

Jesus, The Light John 1:1-13

As we read and as we enjoy these precious words of our Lord, we often see how He so effectively used examples and analogies and metaphors to help us to understand the mystery of who He is and the things that He is able to do.

But we need always to remember that His use of figurative language is for our help and our benefit. He knows that our minds are so very small and are truly unable to fully comprehend the meaning and the wisdom that He wants us to know about.

And that is especially so with this word that is used here in these first few words of John chapter 1 as Jesus is described as being the "Light", the "Light".

Bear with me for a moment as we step back to the "Beginning" of time, the "Beginning" of all existence, where we are told in Genesis chapter 1 that God first "spoke" creation into existence. In verse 3 of Genesis, God said,

³ . . . "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. (Genesis 1:3-5)

I love to ponder words like those, because probably for most of my years of reading these words, my simple mind thought that God was speaking about the ordinary light and darkness that we experience within our ordinary days and nights.

But then one day I realized that no, when He spoke this light into existence the sun and the moon and the stars had not yet been created. He did not create the sun and the moon until the fourth day.

No! This was a whole other kind of Light. This is that special "Light" that comes only from the presence of God Himself. That same Light that He describes for us at the very end of the bible in Revelation chapter 21, where we are told that the new Heaven and the new earth and the new City of Jerusalem,

²³ . . . 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. (Revelation 21:23)

And I have no doubt that this Light of the Lord Jesus that is spoken about here in John chapter 1 was that very same first Light that filled the earth at the very beginning of time spoken about there in Genesis chapter 1.

And oh, it is such a very, very special kind of light. It is the same light that would later fill the hearts and souls of everyone who would surrender themselves into the salvation that the Lord Jesus would generously provide for us through His shed blood on that cross.

And it is that same light that then abides moment by moment within those of us who believe in Him, a light that enables us to see things and to know things that we would not otherwise be able to know, things of wisdom and holiness and righteousness, things that are directly of the Lord Jesus.

Let's pause here for a moment and read these first words given here in the Book of John and we'll talk about this special "Light".

Listen, John chapter 1, verse 1,

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

⁶There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

¹³children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (John 1:1-13)

These words from our Lord reveal that in Jesus, there is a unique kind of "life". It is that kind of "life" that Jesus breathed into the nostrils of Adam and Adam became a "living soul".

And please know that the “breath” of the Lord Jesus was far and beyond the simple air that exists all around us. His breath was the very “breath of God”, breath that brought a unique form of “life” to Adam, “life” that enabled Adam to see and to know things about Him that Adam would not otherwise be able to see and to know.

And here, God calls that ability “light”, a very special ability that He would also give to us, to anyone and to everyone who would put their trust in Him as Savior and Lord, providing us with that same special kind of ability, the ability to see and to know things that we would otherwise not be able to see and to know. And especially, the ability to see the wiles and the evils that are present within this dark world that swirls all around us each day.

And as we are told here, that darkness wants to be able to understand and to even overcome that special light, but it can't. The Light of our Lord is far too powerful.

God used the example of light and darkness here in these words for good reason, because in most every human mind, darkness has a foreboding and ominous presence.

Darkness is the time when most of the evil of this world takes place, robberies, murder, partying and carousing, cheating and adultery. Our foolish minds rationalize that in the darkness, no one can see us. We avoid the light because it exposes our sin.

We are told about that in the Book of John chapter 3. Listen!

¹⁹This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (John 3:19-20)

As we study these words today, let me remind us again of some of the thoughts that we expressed in an earlier study. First, from John 6:63 Jesus said, “The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”

Consider for a moment . . . what is it that can cause a simple word to take on meaning that is far and beyond the common definition that we assign to it? The

answer is, “the Spirit of God”. And that is exactly what takes place in these Words of scripture. They have the very Spirit of God alive within them.

These Words that we are reading here in the Book of John are “Spirit and they are life”. And any understanding that we can have of them are far more perceived by our spirit than the understanding we might have with our rational mind.

And the only means, by which we can begin to perceive the things of God with our spirit, is to first accept them with our faith, “our faith”.

And as we learned in an earlier study, God has a special word that He prefers to use to describe that kind of “Spirit-filled faith” that must abide within our souls. It is the Hebrew word “Emunah”, that word used in Genesis chapter 15 when God said that Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness. That word “Emunah”, “believe”, bespeaks a kind of “faith” that is such a strong conviction within our souls that it transcends any form of reasoning that our minds might have!

It is a form of “belief” that is filled with God’s Spirit. It is done and settled and accepted within our souls. And again, the only way to have that kind of “settled belief” is through the power of God’s Spirit within us.

Folks, God is able to communicate His personality, His plans and His purposes by His Spirit, through the mysterious conduit of our “belief” in Him, our “faith”. And He doesn’t first require you and me to be able to rationally comprehend Him before we can have this abiding faith.

And besides that dear Christian, We don’t have the capacity to do that even if we wanted too. That truth is expressed so well for us in Romans chapter 11. Listen.

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

³⁴ “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”
(Romans 11:33-34)

Again, God really does not require you and me to rationally comprehend Him. But though that be so, He does want us to know Him . . . to know Him intimately

and lovingly. And we can only do that through the eyes and through the ears of "faith", listening to His Spirit. In John chapter 16 He tells us that,

¹³ . . . when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. (John 16:13-14)

Think carefully about those words folks. Our faith, listening to His Spirit, is the only means by which you and I can receive, believe and accept the true meaning and intent of God's Words. His light illumines His Words and they "come alive" within us and begin to make changes in us.

Listen to these words given in verse 12!

¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

These words bespeak a "belief" that "receives" and "accepts" all that Christ is, a kind of belief that goes far and beyond our abilities to reason it out.

My mind immediately goes to all the many people who sit in the church pews across our world each week. As we know, not all of those people are believing Christians. Even Billy Graham often acknowledged that not half the people in our churches were truly saved.

There, sitting side by side in those church pews were human souls, some of which listened intently, believing, receiving and accepting the Words of God. But sadly, others sat with them listening to the very same Words, but completely without understanding.

Folks, an unbelieving mind resides in darkness and rejects the light that can bring meaning to concepts like this that tells us that "to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, He (the Lord Jesus) gave the right to become children of God."

Without the Holy Spirit to define these words, there is no ability to understand them.

Yes, an unbelieving mind can believe and accept the world's systems and think nothing of it. And although they might not articulate it, they actually even place their faith and their trust in those world systems.

Each day, people will drive their cars in traffic, they will put their money in banks, they fly in airplanes, and yes, they take all those medications that their doctors prescribe, each behavior requiring belief and faith and trust.

And no, a person doesn't have to know and to understand how all those things work to enjoy the benefits they offer.

And the very same is true about God and all that He is and all that He does each day. Simply refusing to believe in God does not keep God from being the wonderful and loving God that He is. As those words in Psalm 119 remind us, "God is good and He does good", and that is regardless of whether we believe in Him or not.

And these scriptures speak directly to that point. The light that is within Christ shines through regardless of whether or not the darkness wants to receive it or to reject it.

Verse 4 . . . "in him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

And verse 10 . . . "He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him."

Oh dear Christian, Jesus came into this world to be life to everyone that would accept Him. And His presence is a special kind of "Light" that enables us to accept and receive Him and also to see how to walk daily through this dark world.

I love the way He words it in Psalm chapter 119. There the Psalmist says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

And here in John chapter 1 we read,

⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (John 1:4-5)

Once light is able to shine upon a person, or an idea, or a principle or belief, then truth can be known about it. And so it is with the Lord Jesus. He came into this world to be a special kind of light that would shine on people, and on ideas and on beliefs so that we could truly understand them.

But unfortunately, not everyone is willing to receive and to accept what His light reveals. By choice, much of this world lives in a special kind of "darkness", a special kind of blindness, an inability to perceive whether something they are looking at is truly right or wrong, good or evil.

The presence of Jesus coming into the world shines a light within that kind of darkness. But again and unfortunately so, that darkness has a special kind of power about it. And that darkness tries every moment to overcome the light, but it can't. Verse 5 . . . "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it."

Bear with me for a moment as we take a careful look at this word "understood". The Word "understood" as it's here has a special dual meaning. It is a combination of two Greek words, Kata and Lambano. Katalambano, Kata , which means frequent, continuous intense opposition to, and Lambano, means willingly and actively reaching out to receive.

Combined, these words mean that darkness literally fights against receiving and accepting the light of Jesus. The implication being that the darkness spoken about here, has a special presence of evil within it that continuously opposes the light. Darkness can't comprehend the light, and neither can it understand the light, so it continually fights against and tries to overcome the light.

But to all those who do reach out and actively accept the light that Jesus offers He gives a very special gift. Listen to verse 12.

¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

This Word "received" here in verse 12 is the part of the combination word used a moment ago in "Katalambano". The word received is "Lambano", again, meaning to willingly and actively reach out and receive that light,

¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

Isn't this wonderful folks! For those of us who willingly and actively reach out and receive the light of Christ, we are given the right to become "sons of God".

Oh dear Christian, there is not a more powerful promise in all of scripture.

¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

To those of us who actively reach out and receive Him, to those who believe, to those who have faith in Him, He gives the "right" to become children of God.

This word "right" has a very special meaning. It has the context of a privilege that goes far beyond mere privilege. Its meaning carries with it influence, authority, liberty, power, right and strength.

I'm reminded of the verses in Romans 8 that declare us to be Sons of God.

Listen! Romans 8,

¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

¹⁵For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. ¹⁶The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

¹⁷And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

(Romans 8:14-17)

Again, these words in Romans are of the same sense as the Words used in John 1:12,

¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

When we fully believe and accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we obtain all the "rights" and privileges that accrue to being a Son. While we will certainly not ever be a part of the Deity of the Trinity, we will in every other way be able to receive and enjoy all of the influence, authority, liberty, power, right and strength of a child of God. That is an unimaginable free gift folks.

These words are not frivolous. They are not generalizations. They are Spirit and they are life. And they guarantee you and me that we can walk this earth each day as people that are different from the way we were before, able to fully

enjoy the same love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control that Jesus enjoyed as He walked this earth.

There does not have to be the strife within our souls that fill so many other souls that live in darkness. As children of God, the sin nature no longer exerts control over us. Those words in Romans chapter 8,

⁹You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. (Romans 8:9)

This one simple step in John chapter 1 verse 12 makes all of those changes take place within us.

¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

As "children of God" we become "children of the light". That truth assured to us in Ephesians chapter 5,

⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth). (Ephesians 5:8)

And also in Matthew chapter 5.

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

With the Spirit of Christ living within us, He lights our path and He enables us to become His light to all those around us, a light shining in a dark world, revealing truth to anyone that will listen.

Listen to these words given in John chapter 8 as we close,

¹² . . . Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Pray with me.