

Jesus: the Revelation of God

John 1:1-18

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He was in the beginning with God. 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. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

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.

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. John bore witness about Him and cried out, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because He was before me.'" For from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known.

Let's pray.

Father, we pray now that You would open our eyes that we might see the truth of Your Word. Lord, awaken our hearts to the glories of Your grace. We pray for Your help now in Jesus' name, Amen.

In the beginning was darkness. Have you ever noticed that? I never noticed this before until just recently. If you go to Genesis chapter 1 verse 2, we read it: When God first created everything, in the beginning, there was darkness. The Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. It was

chaos. It was empty. It was a void. There was nothing—no life, no light, no heartbeats, no noise.

Jeremiah imagines a return to this situation in his book, chapter 4, verses 23 to 26. Listen to how he expands this idea: "I looked on the earth, and behold, it was without form and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light. I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro. I looked, and behold, there was no man, and all the birds of the air had fled. I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a desert, and all its cities were laid in ruins before the Lord, before His fierce anger." Lifeless, desolate.

This phrase from H.G. Wells captures a similar concept: "Neither light nor life nor sun nor moon nor stars; the blank infinite." Can you imagine that? Now just close your eyes and try and imagine that darkness, the silence, the emptiness. That is the world without Jesus Christ. That is the world before God speaks. That is the world without God revealing Himself. If God doesn't speak, there is nothing, but if God does speak, then God said, "Let there be light," then there is an explosion of light. Vast, vibrant, life-giving light.

The point of John 1:1-18 is this: Jesus Christ is the revelation of God, and that means that Jesus Christ is all life, all light, all knowledge, all truth, all glory, all grace. And the challenge that John wants to bring before you in this opening prologue to his gospel is this: Do you believe this about Jesus Christ? Do you believe that He is the light of the world who brings knowledge and truth and grace to all men who see through Him?

And these opening verses of John really set up the entire theme of the rest of the book of John. Many of the ideas that we're going to notice as we look through this passage today, if you read the rest of John, you'll find them everywhere. He's setting you up. And this central component of this question—do you believe that—is the question of the entire book of John.

I want to just touch on two brief questions before we start digging into this text a little bit. The first is the structure of this section. Normally we sort of wouldn't do this, but John writes in a Hebrew style. He uses something called a chiasm. That's why I've printed it out for you. If you grab the sheets that I put on the seats beforehand, you'll notice something. A chiasm is a structure of literary writing where you have—it's like a mirror in the middle. Imagine a mirror in the middle of this passage, and there's reflecting ideas on either side. And so I've structured it indented so that you can see it.

The first section there, verses 1 to 9, all deal with Jesus as being the light in

a sense of Him being the creator and revealing God through creation. And then there's a reflecting image in verses 14 to 18, which deal with Jesus showing us the glory of God. And I'll show you it's actually in a way where He's the redeemer. But both of these are about God being revealed through the person of Jesus Christ.

And in between both of these, they're like a mini chiastic structure. There's this idea of John the Baptist, or John the Witness as he's probably better should be referred to based on the book of John. He's the witness of all of this. So you can see those two ideas structured in there. This kind of helped me to make sense of why he keeps talking about John the Baptist in between all these bits. He's forming up this structure. And in the middle, and in a chiastic structure, the middle is the emphasis. He has these two ideas: He came into the world, and the world rejected Him, but to those who received Him, He gave them a gift.

So what we're going to do today is we're going to deal with the first section and then the last section and then the middle section. And that's why, because John's not thinking linearly like we do in the Western world. He's thinking chiastically, right? Building into an emphasis in the middle there.

The second thing I want to just touch on really briefly is that John begins by telling us about the Word. And we're considering the passage as a whole, and so we might as well work out who is this Word that he's speaking about. It's not very difficult. You just have to read the whole thing to work it out. But he's the one who John the Baptist is pointing to in verse 7 and 8. He's the one who became flesh and dwelt among us in verse 14. And then he tells you in verse 17, he is Jesus Christ. So I'm just going to assume that we're all on that page as we go forward.

So let's start by considering this first section, verses 1 to 9. Jesus is the revelation of God in creation. He is the revealer of the Creator God. We know that John's pointing us to this fact because he signals it right up front, "in the beginning," right? Anyone who knows their Bible goes, "Whoa, that's Genesis chapter 1 verse 1." And John's signaling that to us. But then we expect him to say, "In the beginning, God," but he doesn't. He says, "In the beginning, the Word." And so right up front, he's signaling, "Hey, this Word that I'm speaking of, you could substitute God there. This Word is God." And then he tells you in the next few verses that that's the case. This Word is God, he says multiple times.

But then he also says this Word was with God. Now, "with" has this idea of face to face with, communing with. And we're sitting there wondering, how can this be? How can the Word be both God and be with God? How can you speak about this Word as if he's a separate person to God when he

is also God? And so you start to see this great mystery of the Trinity being revealed in John's opening lines. But we're not going to spend too much time on that. There's great depths to be explored there.

But what else you see here is that he's again speaking about how the Word was there in creation. Look at verse 3: all things were made through Him, that is, the Word, and without Him was not anything made that was made. Not only that, but at creation, we start to see life, and we start to see in verse 3 of Genesis, light, right? Light shining in the darkness. In creation, we go from having this dark void, this emptiness, to having a teeming planet full of bright, radiant light and life and abundances of all this greenery and animal life. And John is saying that all came through the Word. The Word brought all that about. The Word was the light that was shining. The Word was the life that was growing up out of the ground, filling the animals and the humans as God made them.

The Word was the light scattering the darkness, bringing order to the chaos. And these words speaking about the light here and the Word, these are all words that relate to revealing. This is really the point that John gets to right at the end of this section when he says, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten from the Father, He has revealed Him." Well, he's signaling that up front. When he speaks of Jesus as the Word, what do you use words for? Well, God uses them to create, but we also use words to reveal, to tell you. You would never know what's going on inside of me if I didn't tell you, would you? You could watch me, but it's my words that communicate what's really happening inside.

This is what it's like with God as well. You would not know God unless He spoke. You would not know what He's like. You wouldn't know what He thinks about things. You wouldn't know what He loves and what He hates unless He spoke. What John is saying here is that through Jesus, God has been speaking since the beginning. Since the beginning. This is a remarkable thing. We can easily become almost deists in our understanding of the world and the way that we approach the world. A deist is someone who thinks that God created, just set the world spinning, and then He left it off to its own devices, and it just sort of operates mechanically. But the Bible doesn't let us think that way. The Bible forces us to engage with a God who is actively speaking all the time, not just to create out of nothing but to sustain His creation.

I've probably said it here before; I say it all the time because I just never get over it. Your heart is beating right now because God is actively saying, "Beat, beat, beat." That's astonishing. And these verses are pointing us not just to that fact that God is sustaining all life through His Word, in Him was life, but it's pointing us to the fact that that activity of God is a revelatory

activity. It reveals God to us.

What do I mean by that? What I mean is God is speaking all the time through you being sustained, through the created world around us, of His glory. He is telling us about Himself constantly through creation. His words are enfleshed in creation.

Psalm 19:1-4, the heavens declare—listen to all the speech words here—the heavens declare the glory of God. Day after day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. See that? It's speaking to you. There is no language or speech where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. What are they saying? They're revealing knowledge. They're teaching us about God.

Paul expands on this in Romans 1:20. He says, "Since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes, God's invisible attributes, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." Everyone can see it. It's understood by the things that are made, "even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." But even man as a creature, even we internally inside ourselves, if you locked up a person in a dark room, they would still have God speaking and declaring Himself to them because there's something happening inside of us that's actively at work by the word of God, by Jesus Christ, that says this.

Our reason, our conscience, our hunger for beauty, our desire for justice, our desire for community—all of these aspects of humanity actively scream to us about our Creator. Paul picks up on this just a few verses later in chapter 1 of Romans, verse 32, where he says, "Men who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them." He's just listed a whole bunch of sins, by the way, one of which includes disobeying your parents, and he says those who do these things know the righteous judgment of God, and they know that they deserve the death penalty. Isn't that astonishing? He's saying, and that bears witness to the fact that there's a Creator, that they have a responsibility to Him. There's all sorts of knowledge that comes out of just that mere fact. I'm a sinner before a God who rightly should judge me. I know the penalty for my sins. There's so much going on there, and John in his first five verses is just bringing to light all of these truths, and he's saying Jesus Christ is the one who God speaks through.

Jesus Christ is the one who is actively at work in creation, screaming at us through the trees and the cows, saying, "I exist. I'm powerful. I'm beautiful, and you should know me." He's the one actively at work in the soul of every person you meet, declaring to them that they're a sinner before a

holy God in deserving of justice, declaring to them that they're a hungry creature of God wanting communion with their Creator. Jesus Christ is the one who's doing that.

And verse 9, this light who is actively at work, shedding light to all men, was coming into the world. Just let that sink in for a moment. Imagine the most powerful man on earth, Donald Trump or something, playing with plasticine, Play-Doh, right, on his table, choosing to become Play-Doh, right? Imagine all that he would have to give up, all of his power, all of his strength. He's going to say he might have to give up his color, but maybe he doesn't, right? But all of his movement, his ability to engage in the world, right? These aspects of his reason that he's going to have to give up.

Now, it's a terrible illustration, but it's ludicrous in that you would never imagine a human would ever choose to do that, right? But the gap between Donald Trump and Play-Doh is like this in comparison to the gap between the Creator and any of His creatures. There is such a void between us and God that for Him to take on flesh, to come into the world—what God is this? Who would do that? Such condescension, such humility, such—why is He doing this? And the idea is here that He's doing it for the same reason He created us in the first place. It's for the same reason that He places all of those desires inside of human beings in the first place. He's doing it to shed light, to shine light in a dark place.

Jesus Christ is this Creator God come in the flesh to show us God. That's amazing. But then shift your attention and look at the mirroring phrases or the mirroring passages in verse 14 to 18. Here John's description of this word shifts; his language changes. Look at some of the language he uses: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." In that word there is "tabernacled among us." That should send off all sorts of alarm bells in our head, right? "And we have seen His glory, glory," and "tabernacle" together. Whoa, we're getting some ideas here. "Full of grace and truth." I'm going to show you that's connected as well to this whole idea. "From His fullness, we've received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses"—again, John's signaling to where you should be thinking—Moses, tabernacle, glory, grace, and truth—"came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God." Again, massive signal to where you should be thinking right now. "The only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known." All of these words here point us back to the Exodus. They're all Exodus language.

And here, what is the Exodus? The Exodus was the epitome of God's redemptive work to people. The Exodus was the place where God didn't just speak in nature but spoke directly to human beings very clearly about His character, His nature, the way that He interacts with and communes with

human beings. Because at the Exodus, you have God not only taking sinful people who are in slavery in Egypt and bringing them out—a great redemptive work—you have Him declaring on Sinai, "I will live with you, and this is how I work. The sort of God I am is this sort of God." And He gives them the law. A law that includes all these moral stipulations that speak of the character of God. A law that includes sacrifices and washings that speak of how God requires us to come before Him. Not just that, but how God has made a way for us to come before Him. A law that speaks of God's tabernacle living in the presence of His people and how they are to approach Him and live with Him through priests and kings.

John is saying this: as God was doing that redemptive work, revealing Himself in so much greater clarity than He had in creation, that was Jesus Christ. That was the active Word of God revealing the Father through these things, through these activities of redemption, and through these clear revelatory words of the law.

Let me just show you that this is what John is calling us to think back to. Listen to Exodus 40:34-36. See if you can hear the themes that John is riffing on: "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out, etc." Can you see that scene? Well, firstly, can you hear that John's echoing all of that language there? God tabernacled with His people, and we've seen His glory. And here we have the glory of God resting in the tabernacle with Moses.

Can you imagine for an Israelite, this was like the height of the revelation of God to people. Can you imagine what it would have been like for the Israelites to have woken up every morning and looked out of their tent window and seen the glory of God over the tabernacle, you know, 50 meters over there? Like, seriously, picture that in your mind. Imagine what it would have felt like when you have enemies surrounding you. Are you scared? The glory of God is right there, visibly on display. Are you wondering where to go each day? Well, what do we do? Well, we follow the cloud. When it picks up in the morning, we head off. If it stays there, we stay. That's it. God is leading them. God's revealing Himself to them. What do we do? Well, we go to Moses, and we say, "I've got a life problem, Moses. Can you help me work out what to do?" And he goes into the tent where God is, and he talks to God, and he comes back out, and he says, "This is what you do." That's what the tent of meeting was. Can you picture that? That's glory revealed. That's God revealed to His people. That's God walking with His people, living with His people.

And John is saying Jesus is better than that. Well, not only are you saying Jesus was that, but when He came in the flesh, He was doing that on steroids. For from His fullness, we've received. The law was given through Moses. That was amazing. That was incredible. The revelation of God through the law was astonishing. But from God's fullness, we have received in Jesus Christ. Moses was allowed to see the glory of God, which by the way included God declaring His name to him, which used the words, "I am a gracious God, full of mercy and truth." And he was allowed to see His back. And the radiant splendor reflected off Moses, and the people saw that. Here we have the full revelation of God on display in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Unfiltered to His people. This is the full revelation of the Redeemer's glory. Grace upon grace.

And this reminds us once again that God is this God who wants to reveal Himself to His creatures. He's been speaking since the beginning in the created order and in humanity. But He's been speaking even more since His work with people began, through prophets, through the scriptures, all of which is the word of the God. How many times do you see in the Old Testament the phrase "thus says the Lord" or "the word of the Lord came to so and so"? That's Jesus revealing God the Father for eons before He even came. And now, in the person and work of Jesus Christ, He communicates God to us even more clearly.

This is a massive emphasis throughout John's gospel. Jesus spoke the words of God. He spoke truth. His words show us who we are, who God is, and how we can be made right with God. His words bring light and grace and life and revelation. John 3:34, John makes this comment: "He whom God sent speaks the words of God." This is universally through Jesus; all the way through, John says things like, "I only speak what I've been told to speak from my Father. I'm just telling you what He says. What I say is what the Father says."

Peter picks up on this, and he picks up on the fact that those words that Jesus spoke are the source of life. In John 6, when everyone's abandoning Jesus because He said some things that were difficult for them to understand, He turns to His disciples and says, "Are you going to abandon Me also?" And Peter says, "Lord, to whom shall we turn? You have the words of eternal life."

But John makes the point in his gospel that Jesus didn't just reveal God to us through His words. He also spoke through His actions. And His actions show us once again the glory of the Redeemer God. He is the enfleshed word. He says things like this: Jesus says, "If you do not believe Me, believe the works that I do, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him." He even says this to His disciples on the night of the

Passover before He's about to die on the cross: "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves."

And I just want to make this point briefly from this: Jesus's standard for faith, I think, was a little lower than ours can be at times. Sometimes we think, you know, well, you just have to believe what Jesus says. Come on, He's the Son of God. Believe what He says. And it's true. Jesus is blessed of those who haven't seen and yet believe. But if your friend or your family member, or if you are needing evidence, you're like, "Look, I'm just not sure. Can you show me something?" Jesus says, "Sure, I'll show you something. Believe Me for the sake of My works." I just think that's amazing. Faith like a mustard seed. Like, that's really poor faith, you asking God to prove Himself to you. And Jesus is like, "It's okay. I'm okay with that."

And I just want to point out too that Jesus's works, that evidence of His divine personhood, have not stopped. There's still plenty of them going on. For a start, you can just look at the resurrection itself. That is a definable historical fact that you can look at. It's an evidence that Jesus has left. It's a work that He has left that demonstrates the glory of the Redeemer God, the one who gives life through death.

But He has not stopped working in the lives of sinners and sufferers and unbelievers either. Your testimony is a work of Jesus that declares the glory of the Redeemer God. The work that He's done in your life, the work that He's done throughout church history and the lives of other saints—all of these things are works, enfleshed words of God that declare the glory of His redeeming power. And all of this is what Jesus came to reveal. That's what verses 14 to 18 point us to. That He came to reveal the power of a redeeming God. A God who speaks clearly through revealed scripture and through the work of redemption.

Now, at this point, you might be wondering, as I have been, why is it that in verse 6 and 7 and 15, John the Apostle inserts these references to another witness, John, who bore witness about the light, who wasn't the light but pointed people to Jesus so that they might follow the light. And I've always felt like this is an odd thing to have pointed out in a series of verses that are all about how glorious Jesus is as of Himself. Why do you need more witnesses? Isn't Jesus enough? God's spoken so clearly in the person and work of Jesus Christ of His creator glory, of His redeeming glory. Why do you need more?

And I think the point is, God keeps speaking. God never gives up trying to reveal Himself to this world. Even when He's about to send His own Son to take on flesh and reveal His power to this world, He sends a witness to go

before Him. Not only that, but John the Apostle, who's writing this book, right at the end of John's gospel, says to you, "I've written these things that you may believe." He becomes a witness for Jesus Christ. Not only that, but the apostles all through the book of Acts used similar language to speak of how they were tasked with bearing witness to the light that has come into the world.

Jesus actually says that each one of His people are meant to do this as well. He says, "I am the light of the world. While the light is in the world, walk by the light that you may become sons of light." And then in chapter 5 of Matthew, He says, "You are the light of the world." What's happening there? Well, God is going to keep speaking to this lost and dark world through creation and through His people.

Your job is to become a witness like John the Witness. To speak of the glory of God. Now we come to the center of our passage, which is like I said, the emphasis of the whole section. This is the main point that John is wanting to make. And the point is this: God has spoken so clearly. Are you listening? Have you heard Him? Have you received His word? Have you believed His Son, the Word of God?

Look at verse 10 to 11. Look at how crazy unbelief looks in the face of these glorious truths. "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world didn't know Him." That's speaking of His creator glory, right? The fact that all of these creatures that Jesus Himself made, as He spoke the word of God, that Jesus Himself sustained—all of these creatures that He came to didn't receive Him. It's baffling. You can hear the undertone of the way it's phrased. Not only that, but Jesus didn't just come to any old people. Anyone should have been able to recognize the creator as He came and stilled seas and opened the eyes of the blind and raised the dead—the only things a creator God can do. Any old people He came to should have realized who He was, but He didn't just come to any old people. He came to His own people. What's he talking about? He's talking about the fact that Jesus had spoken to the Jews specifically for centuries and had revealed His redeeming power to a specific people, had trained them through the law, through the sacrifices, through the promises that you read all through the prophets. He had trained them on what to look for in the Word of God who would come, and His own didn't receive Him. You can see this play out all through the rest of the book of John. Jesus heals a man born blind, and the Pharisees cannot see that Jesus must be from God. Even the guy who's healed is just baffled by this. "What's wrong with you people?" is what he ends up saying. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, and the Pharisees, instead of saying, "Hang on a second, who's this guy who can raise people from the dead?" They plot to kill Jesus and not only Jesus but to kill Lazarus because too many people are believing

because Lazarus is walking around who's just died a few days ago and is now walking around, and everyone's going, "Hey, the guy who raised him from the dead must be the Son of God." And the Pharisees, instead of recognizing that, plot to kill him. Do you see the darkness that John speaks of? "The light has shone in the darkness, and the darkness does not comprehend it," or "overcome it" might be a way that you translate that. Both of those things are true. The darkness wants to overcome the light. The darkness wants to destroy the clarity of God's revelation. The darkness cannot see nor understand what it is that God is saying, either through any of these ways that He's communicating.

And the point of John's gospel here, and my encouragement to you really, is as you go out into the world and as you declare the truth and the light of God's revelation to us in Jesus Christ, it is absurd to not believe it. We sometimes go out with this attitude that it's like, "Well, what I believe is absurd, and I sort of need to justify it to you." It's not the case at all. It's not the way Jesus approached it. It's not the way the apostles approached it, and it's just not true. What we believe in the revelation of God through the person and work of Jesus Christ, through His scriptures, and through creation, is the only thing that makes sense of the entire world. It makes sense of beauty in the world. It makes sense of sin in people's hearts. It makes sense of all the desires that we have for good things. It makes sense of the fact that when we put people in the dirt, we don't think they're gone. It makes sense of all of these aspects of human experience that nothing else provides reasonable answers to. Reasonable answers to.

Don't feel like you're on the back foot. Look at the way John phrases it. Jesus came into the world; He came to those whom He made, and they didn't receive Him. They're crazy. He came to His own people, people who knew the scriptures, who knew about the Savior that Jesus would send, who knew about how God works with people through sacrifices and washings and through moral laws, and they didn't receive Him. They're crazy. They're mad.

But in contrast, John tells us of those who did receive Jesus and who did believe in His name. To them, He says, Jesus gave the right to become children of God, in verse 12 there. J.I. Packer saw this as the highest glory of the gospel—adoption as sons into the family of God. And there's certainly depths to be plumbed here. We won't plumb them all. But John the apostle never got over the depths of this one idea. In his epistle later on in his life, 1 John 3:1, he says this—this is just how excited he is—"Behold what manner of love is this, that we should be called children of God." It's pure wonder. It's pure grace. Those who do what? What major activity must you do to be given not just the ability but the right to become children of God? What do you do? You believe in His name. You receive Him. That's it.

You see Jesus, and you recognize that He is the creator, that He is God in the flesh, that He is deity taken on manhood, that He is the Lamb of God, the sacrifice, the revelation of God, that He is the one through whom all life and light comes. You see Him for who He is. You receive Him and believe on Him, and He gives you the rights to become children of God. Not slaves of God. Not minions of God. Sons of God. Not sons into any family. Not sons into some family that lives in squalid poverty on the streets. A family of God. Royal family. Divine family. Glorious family. A family that has awaiting for its children the most incredible inheritance you could ever imagine. A family that seeks not to only raise up one of its children and to squash the rest, but to raise up all of its children into positions of royal kingship and priesthood.

A family where the children are welcomed, are received, are loved, are provided for. A family where children receive a hope, a future, a security that cannot be destroyed or threatened. A family where the children receive a nature like their father. That's incredible. Just stop and think about that for one moment. Remember the nature of God as we've seen Him so far today. God is a revealing God who speaks through the Word. He enfleshes His word. He creates. He redeems. He brings light and clarity and grace and truth to bear on the world. He calls sinners to believe in Him and to receive life. He raises up witnesses to declare His glory. And as children of God, He is saying you share in His nature to engage in the same sort of work that He engages in.

That brings glory to every aspect of your life. As you go to work and you create something, do it as children of God. Do it the way that God creates. Create something beautiful. Create something that helps people. Create something that declares the glory of God through its very existence. As you go out into the world and you sustain something, as you engage in maintenance work, sustain it like God sustains things. In a way that sheds light onto His loving providential care for His creatures.

As you speak words, speak words that reveal the honor and beauty and glory of God. Whether that be just about the facts of how this world works, as you teach your children or as you talk about whatever else you might be talking about, speak truth. But more than that, speak truth about the redeeming God. Speak words that reveal a God who saves through sacrifice. Speak words about a God who comes and enters into His world so that His creatures might be made those who fellowship with Him. Not only that, but enflesh your words like He does. You speak words of forgiveness, enflesh that forgiveness. Your wife offends you, you say, "I forgive you," act like someone who has forgiven her.

You could go on and on and on. This basically changes your entire life. If you simply look at God's revelation of Himself in creation, in redemption, and most beautifully and perfectly in the person and work of Jesus Christ, and then you say, "Well, I believe in Him, and I receive the rights to become children of God," and so, "God, I want to inherit Your nature. Lord, show me Your nature that I might imitate You." Imitate You. And this is all actually very much what the Bible tells us to do. It's quite an incredible thing. But everything that Jesus is in this passage, He specifically tells you to become.

I've already told you about how He links the fact that He is the light of the world with the fact that you are the light of the world. But this one's really amazing to me. He is the Word, right, through whom everyone is saved. Listen to this. This is His prayer in John 17:20. He says, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through..." Now, He should say, "My word," right? Through Jesus' word. That's not what He says. He says, "Those who will believe in Me through their word." They become the Word of God that reveals God to the lost and dying world so that they might see the true light, the true Word, and receive Him and receive forgiveness in His name.

And as we close out and finish off in verse 13 there, we find that those who receive Jesus receive this right of adoption into God's family not because they were born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the gospel of John walks this line. As people encounter Jesus throughout the gospel, they are called, commanded, expected to believe on Him and receive Him. But Jesus also recognizes, as John is here, that those who do receive Him only do so because they are His sheep whom the Father has given to Him. "My sheep hear My voice," He says. They do so because not because there's some human reason that goes on that compels them to come in, but because they were born of God. They receive new life, as Jesus explains in John chapter 3.

And so, my call to you today is to believe in Jesus, to receive Him as the most important man to ever walk this earth because He is the creator Himself who's taken on flesh, the source of all light and life and truth and grace and glory. My call to you is to worship Him, to hear Him, to believe Him, to trust in Him, and then to remind you that if you have believed in Christ, you have only done so because you were born of God. God has done this work in you. He has opened your eyes. He has breathed new life into your soul. He has revealed Himself to you. Before in your life, there was darkness. There was void. There was chaos. But when God said, "Let there be light," He shone into your hearts, in the face of Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father, we praise You that You are a God who speaks. For without You revealing Yourself to us, where would we be, Father? We would

be in darkness. And Lord, we confess that we loved the darkness, and yet You spoke, and You woke us from our slumber. You pulled us out of the depths. You revived us again. You shone light into our life. You shone light into our life. We praise You that we have seen the light of God shining to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ. We praise You that You've revealed Yourself to us in Him. And oh, Father, we pray that we would know more of Your glory as we look at Him day by day. Open our eyes more and more. Give us grace that we might have the light flooding into our hearts. Lord, we want to know You. And we want to know You more. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.