkness it is not my opinion on the matter it is not subjective!

upon how I feel about it it is something authoritative within the word as the word informs our reality wouldn't the devil love to fool you with the facade of peace that will fade like our fleeting feelings do

you know how feelings just come and go they're kind of like a high you feel good and then all of sudden you get a flat tire and all you are like Job woe is life everything is a mess am I under judgment of God right come on Christians our feelings fade like flowers but there is a truth that anchors there is a light a light that brings peace with God that is enduring and it has nothing to do with our willingness or unwillingness to receive him but it is the will of

[ 34 : 25 ] God and the initiative of God's spirit to bring about salvation in our hearts want peace in this life well John's saying there's something about this voice that confronts this reality he says the there's a mystery that scripture promises that the spirit work is unconditionally at work in you and this is good news because there's a third section here in this passage the remaining two verses is like the choir singing out together with the good news of the gospel but contrast but to all who did receive him who not only perceived but responded to all who receive him who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of

God who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God if verse 6 through 11 reinforced that the world has become distinct from its creator because of sin verse 12 through 13 is this family reunion there is hope it's good news that proclaims that God is not done creating he is still creating in the hearts of the depraved now many struggle I think in their hearts I've had conversations after a sermon or I'm hitting hard on obedience to the word and everything people say I feel like I'm not saved and I believe that that question is more of a problem with how I preach the sermon than with what's going on in your hearts right because

I get it salvation isn't just a feeling it's faith right what would faith be if we just had this assurance that really accommodates our feelings look at Paul Paul lived in this tension between his flesh and salvation we see this all throughout scripture you see Job he's crying out to God not questioning him but really just expressing his grief over his situation!

It's exclusive allegiance! It's exclusive allegiance to that word responding just as a child who trusts the parents going back to Ari lost at the Canfield Fair don't call CPS by the way I love our children she was aware there was an awareness that Ari had that she was lost and it had to do with the direct relationship that she did belong in a family that she was outside of this union she was scared and the evidence of her belonging to the family was expressed simply in searching searching for the one that they belong to similarly God's children are at peace because of the designated status of a child of

God that has in the family of God if you struggle with assurance praise the Lord isn't the fact that you struggle with assurance assurance in and of itself amen the world doesn't struggle with this though the ones in darkness who do not perceive the light they don't care about that they belong to themselves they have their own truth peace for a child is not circumstantial it's personal and the same is true for the believer all because this voice rang out to the world there's something about this voice John is making the distinction within the world this sort of like dual citizenship that those who receive him and believe are not just citizens on earth but they're citizens of heaven they're in the family of God they're given an adopted status that's legally binding they are brought in it doesn't come in and go out it doesn't come to and fro like the winds upon our feelings it's something anchored in shore new status new nature and a new family and just as this passage speaks about in verse 12 but to all who did receive him the writer of the gospel of

[ 40 : 22 ] John John the apostle John not John the Baptist we got two Johns today surprise we have John the author of the gospel and he brings a little bit of insight into something mysterious but so important for us to at least wrestle with and understand he says but to those who did receive him category of people he says essentially implies this is what happened to them he says in 12 who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God who were born not of blood nor the will of the flesh nor the will of man but of God there's something mysterious in this section something very mysterious just as a child is born at a specific moment in physical birth

I know some mothers are full with baby right now some at home in pain some here today that are just like man I hope this happens soon but it's not in any of these women control of the time of their delivery at least apart from administering and just creating contractions and things like that it's not up to the baby at all of when they come to life and similarly there's an additional instantaneous moment in the life of a Christian where the Holy Spirit imparts new life a new birth and you don't have to be a Calvinist to believe in this miracle of this moment that has nothing to do with what a person does but it's something that is done to you you don't have to be a Calvinist you have to just be biblical this is John's writing this is what scripture says I don't care the is or the isms care about

being biblical and here

John indicates! new birth is not in effect by the will of man and many call this birth moment regeneration we had it in our Titus reading in our corporate reading this is a birth moment regeneration and John clarifies this moment is an act of God it's not cooperative between God and man like maybe you might think of two operators of some ship that say you ready ready fire fire it's not a cooperative effort it is a domineering it is a God who saves beyond the will of man beyond the will of flesh but of God you are born again this is a mystery it is really confusing you got theologians totally in disagreement you have church members in disagreement over this men's retreat 2024 talking about this great conversations but there's a misunderstanding of how this works practically and praise the

Lord we're not supposed to know an infinite God but we can know what scripture says and root ourselves in what scripture says I would imagine something regarding regeneration and this new life this birth moment sort of like this preconceived state before the light was turned on kind of like wandering around in the dark like imagine yourself in a dark room now you can probably feel furniture in there you can kind of like tell that there's something there right fumbling around oh that's a wall yeah good right but you can't see this is the pitch is black darkness relating to depravity that humanity is in and they're walking around can you imagine yourself in that but there is a moment according to scripture that a light was turned on a light was turned on and instantaneously there was sight restored at the moment that you perceived what was before you and it is my deeply held belief that regeneration is

God turning the light on it is God turning that light on his sovereign act giving spiritual sight to the blind and to the deaf to the depraved and faith is that immediate response and that's where people get choked up in at what point after that light goes on it's like a micro of a micro of a microsecond like we can get lost in this this argument relating to at what point did we choose to follow Jesus as the hymn goes I've decided well before we decided scripture says that God decided it's true we don't have to believe in order to be reborn we believe because we have been reborn new nature new life children of

[ 46 : 06 ] God are you a child of God we all have the weight of our sin we still struggle with sin at times we get disoriented even in our faith struggling but to those who love the light even when they're disoriented will reach for their father because they're lost like area at the camp field fair will reach as a child fully aware of the darkness that's surrounding them because they ultimately desire the light there's good news for those who belong to Jesus Christ and our children of God so if you if Jesus is who you reach for we are certain that in your heart there resides not a theological mystery of regeneration but a theological reality of salvation you have been saved and praise the

Lord for that peace you can try to create peace or you can just receive it that's it and there's something about this voice and if this is the voice that points to Jesus Christ Christ then you know exactly where to go if you here today you're to run to Jesus Christ not run to a pastor not run to the altar not run to your mother but to run to a savior run toward the light run toward the father run toward peace hear peace calling and see peace coming let's pray