

But to all...He gave.

John 1:6-13

October 11, 2026

Today our text will be John 1:6-13.

John 1:6-8 ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through Him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

- John introduces John the Baptist as the man “sent from God.” “Being one sent by God” wasn’t hyperbole. It was prophetic. Isaiah tells of a man who will be sent to prepare the way for the Lord. Let’s read it together.

Isaiah 40:3-5 A voice of one cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the **Lord**; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

- Notice that Isaiah declares that the way is being prepared for the Lord (YHWH). He is not preparing a way for a human king. There is no mistaking that John the Baptist was the one prophesized by Isaiah as the man who was called to prepare the way for the Lord.
- Matthew, Mark and Luke and John all connect this prophecy to John the Baptist.
 - Matthew 3:3 identifies John as the “one spoken of by the prophet Isaiah.”
 - Mark 1:2-3 quotes Isaiah 40:3 in his introduction to John the baptizer.
 - Luke 3:4-6 also specifically references and quotes Isaiah’s prophecy
 - John 1:23 – The apostle John, in telling the story of John the Baptist quotes John identifying himself saying, “I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as Isaiah the prophet said.”

John tells us in verse 7

John 1:7 ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.

- In his letter, John uses “witness” as a noun 14 times and verb 33 times. Here he uses it in both forms.
- He came **“as a witness” (noun)** - Someone who personally knows or observes something and can give a reliable testimony. In a court room they may be referred to as an “eye witness” who was present to see an event or a “character witness” who is someone who knows the person and can speak about their life.
- He came **“to bear witness” (verb)** about the light. He came to testify or affirm what he saw and believed to be true.
- So, in verses 1-5, Jesus is introduced as the Word. The Word who was God and was with God. He is the eternal and pre-existent creator of all things. In Him was life and the life was the light of men.
- John came as a witness, to bear witness about the True Light.
- Every other light is a copy. (Moses, the Law, the temple, the sacrifices) all pointed to the true light and the fulfillment of the OT religion.
- He says, “He came as a witness, to bear witness about the Light” and he concludes verse 7 saying, **“that all might believe through Him.”**
- As we journey through his letter, we will continue to circle back to John 20:31 where he says, these have been written so, **“that all might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God: and that believing you may have life in His name.”**
- In verse 8 John clarifies that “He, John the Baptist, was not the light, but came to bear witness about the Light.”
- In verses 1-5 John introduces the cosmic description of Jesus as the Logos. The Word. In verses 6-8, that introduce John the Baptist, they seem to be dropped in the middle of the metaphor describing Jesus as light.

Why was it important for the Apostle John to drop in the introduction of John the Baptist here? Between the amazing and glorious description of

Jesus as the Logos (the Word) and the historical appearance of Jesus coming into the world in verses 9 and following?

- It was important to introduce John the Baptist because John was sent by God for a specific purpose. His role was to prepare the way, to connect the dots between the OT promises and the arrival of the True Light.
- John was sent to be a witness and to bear witness to establish the identity and credibility of Jesus as the Son of God. John speaks from a human level to bring awareness, to open the eyes of the people, to introduce them to the True Light.
 - In Luke's gospel in chapter 1 he tells us before John was born, the angel Gabriel told his father Zachariah, the priest, John would be "great before the Lord" and would "turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God."
 - Luke tells us in Luke chapter 3:2-3 that around age 30, "The word of God came to John" in the wilderness to proclaim a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
 - Don't we all want to be like John? We all want to know the purpose and the plans that God has for us.
 - John is one of those guys who was truly born and knew the purpose for which he was created.
- So, why does John drop in this introduction of John the Baptist in the middle of this glorious introduction of Jesus as the Word and the Light?
 - John substantiates the credibility of John the Baptist as the witness prophesized by Isaiah
 - Declares the purpose that John the Baptist was sent by God as a witness and...to bear witness about the Light.
 - He emphasizes that he, John the Baptist, is not the Light.
 - He came to testify so that all may believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Transform TSU

- As I have shared, a few months ago I was introduced to the campus leader of the Baptist Student Ministry on the campus of Texas Southern University. He shared with me his “870 Vision” to share the gospel with 870 people or 10% of the TSU students. He says, “Every student, every faculty, every staff.”
- I asked if he had heard of breakaway at Texas A&M where as many as 4,000 students gather each Monday night to worship and hear about Jesus. He had not, so we arranged a visit to see how others were reaching college students.
- A few weeks ago Carl, the TSU BSM leader told me he had met a couple transfers on the football team that wanted to start a Bible study. He invited me to join him and bring the lemonade.
- These past few weeks I have had the privilege to bring the lemonade and to be a witness to the ministry started by the BSM and a couple football players called by God to transform the campus of TSU. They also are using John’s gospel in their teaching to bear witness to Jesus as the life and the light for all men.
- As they share John’s gospel, I came **as a witness** to see the power of the Holy Spirit transform the lives of students, to see these students called out of darkness and into the light and life of Jesus.
- I am here today **to bear witness** about the Light. I testify that many have come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and many have come to have life in His name.

Now John makes the extraordinary claim:

John 1:9-11 ⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him.

- John identifies Jesus as the “True Light.” The Light that gives life to all men.

- John is doing what God sent him to do. To prepare the way and to announce that the light was coming to the world.
- The light washes over the darkness. You may think there is hidden sin or parts of your past that are so dark that His light cannot penetrate. Let me tell you. There is no place in our hearts where it is so dark that the light cannot penetrate. The light penetrates and reaches every dark crevice and every dark corner.
- The True Light, the light of Jesus is for everyone. To the Jews and to the Gentiles. His light is displayed to everyone through His creation.
- We just returned from Yosemite National Park yesterday. The Yosemite valley, El Capitan, Half Dome and the stars in the early morning before sunrise. All week long this verse was on my mind.

Romans 1:19-20 ¹⁹For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

- Looking up at the stars one summer night in 8th grade is exactly how I came to faith. His eternal power and His divine nature was on display.
- He reveals Himself through His creation but we, indeed, are also called to participate with the Spirit to bear witnesses. To tell others. From “Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
- Verse 10 He says, “the true light” was in the world. The world that He made. John just reiterated this fact in verse 3 saying, “All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was LIFE, and the LIFE was the LIGHT of men.” – “Yet the world did not know Him.
- Verse 11 says, ¹¹ He came to his own,^[b] and his own people^[c] did not receive him.
- He came to His own domain, the domain which He created. And His “own people,” the Jewish people, heirs of God’s everlasting covenant to the

descendants of Abraham and Sarah. – Repeat after me. **“But they did not receive Him.”**

- God’s people, the Jewish people, descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob treasured the stories of God’s provision for His people. These stories of God’s provision were known and passed down from generation to generation.
- These stories are foreshadows or copies of the real provision that was promised. Jesus references these stories in His teaching. He clearly identifies himself as the True Light. The fulfillment of the Law and prophecies of the Messiah
- God provided manna from heaven in the wilderness to sustain them during their wilderness journey. The manna met the temporary physical needs but it was a sign pointing to the One who provides life.

Jesus says, in **John 6:35** – I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger.

- Jesus isn’t saying He provides bread to meet the temporary physical needs, but He is the true bread providing eternal life. **“But they did not receive Him.”**

Water is also symbolic to life. God provided water from the rock in the wilderness. Isaiah describes God’s future salvation in terms of abundant water.

Isaiah 44:3 “For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring.”

- The Hebrew prophets associated the coming age of salvation with God pouring out His Spirit like water.
- Jesus, on the 8th day as prescribed in **Leviticus 23:36** at the height of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jewish leaders were reading the promises of God regarding salvation quoting **Isaiah 12:3** “Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation.” At this very

moment of the celebration, Jesus stands and announces Himself as this salvation. Jesus stands and says,

John 7:37-38 “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

³⁸Whoever believes in me, as^[f] the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” **But they did not receive Him.**

- The Hebrew Bible uses the Shepherd as a metaphor for God. Israel's leaders were often referenced as Shepherds who failed God's people who were looking for the one promised Shepherd. A messianic shepherd in the line of David. In the Hebrew Bible, the ultimate Shepherd is YHWH Himself. John records Jesus proclaiming Himself to be the Good Shepherd, the Messianic Shepherd promised through Israel's Scriptures.

John 10:14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me. **But they did not receive Him.**

- In the Hebrew Bible, Israel itself is repeatedly illustrated as God's vine.

Isaiah 5:7 “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel.

- The prophets warn Israel for failing to produce the fruit God desired.

Jeremiah 2:21 Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine?

- After declaring Himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life and promising the Holy Spirit in John 14, Jesus says:

John 15:1 I am the **true vine**, and my Father is the vinedresser.

And then He says, John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. **But they did not receive Him.**

- They were so blinded by religious tradition they could not see the Light that had come to the world. They did not receive Him. They did not believe in His name. And they crucified Him.

John 12:37 Though He had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in Him,

- Religious traditions, while at their roots have good intentions, over time can turn heartfelt worship into a dull and mechanical routine.
 - Communion becomes a sacred routine without bringing the church to truly reflect on Christ's sacrifice of His body and His blood.
 - Fabulous hymns written centuries ago have lost their meaning.
 - Recited prayers and creeds repeated each week lose their connection to the truths that they teach.
- Do you know people today that are blinded by religious tradition? People that fail to recognize or connect their religious traditions that have become routine with spiritual truth? It is the responsibility of the church leaders to put rigor into the service of the church.
 - To prepare their hearts with songs and hymns.
 - To deliver applicable biblical truth through the teaching of the Word of God.
 - To bring the church to the alter to reflect and confess our sin, to recognize and receive the grace and mercy through remembering the Lord's suffering and sacrifice with the Lords Supper.
 - May we never drift into routines that blind us to the great truth we are remembering.
- My mother tells a story where she was playing bridge with one of our long-time family friends. They were having conversation and her friend asked:

Friend: Do you think there will ever be peace in the middle east?

Mom: Not until Jesus comes.

Friend: You mean He's coming here? Where does it say that?

Mom: Knowing she would not be familiar with the Bible she says, you say it every Sunday when you say the Nicene Creed.

**He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.”**

Friend: Is that what it means? ...“I knew that.”

What a tragedy! So many souls are blinded from the True Light because of religious traditions and, more so, because their shepherds have failed them.

But Now! Listen to me as I read the key verse of this text. This verse is addressed to the people and to the purpose to which John is writing.

John 1:12 But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name,
He gave the right to become children of God,

- We ended verse 11 saying, “He came to His own and His own people did not receive Him.” But in verse 12 we pivot, “**BUT TO ALL WHO DID RECEIVE HIM.**”
- What does it mean to “receive Him?” - to receive is to accept or welcome Him as you would receive or welcome a guest in your home.
- John says those “who did receive Him, who **BELIEVED** in His name.”
- What does it mean to “believe in His name?” Believing in His name is more than believing or acknowledging that Jesus exists. “to receive Him and believe in His name” is to acknowledge Him and to invite Him and welcome Him into your life as the person He has revealed Himself to be.
 - FULLY GOD.
 - The Bread of Life
 - The Living Water
 - The Good Shepherd
 - The True Vine.
 - The True Light
- As you sit here today, do you truly believe in Him?
 - Have you welcomed Him into your life as fully God and creator of the world and everything in it.

- Have you invited Him into your life as fully human, born into flesh, relating to the relationships, trials and temptations we all experience, living without sin, and paying the penalty for your sins, overcoming death and seated at the right hand of the father today offering eternal life if only....if only you receive Him and believe in Him?

Now the promise. Human words cannot describe and human emotion cannot express the grace that we have been given.

John 1:12 But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, **He gave the right to become children of God,**

- This is not saying by receiving and believing you will go to heaven. Infinitely more! It says, “He gave the right to become children of God.”
- “He gave.” He gave what can only be given by God. It is not something that can be earned.
- He gave “The right.” What right is John referring to? The word here for right means authority, right, privilege, or legitimate standing. John is saying, those who receive Jesus are granted a right or legitimate standing that would be impossible for them to claim on their own.
- To those who do receive Him and believe in Him, He (Jesus) gives them a new family identity. They become “**children of God.**” Adopted as children. Adopted into the family of God. Those who receive Jesus and believe in His name are **granted** the right to become children of God.
- Before I add to this standing as children of God let me read verse 13 that completes the sentence and John’s proclamation.

John 1:12-13 ² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, He gave the right to become children of God, **Verse 13** ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

- Just to make it crystal clear. John specifically adds verse 13 to clarify what it means to be granted the right to become children of God. John says in

verse 13 it is NOT referring to any right that would be inherited by bloodline that someone is born into or by any self-determined will, decree or decision made by any person, but it is of a right given by God and God alone.

- It is a spiritual birth. To be “born again” into the family of God.

In verse 12 it says, God gives the right to become His children

- **Through Christ Alone** – Jesus is the focus and His children “receive Him,” Christ alone,

God gives the right to become His children

- **Through Faith Alone** – His children “believe in His name.”

God gives the right to become His children

- **Through Grace Alone** – “He gave the right” to become children of God.

God gives the right to become His children

- **Through Scripture Alone** – John’s gospel is an authoritative testimony about who Jesus is.
- **And Glory is given to God Alone** – The entire process is “born of God.”

Some do not receive Him, but those who do receive Him and believe in His name, He gives the right to become children of God.

- In his letter to the church in Rome, Paul uses language of family inheritance describing and personalizing this right as an “adoption.” He begins with the proclamation in

Romans 8:1 saying, There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Once we have received Him and believed in Him, THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS.

- The Law condemns, but the power of the Spirit has set us free from sin and death. And...

Romans 8:16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

- Notice he doesn't say Heirs of God's promises or possessions. He says simply, "Heirs of God." As children of God, we have been brought into God's family. We are heirs to God Himself. The greatest gift of inheritance is God Himself. To know Him, to belong to Him, and to enjoy His presence forever.
- He continues to say we are "fellow heirs with Christ." Through Christ, God adopts us into His family, He gives us His Spirit as the guarantee of our inheritance and promises that we will ultimately share in the glory and eternal life that belong to Christ. Ultimately, God Himself is our inheritance.
- So then....Why in verse 17 does Paul have to mention suffering? Because believers' inheritance is patterned after Christ's own path. Paul goes on to say in **Romans 8:18**, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."
- Suffering also connects with Paul's definition of what it means to "gain Christ" that I have shared a few times.

Philippians 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

- We are transformed to become like Christ as we are sanctified and as we grow through hardships and suffering. God uses suffering to bring us into circumstances where we must learn to trust, to obey, to persevere, to humble ourselves, to love sacrificially and to find our hope in Him. All along conforming us to the character of Jesus.

Let me close with another reflection that John gives to us in a letter that he wrote after writing the gospel of John.

1 John 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called **children of God**; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.

- The light is still shining. For those who have not come to believe, these things are written so that you will believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

A Few Things We Can Take Away from the Text.

- **God is always faithful to His promises.** – God promised He would send one to prepare the way for YHWY, the Messiah. John the Baptist fulfilled His promise.
- **The True Light washes over all darkness.** – There is no darkness in my life or your life that is too dark that the light of Jesus cannot overcome.
- **The shepherds failed to see the One Promised Shepherd.** – They were blinded by religion and pride and did not receive Him. The Bread of Life, The Living Water, The Good Shepherd, The True Vine, and The True Light.
- **But to all He gave the right to become children of God.** – He GAVE the right through Christ Alone, through faith alone, through grace alone, through Scripture alone, and all glory goes to God alone.

If there are any who have not received Him and Believe in Him we want to give you the chance to become children of God today. – Come down after the service and we will be here to pray with you.