

John Ch 1:6-13

“Preparing A Place For Jesus”

The Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul gave us an interesting insight when he wrote to the Corinthians saying, “*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*” 2 Cor 3:18 Because what he’s saying there in essence is that the more time that we spend looking at Jesus, gazing upon Jesus, considering Him, and meditating upon Him, the more we will become like Him. and John sort of echoed these words in his 1st epistle when he said, “*We know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*” 1 John 3:2-3

You see the purifying effect is a present one, it’s something that begins to take place in the here and now (through our seeing Him principally in His Word) until it ultimately one day culminates, and makes that transition into perfection upon our seeing Him (practically) face to face. But the more time we spend focusing upon Jesus; the principle is in effect, the more like Him we will become.

We’re seeing it in our time together through 1st and 2nd Samuel on Wednesday evenings as these 400 graduating up to 600 men presented themselves to David, men who were in debt, distressed, and discontented, just a rag tag group of renegades who were the social rejects of Israel. But the more time these guys spend with David, the more they’re becoming like David. So much so that by the time it’s all said and done, these guys become known as the mighty men of David going down in history as one of the most elite fighting forces ever known in all of Israel. and That transition took place over time as they just got to know David’s heart. Seeing him, the way he handled himself, his love for God, his readiness to repent, his passion to proclaim the praises of God, his desire to guard the integrity of God, and they just grew and developed through spending time with their leader. and We’re that rag-tag group of renegades who are in debt (via our own sin) distressed, and discontented.

But as you and I hang out with our greater than David, the Son of David, Jesus Christ we’ll find ourselves being changed, (from glory to glory) becoming more and more like Him. That’s why the gospels are so important, because they let us see Jesus, and as we see Him we’ll become like Him. Not that we’ll become gods, as the gospel of John so clearly demonstrates Jesus to be, but that we’ll become like Him in *character*, taking on His *flavor*, and His *fragrance*.

His love will become your love, His compassion, your compassion, His heart of grace, your heart of grace, His mercies become your mercies, you’ll deal in truth the way He deals in truth, you’ll be an individual of integrity as He’s an individual of integrity, you see *when we* see Him (that is truly see Him for who He is) then we will become like Him.

Now in these 1st 5 vs John the apostle takes no time to introduce himself, or authenticate his claims, he just casts the facts of who Jesus Christ is right out into the seas of humanity for us to deal with (and I like that). Take it or leave it, these are the facts! and If you were with us last week we examined Jesus in a manner that was 5-fold as seen in these 5 vs, we seen #1 Jesus as Eternal, #2 Jesus as God, #3 Jesus as Creator, #4 Jesus as Life, and #5 Jesus as Light.

Here in vs 6-13 John sort of takes a moment insert a parenthetical point to prepare us for the incarnation of Christ, or as we'll see when we get to vs 14 "Jesus as human." and In order to prepare us for this declaration, in comes John the Baptist, now don't be confused this *is not* John the apostle being spoken of here in these next few vs, but rather J. B., the forerunner of Christ. and John takes the time here to tell us #1 Who John is, #2 What John did, #3 Why John did it, and #4 Who John is not. Then in vs 10 he picks back up his flow concerning who Jesus is, and we begin get sort of a teaser trailer to the message of gospel that will be further elaborated on there in ch 3, what it means to know Christ, what *He's* done for us, and *why* He's done it. and So let's follow the flow and begin in vs 1 and read thru vs 13.

Vs 1-13

Did you catch that parenthetical segment there in vs 6-9? It's like this little cut out portion that begins to prepare us (by setting the stage) for something big, and there's a cutting contrast that slices right between vs 5 and 6. So that we're reading of the magnitude, and the importance and the enormity of Jesus Christ, His essence and His eternality, He is our Creator, He is Life and He is light, and then vs 6 draws our attention (notice) to "a man". There is nothing divine about this individual, John wants there to be no confusion on this point, he's contrasting now for the sake of emphasis so that we'll understand that though what he previously spoke of is deity, what he's presently speaking of (Vs 6-9) is humanity. (Read vs 6)

Of course as I mentioned a minute ago we're speaking here about J.B. and The aspect of this vs that I want to emphasize to you is the fact that he was just an ordinary man, he was a man not unlike you or me, he had like passions, struggles, strong points and weaknesses. and Though what God wanted to occupy John's life with was divine, John was not. Why do I draw your attention to this point? Simply to remind you of the fact that God "employees" or uses, ordinary people to accomplish His extraordinary tasks.

God had a pre-ordained plan for John's life, and He was going to use him in a way unparalleled in human history. To be the very forerunner of the Messiah Himself, yet in and of himself John was no different than you or me. and I'm suggesting to you, and challenging you with the fact that God has a plan for your life. A very special plan, a "divine" plan in fact that if you'll simply submit your life to Him, He'll use you in a way unlike He'll use no other.

You say, “Wait a minute Jeff, we’re talking about J.B. here, I mean it was prophesied the ministry that would be given him, and that God had a work for him to do.” and You would be exactly right, but the bible says the same thing concerning your life. “What do you mean?” *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for (which speaks of purpose) good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”* Eph 2:10

Or to understand that another way, God has a divine plan for your life, and He wants to use you in a way that He’ll use no other, ordinary though you may be. He wants to commend you to the ministry of J.B. in that you allow Him to direct your steps that by His Spirit you go before Him preparing a place for Jesus. You see J.B. was just a man, but God ordained that John would go before Jesus Christ empowered by the Spirit to prepare the hearts of the people for their Savior, that they might see their need through the things that he would say, and the life that he would live. He was busting up the fallow grounds of the human hearts around him that they might be soft, fertile, receptive and open to the healing hand of Jesus Christ Can I tell you that there are lives that you’re around everyday that none of the rest of us will ever have the privilege of being any form of influence upon.

God has ordained that you would be in that scenario, in that workplace, in those classes, around those people because He wants to use you, not me, but you to prepare those people to receive Jesus Christ To speak to them about the reality of whom He is, of what He’s about, why He came to this earth and what He’s done for you. So that as Jesus Christ presents Himself to them, they’re ready to receive Him. That was the ministry of J. B. To go before the work of the Lord as by the Spirit of the Lord, notice it there in vs 7.

Vs7

So #1 who is John? He’s a man (an ordinary man) #2 What did John do? He came for a witness, now this word “witness” is a key word, we see it twice in this vs alone. 1st of all stated simply to tell us what John did, he came for a witness. He didn’t come as a politician, he didn’t come to debate, he didn’t come to argue, or seek to persuade people towards his opinion.

He came for a witness, what is a witness? A witness is someone who simply reports the facts, “I’m not trying to win you over, or make my case, I simply speaking truth,” that’s the duty of a witness. A witness doesn’t seek to exalt themselves, or somehow wow people with their credentials, they’re there to testify on the behalf of another, and so when John was asked to elaborate upon himself, he refused. All he would say was what we see in vs 23 (notice it, read).

It's so easy to want people to be occupied with us, impressed with who we are, and if someone speaks ill of us, or misunderstands us, it kinda hurts, but John wasn't worried about any of that. All he was worried about was accurately representing Jesus Christ, he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30 Why, because if I'm represented too much in my witness about someone else, then the facts become eschewed, and begin to blur. and John would say, "If you see any of me, then my witness has failed, I'm here as a witness not for myself, but for Jesus." He came for a witness, and that's what you're to about, and what I'm to be about.

We don't have to try to win debates, or argue convincingly, this is so freeing because no body is mind to convert, that's the work of the Holy Spirit, my role is to report the facts, to share the truth. If God's blessed you with a new car, or a good job or whatever, when someone asks don't say, "Well, I studied my tale off, or I've been pulling all this overtime and it's finally paid off." That's not the fact, that's untrue, the fact is, God's mercies have abounded towards you, and because of no reason of my own, God has just blessed my life. So be true to the facts, whatever the case may be, physically, emotionally, or circumstantially, be careful to be true to the facts, to be an accurate witness of the goodness of God in your life. That's what John did, #3 why did John do it? Notice vs 7

"To bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe." Who needs a witness of Light? One who is blind, one who can't see the reality of what's happening around them, and John bore witness of the Light, that is of Jesus Christ, that all through him might believe, highlight that word, "all." Because this is the heart of God as it pertains to mankind and a specific way in which He wants to use your life. That all through you might believe, the bible says, "*For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" 1 Tim 2:3-4 and Of course, "*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*" 2 Peter 3:9

Yet the bible is clear, "*How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?*" Rom 10:14 Now that's where you and I come in, "*As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!'*" Rom 10:15 Don't be intimidated by the word "Preacher" I'm not trying to say that everyone's called to stand behind a pulpit in the stereotypical sense of the word "preacher", but we're all called to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ For whatever reason God has ordained to use ordinary man, in the accomplishing of His extraordinary purposes, to herald the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ Or to understand it in a way that's possibly a bit more sobering, God has entrusted you, has entrusted me with a responsibility. We have a responsibility before God Himself to testify of the facts and bear witness of the reality of Jesus Christ

J.B. went before Jesus Christ, how often God will send us ahead in the power of His Spirit, to prepare a heart for the coming of Jesus Christ to them, that they might (through the

witness you have bore) believe. He will use you to prepare a place for Jesus Christ in the heart and life of another.

Vs 8-9

Again in vs 8 John makes a distinction between John's role, and Jesus' as they both sort of came on the scene sort of simultaneously (at least physically). John was not that Light, but came to bear witness of the Light.

In other words, John wasn't about making disciples after himself, but rather he was always pointing people to Jesus.

He was never ruffled when the attention wasn't focused on him, his cry was not, "Behold this man of God" it was, "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" John 1:29 and we do well to notice here the 3rd mention of this word, "witness" in vs 8, what's God trying to say to us? John came "for a witness", "to bear witness", and again here, "to bear witness", do you think that God may be seeking to emphasize the urgency, and the reality of the responsibility that we have to be a witness, God's seeking you out, and me out, that we might bear witness of that Light, the Light which is the true Light. (Which by the way #4 John was not). Now there was a bit of confusion in the years of the early church as to who exactly J.B. was, and even while he was ministering the question would come up, and John the apostle makes it clear who he's not, he's not the light, he's a man, and he was sent for the same reason that we're all sent, to be a witness of the true light, to prepare a place (more specifically a heart) for the coming of Jesus, who is the true Light. Now let's stop right there.

What does this mean, "true Light"? Is there any other kind? You bet, and we're speaking here of that light which is genuine as opposed to that which is counterfeit. There are "lights" that are deceptive. You ever see one of those movies where a guy is driving at night and he's going down an old country road and he sees these 2-headlights like a car is headed straight for him? As they get closer and closer the tension gets higher and higher and he can't swerve so he just closes his eyes, prepares for the worst and 2 motorcycles fly passed him on either side. Now that was deceptive, it was light that gave off the appearance of being one thing when in reality it was quite another.

Jesus said that there were these kind of people in the world, people who would lead others astray, draw disciples after themselves, He called them thieves, deceivers. Notice, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers.*" John 10:7-8 Paul said it like this, "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.*" 2 Cor 11:13-14

He seeks to counterfeit the genuine article, Jesus Christ remember there is no counterfeit apart from a genuine article. and Jesus is the true light, now also to the Jew this would send a

message of the culmination of the law and the prophets. Because the religious leaders of that day were always seeking to establish their righteousness through the law, and the physical lineage of Abraham, and Jesus said to them, *“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”* John 5:39-40

In other words, the Mosaic Law, and the testimony of the prophets aren't the true light, they're “lesser” lights at best. They can reveal sin, but they can't remove sin, they were simply (as culminated in J.B.) pointing that Light which is the true Light, Jesus Christ, “Which gives light to every man coming into the world.”

2 Things here about this phrase, #1 I would draw your attention to this word, “gives” salvation is a free gift, there's nothing you or I can do to earn it, or somehow merit God's favor. Rev 22:17 says, *“Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”* Jesus said, *“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.”* John 7:37 Salvation is available for any who desire, and it's God's gift to mankind in the person of Jesus Christ The 2nd point I would like for you to see is found in this word, “Every.” There will be no one with a valid excuse come judgment day for rejecting Jesus Christ Because the light is given to every man coming into the world, now obviously the bible teaches that to whom much is given much more will be required. and So we who have been entrusted with the reality of who Jesus Christ is are obviously going to be held to a much higher standard of accountability. But even that guy that every skeptic is so worried about in the deep jungles of Africa will stand before Jesus Christ

Have you ever noticed that the people so seemingly worried about him, are so unwilling to do anything about it. If you're worried about that guy, maybe it's because God's wanting to use you to reach him instead of having you simply look for a loop hole to question God's righteousness and therefore justify sin in their own life by making the silent suggestion that it would be unfair for God to judge people on differing standards, yet what choice would He have if someone didn't know about Him? and So they think they've got God in this catch 22 that they'll be able to hold Him to so that when they stand before Him, they'll have outwitted Him and He'll have to humbly grant them access to Heaven. and In reality all that is, is a display of arrogant ignorance, leave the gospel of John and look quickly to Romans Ch 1 (Vs18-21)

What does that mean? It means that every man is with out excuse because God has revealed Himself even in His creation, and every man know intuitively and instinctively that there is a God, Someone who created all this. But by suppressing the truth, or resisting the truth, rather than being brought further into the light as to who this Creator is, their foolish hearts are darkened. Or to understand it another way, if you refuse to believe the truth, God will give you over to the lie, there's no other choice, you either believe the truth, or you're trusting in a lie, there's no other option.

I personally serve a big enough God, that if that individual responds to this stirring in their heart, who knows something bigger than myself has created all this, and begins to seek

that out, God will meet that person, if they seek they'll find, if they ask, it'll be given, and if they knock it'll be opened, or is that a promise to only those who already know what God's Word says? God will only honor His Word after you've read it? No! God's Word, is God's Word, and Jesus gives light to every man coming into the world. Not only through His written Word, but through you, and me, and His undeniable attributes clearly seen in His creation, not too mention the work of the Holy Spirit who came to convict the world (even the remotest parts) of sin and unrighteousness.

Vs10

We notice this pattern of 3's as it pertains to Christ through this opening passage, Vs 1 (Read, Was the Word, with God, was God). and Now here in vs 10, "He was in the world" "The world was made through Him", and "The world did not know Him." Again the Light of the world came into the world, not only upon His incarnation, but even in His creation He was revealing Himself. Notice, "The world was made through Him" and we spoke about that last week, and "The world did not know Him." What's the emphasis there? It's upon *knowing* Him, not knowing about Him, but knowing Him, having a relationship that is personal with Him, walking with Him, talking with Him, pouring out your heart before Him and allowing Him to spill His heart into you. and Then vs 11, one of the saddest vs of the bible.

Vs11

Now there's a couple of things you need to see here, this 1st phrase, "He came to His own" is a reference to, "His own things" it's neuter term which speaks of His own creation, the world in general. "and His own did not receive Him." This "His own", is a masculine phrase that speaks of mankind specifically, though it could be narrowed down to a reference to Israel, the point remains. The only aspect of creation that did not receive Jesus Christ was that which was created in His own image and after His own likeness, mankind. The wind obeyed Jesus, the waves received Him, supported Him, submitted to Him, that little donkey that had never been ridden readily submitted to Him. Even the demonic forces would cry out in recognition of who He was as the Son of God right there in their midst. But the very people He would come to *redeem*; would *reject* Him.

"He came to His own", why? Because His own wouldn't come to Him, the bible is clear, "*There is none who seeks after God.*" Rom 3:11 Therefore God seeks after you, but how often this very testimony rings true today, Jesus pursues mankind, is beckoning out, and calling out to man, coming to His own, but His own refuse to receive Him.

Vs12

What incredibly good news swings on the hinges of this word, "But" (read again). Notice the words, "As many" the door is open to all who will call upon His name, there is no one who will come to Christ, whom Christ will not accept. "As many as received Him."

There's 2 words that I want to point out to you here, synonymous in certain respects yet distinct in their individuality as well, terms that are "conditional" (if you'll allow me the weak words) if you're to become a child of God. There's 2 things you need to do, it's the part where

God has done the work, it's complete, and it's finished, but He won't force it upon you. It's free for the taking, but it's up to you to #1 "Receive Him", which is predicated upon your need to #2 "Believe in Him." and I believe it's a hair worth splitting because it's impossible that you should receive something that you don't truly believe, yet a shallow head knowledge consent to the truth with no commitment from the heart isn't enough.

Belief in and of itself means nothing, "*Even the demons believe -- and tremble!*" James 2:19 You see once you believe, (which has to do with your head) it's essential that you then receive, (which has to do with your heart). We must receive Jesus Christ into our hearts and into our lives, give Him that platform of our Lord, and our Savior, and our God. When we believe in Him, as demonstrated by our receiving Him, He honors that by giving us the right, or literally authority, to become children of God. Or to understand it another way, you're born again, not in the physical sense, but in the spiritual, notice vs 13.

Vs13

You see John makes real clear here that new birth has nothing to do with humanity, it's #1 Not of blood, this speaks of "Descent", you're not granted access to Heaven because your folks were right on, or because you have 18 preachers in your family tree, it's not of blood. Nor is it #2 of "Determination" or "The will of the flesh", I can't say, "Well, I'm going to clean up my act, quit cussing, smoking, drinking, I won't chew, or hang around people who do, I'm going to be a Christian."

It doesn't work that way, you can't get to Heaven through willpower and determination. and Finally #3 it's not by "Desire", "The will of Man", we've already determined it's not a natural desire with in man anyway, there are none who seek after God. So how's it done? It's a work that's (notice it) "Divine. It's not through, #1 Descent, #2 Determination, or #3 Desire, #4 It's Divine. Born of the will of God, the whole thing is His doing, and the great news is that God's not willing that any should perish, and so the choice is up to you, to believe and receive, or to reject Jesus Christ The call has gone out. Jesus said over and over again and He still says it today, "Follow me", "If anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink", don't reject Jesus Christ, receive Him.

You've heard the witness today, and Jesus has come to you, He's shed His blood that you might believe in Him, and receive Him into your heart, and into your life. He wants to give you the authority to become a child of God, washed white as snow, old things passing away, all things being made new, now He leaves the choice up to you.