

Back to the Basics

A Light for my Path

Let's read John 3:3: together.

John 3:3 (NIV)

³In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

Prayer

This week, let's start at John, versus 4-5.

John 1:4-5 (NIV)

⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

Now we already know from reading verses 1 and 2 that this passage is speaking about Jesus. When we read about the Word, we know we are reading about Jesus. When we read about Jesus, we know we are reading about the entire Word of God. This is a very important concept to understand because it unlocks not only the New Testament writings but also the Old Testament writings as well. The Old Testament looks forward to the cross and the New Testament books backwards to the cross except for the epistles which describe the life of Jesus; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Now look at verse 4 again; ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The origin of life and light is in Him. This verse further proves that Jesus is God. He has life in Himself; not only the true God, but the living God. All living creatures have their life in him. We know from last week that all the matter of creation was made by him, but now, all the life to that is in creation is derived from him. And Jesus is not only the life of men, but He is also the light of men. This conveys the concept of revelation and illumination. As the light, Jesus Christ reveals God's appearance to mankind. Jesus Christ also shines His light into our darkened souls to reveal our sin. When we are in a dark room, it is very easy to stumble and hurt ourselves. But if we carry a flashlight, it is easy to find the correct path to travel. This is the same reason why we have headlights on cars for driving in the night. We can't imagine anyone driving on Interstate 95 without their headlights turned on yet many travel on life's journey without any Light to guide their decisions. Unfortunately, this results in head-on crashes with others because there is no Light to guide the path. If we use the Light, He will lead us down the path to safely reach our destination. This is why the Word of God is so precious, because it Lights the path of how to best live our lives.

Have you ever been hurt by anyone?

Now, let's look at verse five, ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. We all know how crazy this world is. In fact, Romans 1:29-32 tells us of the people who are in the dark because they don't understand the light:

Romans 1:29-32 (NIV)

²⁹They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³²Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do those very things but also approve of those who practice them.

If you think about it, this really describes the entire human race. It even describes every person in this Bible Study because in some fashion it has described each of us at one point of our life. Each of us has darkness in our life at one point. Do you remember the verses in Romans that we just read? Compare the following verses in 2 Peter 1:3-11 to those in Romans.

2 Peter 1:3-11 (NIV)

³His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. ⁵For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. ⁸For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. ¹⁰Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, ¹¹and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Would you like to be described in Romans or 2nd Peter?

When we become Christians and understand that the Word of God is a light to our path, we have the opportunity to serve Him through the things that we do. And truly, the only way we can become Christians, the only way we can become born again, the only way we can be saved, is to hear and understand the Word of God. There are literally hundreds and hundreds of verses in the Bible that says that the only way we can be saved, the only way that we can have eternal life, the only way that we can escape death, is to hear the Word of God. Let's go over just a few of them.

The verses in Romans describe our behavior *before* we came to Christ. The verses in 2nd Peter describe how our lives change when we are truly born again of the Spirit of God. This is not an instant transformation but a gradual transformation. In this life, we will never be sinless but we *are* expected to sin less and less each day. We are being made into the image of Jesus Christ Himself.

Joshua 1:6-8 (NIV)

⁶Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. ⁷Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Isaiah 55:10-11 (NIV)

¹⁰As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹so is my **word** that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

2 Chronicles 34:29-32 (NIV)

²⁹Then the king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. ³⁰He went up to the temple of the LORD with the men of Judah, the people of Jerusalem, the priests and the Levites—all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the **Book of the Covenant**, which had been found in the temple of the LORD. ³¹The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the LORD—**to follow the LORD and keep his commands, regulations and decrees** with all his heart and all his soul, and to **obey the words** of the covenant written in this **book**. ³²Then he had everyone in Jerusalem and Benjamin pledge themselves to it; the people of Jerusalem did this in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

Psalm 19:7-14 (NIV)

⁷The **law of the LORD** is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. ⁸The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The **commands of the LORD** are radiant, giving light to the eyes. ⁹The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The **ordinances of the LORD** are sure and altogether righteous. ¹⁰They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. ¹¹By them is your servant warned; **in keeping them there is great reward**. ¹²Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. ¹³**Keep your servant also from willful sins**; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression. ¹⁴May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Psalm 119:97-106 (NIV)

⁹⁷Oh, how I love your **law**! I meditate on it all day long. ⁹⁸**Your commands** make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. ⁹⁹I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your **statutes**. ¹⁰⁰I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts. ¹⁰¹I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might **obey your word**. ¹⁰²I have not departed from your **laws**, for you yourself have taught me. ¹⁰³How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! ¹⁰⁴I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. ¹⁰⁵Your **word** is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. ¹⁰⁶I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous **laws**.

Psalm 119:127-132 (NIV)

¹²⁷Because I love your **commands** more than gold, more than pure gold, ¹²⁸and because I consider all **your precepts** right, I hate every wrong path. ¹²⁹**Your statutes** are wonderful; therefore **I obey** them. ¹³⁰The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. ¹³¹I open my mouth and pant, longing for your commands. ¹³²Turn to me and have mercy on me, as you always do to those who love your name.

Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

⁴Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every **word** that comes from the mouth of God.'"

2 Timothy 3:14-15 (NIV)

¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Luke 8:4-11 (NIV)

⁴While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: ⁵“A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. ⁶Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.” When he said this, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” ⁹His disciples asked him what this parable meant. ¹⁰He said, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, “though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.’ ¹¹“This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God.

Luke 10:25-26 (NIV)

²⁵On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

John 5:24 (NIV)

²⁴“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

John 5:39-40 (NIV)

³⁹You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

John 6:63 (NIV)

⁶³The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

John 17:17 (NIV)

¹⁷Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

John 20:31 (NIV)

³¹But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Romans 10:17 (NIV)

¹⁷Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Ephesians 5:25-26 (NIV)

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

James 1:18 (NIV)

¹⁸He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

1 Peter 1:22-23 (NIV)

²²Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

So now, we have examined the lives of those who are not Christians and we have also looked at those who are Christians. We have discovered that God's Word is required for true salvation. Allowing God's Word to penetrate us is required to become a Christian. In the book of 1 John, we can find out how we can not only find the light but also how we can walk in the Light, The following verses tell us how to become born again. Let's look at these verses that clearly tell us how to become a Christian.

1 John 1:5-10 (NIV)

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. ⁸If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

1 John 2:3-6 (NIV)

³We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. ⁴The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

Please note that this does not say that we will live a sinless life, but we *are* expected to sin less.

1 John 2:15-17 (NIV)

¹⁵Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

1 John 3:2-3 (NIV)

²Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

1 John 3:9 (NIV)

⁹No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

We *are* expected to sin less and less each day.

1 John 3:16-20 (NIV)

¹⁶This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. ¹⁷If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. ¹⁹This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

Salvation, going to heaven, becoming born again, requires a relationship. It is a simple process and yet few people ever find it. We need to be thankful for His Word and His Spirit. To have a relationship with the Father, we need to repent of our sin and follow our Teacher, Jesus Christ.

If you know that you are not in God's presence, go home tonight and ask forgiveness for your sins. Invite God to come into your life and ask Him to lead you in every step of life's journey. Give Him the control for the rest of your life, in your home, your marriage, your family and with your friends, until you meet Him face to face.

Have you ever asked God to forgive you?

John 3:3 (NIV)

³In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

Prayer