01 John - Jesus is the light (*Handout*)

John 1.1-15

Type **bit/ly.nlncmu** into the address bar of any browser for a series overview and session notes.

A. Getting started – Tim

- Other than The Chronicles of Narnia, what books have you read over the past few months?

Background questions on the book of John

- What do we know about the author?
- How does John compare with Matthew, Mark, and Luke?
- In what order do you suppose these four gospels were written?

B. John 1.1-5 (NLT) – Ryan

Prologue: Christ, the Eternal Word

1 In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He existed in the beginning with God. 3 God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. 4 The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

Questions

- John could have begun his gospel in any number of ways. Why do you think he chose to begin in this way?
- To who, or what, does the Word refer?
- What words or phrases does John use to highlight the vastness and far-reaching impact of the Word?
- Can you think of some instances in the Bible where the Word also appears? —
- How might this influence your reading of the rest of John's gospel knowing the cosmic scope of God's light and life?.

C. John 1.6-8 – Ryan

God sent a man, John the Baptist, 7 to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. 8 John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light.

Questions on the text

- In what ways did John's life give witness to the light? How might the life (and death) of John challenge our notions of success?
- What are some common characteristics among those God uses as His messengers?

D. John 1.9-15 – Tim

The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

10 He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. 11 He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. 12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. 13 They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

14 So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. 15 John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'"

Questions on the text

- What are some basic differences between darkness and light?
- To whom does v10-11 refer? What kept them from receiving the Lord Jesus
- How about in v15? To which John does v15 refer?

E. Connecting the text to contemporary life – Tim

- So how does Jesus' light shine into the darkness of our world?
- How is this journey playing out in your life at this point? –
- How does it help us to know God's light shines now and will not be overcome by darkness?

E. Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Word[1] – Ryan (based on Psalm 119:105-112)

Life-giving God,
we praise You for the gift of Your Word;
for the light and life it brings to our lives.

Through it, we come to know You better;
we come to understand ourselves more fully;
and we find the wisdom and encouragement we need
to live as Your faithful disciples.

Help us keep Your Word at the center of our lives;
a light to guide our way in whatever darkness we encounter,
or whatever temptations we face.

Teach us what it means to follow Your commandments,
and to walk in Your ways. Amen.

[1] re-worship.blogspot.com/

01 John - Jesus is the light (*Teaching notes*)

John 1.1-15

Type **bit/ly.nlncmu** into the address bar of any browser for a series overview and session notes.

A. Getting started – Tim

- Other than The Chronicles of Narnia, what books have you read over the past few months? – *Paul - a Biography, The Lion's World, The Patient Ferment, The Christ of the Indian Road, Show Them No Mercy; 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide, Wait Till Next Year*

Background questions on the book of John

- What do we know about the author? – *John was a disciple of Jesus. So was Matthew. Mark's main source was probably Peter. Luke's was Paul, among others.*
- How does John compare with Matthew, Mark, and Luke? – *Latter 3 are called Synoptic Gospels, meaning they are in some sort of narrative order. John and Mark have no nativity story.Mark ends with an empty tomb, the others include episodes with the resurrected Jesus. John is organized more like "sermons" leading to a passion narrative. John has nativity story, as in Luke and Matt.*
- In what order do you suppose these four gospels were written? – *Mark (~70), Matt (~85), Luke (~90-95), John (~90-100). Matthew & Luke clearly used Mark and Q (Quelle, a collection of sayings about Jesus) as source material.*

B. John 1.1-5 (NLT) – Ryan

Prologue: Christ, the Eternal Word

1 In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He existed in the beginning with God. 3 God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. 4 The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

Questions

- John could have begun his gospel in any number of ways. Why do you think he chose to begin in this way? — *John was writing to both a Jewish and a gentile audience. He knew the significance that the word (dabar and logos) would hold to them.*
- To who, or what, does the Word refer? — *Jesus*
- What words or phrases does John use to highlight the vastness and far-reaching impact of the Word? — *"In the beginning," "everything through him," "nothing was made," "gave life to everything," "light to everyone."*
- Can you think of some instances in the Bible where the Word also appears? —

  1 Corinthians 10:4 For they (The Israelites) drank from the spiritual rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ.

  Hebrews 11:24-26 Moses thought it was better to suffer for the sake of Christ than to own the treasures of Egypt

  Jude 5 So I want to remind you, though you already know these things, that Jesus

first rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt

Colossians 1:15-16 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth.

- How might this influence your reading of the rest of John's gospel knowing the cosmic scope of God's light and life? — *We can see God at work in unexpected places and unexpected people; Christ died for all; God desires for all of us to enter into a union with Him.*

C. John 1.6-8 – Ryan

God sent a man, John the Baptist, 7 to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. 8 John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light.

Questions on the text

- In what ways did John the Baptist's life give witness to the light? How might the life (and death) of John challenge our notions of success? — *John was sent by God to set the stage for Jesus. We don't often think of success ending with death.*
- What are some common characteristics among those God uses as His messengers? — *faithful, obedient, submissive to God's will and willing to follow*

D. John 1.9-15 – Tim

The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

10 He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. 11 He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. 12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. 13 They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

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Questions on the text

- What are some basic differences between darkness and light?

  – Light is a physical force; darkness is just the absence of light.

  – When light enters the picture, darkness flees, not the reverse. A point of darkness has far less impact on light than a point of light has on darkness.

  -- When John says "God is light", he means God is our illuminator. That is, as the illuminator - as the creator - as the generator - of all that was, is, and ever will be. Of course, light not only reveals that which is hidden in darkness, but it also provides the energy needed for the giving and sustaining of life. When the earth was dark and void (Genesis) God provided light. This light not only provided physical energy for the development of all life, including human beings, but it also provided spiritual direction, ultimately through the person of Jesus Christ, for the proper orientation of all life toward and

in obedience to God's Word.

- To whom does v10-11 refer? What kept them from receiving the Lord Jesus – *The Jews were his own, but they didn't recognize him. Seems like it was a failure of Jewish leadership.*
- How about in v15? To which John does v15 refer? – *John the Baptist.*

E. Connecting the text to contemporary life – Tim

- So how does Jesus' light shine into the darkness of our world?

  – Conventional ways: scripture, preaching, apologetics, music/art, through people who have already responded to the light.

  – From 03 Narnia, p6: People need to be surprised into a realization that they have never actually reckoned with what Christianity is about. Rowan Williams in The Lion's World *explains this process in three steps:*

  1. *People experience transcendence as they respond to the Spirit's summons to the romance of living as rebels, along with other Jesus-followers, under the occupation of a broken world.*
  2. *People experience the "aha experience" that it is they, themselves, who are the occupying force. In other words, the "light" turns on and we realize that we have enslaved ourselves!*
  3. *Once liberated from our position in the occupation, the road ahead is full of light and joy.*

  Or, in a nutshell: We experience the unplanned and uncontrolled incursion into our self-preoccupied lives of God's joy in himself.

- How is this journey playing out in your life at this point? –
- How does it help us to know that God's light shines now and will not be overcome by darkness? –
- Today's lesson interpreted two common items in terms of Jesus? What are they, and can you think of other times when the Bible used this concept? – Word and Light were both synonyms for Jesus in this passage. Other instances of this: 1) Tabernacle/Temple –> the Ecclesia, the gathered followers of Jesus, the church. 2) Pillar of fire/cloud –> God. 3) Wind –> Holy Spirit.

E. Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Word[2] – Ryan (based on Psalm 119:105-112)

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we praise You for the gift of Your Word;
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Through it, we come to know You better;
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and we find the wisdom and encouragement we need
to live as Your faithful disciples.

Help us keep Your Word at the center of our lives;
a light to guide our way in whatever darkness we encounter,
or whatever temptations we face.

Teach us what it means to follow Your commandments,
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