

## “Jesus Is the Light of the World”

John 1:1-5 - *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 any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

- John, “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” is obviously expecting his readers to hearken back to their knowledge of Genesis. Phrases like “In the beginning,” “Let there be light” should be coming to mind.
- Before the light, the physical realm was in total and absolute darkness and nothingness. God’s creation of light was necessary in bringing order to the dark cosmos.
- The word, Jesus, was/is God. Through and by Jesus, everything was made. Everything.
- John wants to imply that Jesus’ coming into the world was as important an event as the act of creation itself.

John 1:9-14 - *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. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

- Before Jesus came into history, men were walking in relative darkness. After several millennia of recorded history, humanity was in a state of spiritual ignorance.
- Even the Jews, to whom the oracles of God had been revealed, failed to acknowledge their creator. They had committed spiritual adultery by following other gods and by developing a religion based, not on God’s revelation, but primarily on their own rules and traditions.
- The world was ripe for a fresh burst of light from God. Into this dark world Jesus came as the true light, full of grace and truth.
- His own (the Jews) did not receive him, but to those all who did receive him by believing in him, both Jews and Gentiles, he gave the right to become children of God.

These are the propositions I want to explore with you today:

- Because Jesus is the true light of the world, our eternal status is determined by how we respond to Jesus.
- Many people say and claim many things. If their truth claims don’t line up with the Word, they should be rejected.
- Our attitude, when competing philosophies arise, should be “Did your guy rise from the dead? Then I don’t want to hear it!”
- There are two, and only two, groups of people in the world and into eternity: those who see the light, come to the light, and believe, and those who stay in darkness because of disbelief.
- In the same way, there is one, and only one, reason why people reject Jesus: they prefer their value system, their own set of standards, over his. To put it bluntly, they are not willing to give up their sin. “Everyone is a theologian.”

- In John 3 we have the story of the Pharisee, Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night (why do you suppose he came after dark instead of the light of day?). They had their famous exchange about being born again, and that unless you are born again you will never see the kingdom of God.
- In verses 19-21 Jesus said this *“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. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”*
- Think about it, from dark alleys to the high ivory towers of academia...the person who rejects Jesus does so because he loves his lifestyle more than his perception of a life being a disciple of Jesus.
- To follow Jesus, it will cost you something. In fact, it will potentially cost you everything. If there is something, anything, you are not willing to give up to follow Jesus, then you are not truly his disciple. Recall the story of the rich young ruler. He recognized the truth in Jesus, but he was not willing to give up his possessions to follow Jesus.
- Belief or disbelief is indicated (not determined) by our works (what we say, what we do, our attitude, and our affections). If we believe we should bear good fruit.

These propositions are wonderfully illustrated in the story of the man born blind from birth, and his encounter with Jesus the Messiah in John, Chapter 9:

*As he (Jesus) passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” 3 Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*

- Jesus is about to bring light to this fellow’s dark world. In addition, he is going to bring the light of God’s omniscient will to the situation. This man was created for this moment!
- Now we have this story, recorded in scripture, for our benefit! Do you think the blind man or the disciples could have realized the implications at the time?
- Do you believe that God wants to display his work in you? Wouldn’t our lives and the lives of those being crushed by the weight of misery and sin be so much better if we fully apprehended the truth that God wants to use our life situations to display his works? God wants to write a “John Chapter 9” using your life to bring him glory!
- But, people love their standards and their interpretations of their life’s situations more than they love the truth Jesus can bring to their situations. We love darkness more than the light.

*6 Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud 7 and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. 8 The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” 9 Some said, “It is he.” Others said, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” 10 So they said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” 11 He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed and received my sight.” 12 They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”*

- One thing that's great about this fellow is his unapologetic honesty. When asked, he simply tells it like it is. He humbly obeys, and he reaps the benefits.

*13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. 15 So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." 16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. 17 So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."*

- Notice the inability of the Pharisees to believe what had happened. Why? They prefer their own standards and interpretations of "God's will" to the truth found in Jesus.
- They are faced with an obvious miracle, but they refuse to believe because it would mean they would lose something: their place of prominence and power in their culture.
- In the Hebrew culture of the time, the Pharisees ruled the day. Yes, they were under Roman rule, but unless there was trouble the Romans left the Jews alone.
- The Jews feared the Pharisees about as much as they feared the Romans because of the power they held.

*18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight 19 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20 His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. 21 But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." 22 (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."*

- There it is again. The parents could see the obvious, that their son had been healed, but they didn't want to risk losing the life they were enjoying. The cost of admitting the obvious, that there was something divine about this man Jesus, was too high.

*24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." 25 He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." 26 They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" 28 And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." 30 The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34 They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.*

- Jesus promised his disciples that when they were put on trial for following him, they should not worry about what they should say.
- It took a tremendous amount of boldness for this fellow to stand up to some of the most powerful people he would probably ever encounter.

- Being healed of blindness can make you bold. What does Jesus want to do in you, so that you can and will boldly proclaim his name?

*35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." 38 He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. 39 Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.*

- The man born blind was willing to put aside everything to follow Jesus. You might be tempted to think "Well, why not? What does he have to lose by becoming Jesus disciple? His life just got a lot better!"
- Did it? Now he must find a way to make a living whereas before all his did was sit and beg. It would be doubly difficult because he has been put out of the temple. In that day and culture, to be cast out was to be totally ostracized. He would definitely have an uphill climb. It's quite possible that his parents were pressured to put him out of their house as well.
- The Pharisees and the blind man's parents refused to count the cost. Their unbelief, their refusal to give up their darkness and come to the light will result in their eternal damnation unless they repent and believe.

Remember my earlier proposition that there are only two groups of people in the world and into eternity: those who see the light, come to the light, and believe, and those who stay in darkness because of disbelief and a refusal to give up their own standards?

The Apostle John, who witnessed this miracle, also wrote the book of Revelation. He recorded what he heard and saw in this revelation while in exile on the penal island of Patmos. He could easily relate to the blind guy's fate. Let's close by looking at the admonition the resurrected Jesus gave to a church that was struggling with the cost of following him. Revelation 3:14-22:

*14 "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.*

*15 "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, **I will spit you out of my mouth.** 17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, **and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.** 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. 21 The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*

- We might be tempted to think "Really, there are three groups of people in the world":
  - cold (like the Pharisees in the story of the blind man healed by Jesus),
  - hot (like the blind man who believed Jesus), and
  - lukewarm (like the parents who saw and believed what happened, but who would not give up their comfortable lives to become followers).

- But Jesus makes it very clear...to be lukewarm is to be cold. Both will be spit out of his mouth.
- “Lukewarm” means to be room temperature. You simply adapt to your surroundings so as to not stand out or risk being noticed as a disciple.
- “Lukewarm people don't really want to be saved from their sin; they want only to be saved from the penalty of their sin.” — Francis Chan
- “The core problem isn't the fact that we're lukewarm, halfhearted, or stagnant Christians. The crux of it all is why we are this way, and it is because we have an inaccurate view of God. We see Him as a benevolent Being who is satisfied when people manage to fit Him into their lives in some small way. We forget that God never had an identity crisis. He knows that He's great and deserves to be the center of our lives.” — Francis Chan

May our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Light of the World, deliver us from darkness, from our blindness, so that we will become “hot” Christians who are willing to give up anything to be his disciples.

Close in Prayer

### **Bonus Material**

Video Dramatization – Jesus heals a man born blind

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LRowXe8XBU>

“Healing a Man Born Blind.” A sermon by Pastor Francis Chan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOM5zDcfVDA>

“Are You a Lunkwarm Christian?” A list of symptoms by Francis Chan

<http://iwilltrustinyou.org/post/3952064952/are-you-a-lukewarm-christian-by-francis-chan>

“I Am the Light of the World.” A sermon by John Piper

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/i-am-the-light-of-the-world>