**The True Light**

**(John 1:6-11)**

**Main Idea**:  In a dark world searching for meaning in life, John the Baptist bears witness of the true Light, Jesus Christ, who provides life, security, and direction.  Although Christ took the initiative to pursue and love the world, He was not recognized.

INTRODUCTION

When I was in the 4th grade, I was so excited to be selected as one of a few students from my school to participate in the citywide Christmas Pageant. I had the role of a toy block with the letter M that spelled out the phrase “Merry Christmas.” We got to perform at the Oakland Auditorium in front of thousands of people for several evenings. I was given this special privilege and I wanted to carry out my responsibility well in order to represent my school well and to honor my school. Today, we will take a look at someone that was specially selected to carry out a responsibility for God. He wanted to represent God well and to honor Him.

Last week, we were introduced to the Logos, the Word, who was Jesus Christ. He came to earth to provide salvation for mankind. He came to give us life. Logos stands for logic or reason. For the Greeks, it refers to the reason for life. Everyone was searching for the reason for life. Jesus came to show us how we can have meaning in life because He is the true light that gives life.

As a continuation of last week’s message in John 1, God hand-picked someone for a very important mission. He was to be the forerunner for Jesus Christ. He is introduced in John 1:6-8. “There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.” The theme of this chapter is the Logos or the Word. God handpicked John the Baptist, and he had the privilege of proclaiming the Word. Let’s take a closer look at who God selected and what mission he had.

1. Proclamation of the Word
2. John the Baptist’s Calling: The Man

This responsibility to proclaim the Word is a very important one. God could have selected an angel, but God selected a man. He was just an ordinary man. He was not rich, neither was he well-educated nor was he famous or well-known. He didn’t have a nice house or beautiful wardrobe. Just a man. The Old Testament did prophesy someone would come out of the wilderness eating locust and honey that would go before the coming King to prepare the way. His name is John the Baptist.

The author emphasized the function of John the Baptist, not his identity. In the gospel of Luke, there is much more description of John the Baptist’s birth and life. In contrast, John focuses more on who sent him and why he came. Here in verse 6, it is clear that John the Baptist was sent from God with a message. John was not randomly placed here at this time. It was very strategic as to where and when this took place. God had a master plan. Nothing happened by chance.

 APPLICATION: God has picked you for a specific mission also. Oh what a privilege to be selected by the Lord to accomplish His mission. Let us take a look at what is John’s mission. What did God call John the Baptist to do?

1. John the Baptist’s Clarification: His mission

Verse 7 says that John was sent to be a witness. A witness is a legal term. The main responsibility of a witness is to tell others what he has seen or experienced personally so that people might be convinced of the truth. The verb form for the word witness is “testify.” It occurs 33x in the gospel of John and only once each in Matthew and Luke. We see here clearly that the author is focusing more on the function of John the Baptist. John came to speak and to direct people to God’s Son.

ILLUSTRATION: A couple of years into my ministry, there was a very unfortunate accident in our parking lot. One of the youth was messing around and was lying on top of the hood of a car as his friend drove the car from one side of the parking lot to the other side. The car turned a little too quickly and the young man fell from the car and landed on his head. Unfortunately, he died after a few days later. We cared for the family and ministered to them. But their relatives encouraged them to sue the church. Three years later, we went to court. I was called upon to be a witness. My responsibility was to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, to give only the facts. The jury was convinced of the truth and the church was found not negligent.

John the Baptist came to be a witness. What was he to testify? According to verse 7, He came to testify concerning that light. According to the context, the light is referring to the Logos, the Word or Jesus Christ, who gives reason for life. Jesus has claimed to be the light of the world. John came to direct people away from the imitation of light to the true light.

In the world, there is much darkness. It has deceived us with false claims as to what is the reason for life. The world declares that you will have true life if you have a good education, a well-paying job, a nice house and nice car. The more toys you have, the happier you will be. The media portrays the celebrity life as the epitome of success. In reality, what is being depicted is not real. Many of the celebrities seem to have everything, but yet deep inside, there is emptiness. What is on the outside is only a veneer hiding the truth that is inside. There are so many people that look good on the outside, but so unhappy and unfulfilled on the inside.

The world needs someone to point them to the light. It is difficult living in darkness.

ILLUSTRATION: When a ferocious storm knocks out the transformer and the lights go out, it is easy to bump into furniture or step on something that can cause you to stumble. We quickly want to find a light source to give us direction. Light gives us security. Coming home from a long journey in the evening, the first thing that you want to do is to turn on the light. Too often, we have been deceived by the world as to what is the true light. There are a lot of imitations. John the Baptist was sent so that he could point people to the true light, which is the Word. The True Light gives us life; the Light gives us security; the Light gives us direction.

The purpose John the Baptist testifies concerning the true light is so that all men might believe. If you are searching for life, security and direction, I invite you to believe in Jesus today.

John being a witness is a conduit for the Lord. God has called all of us to be His witness so that all men might believe. (Acts 1:8) “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

APPLICATION: As a witness, we are to tell others what we have seen or experienced. How has God been real to you? Are you conscious of what God is doing in our life? How has he provided for you? How has he blessed you? How has He changed your life? May we make it a regular practice to tell others of our loving God.

When John the Baptist first started proclaiming the Word, many followed him. He became well-known. People had not heard from God through a prophet in over 400 years. Many wondered if John was the Messiah. In verses 8-9, John wanted to clarify his position by stating that “He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.” Jesus is the true light and John merely reflected this light.

A good witness does not attract attention to himself, but to the person which he represents. Because of our selfishness, we want to be recognized by others; we enjoy the applause of others. We forget that we are only the witness and not the light.

ILLUSTRATION: I remember during my earlier years of ministry. I was so gung ho about winning the world for the Lord. As my ministry grew, Satan deceived me to believe that I was awesome. Without realizing it, I slowly depended less on the Lord and more on my own abilities. I felt good as other praised me for my work. Before long, I started drawing people to me instead of God. I fell into a trap thinking that I was irreplaceable. I came crashing down. … God had to break me and humble me. I fell into a depression and it was a wakeup call. I was reminded that I was not the light, but only the witness to the light. Jesus is the source and I am only an agent. I was supposed to direct others to Jesus, who is the true light. He is the only one that can offer life, security and direction.

John the Baptist understood his role and God’s role. We are only creatures that God has created for His purpose. It is not about me, but it is all about God. Many times, we have it all wrong believing that God needs to rubber stamp our desires. Instead, it is the other way around. We have to seek God’s will and align our will with His because He is the creator.

We are created to worship. We are to make God look good. We are to give worth to our Lord and not to ourselves. John the Baptist totally understood all of this. He humbled himself before the Lord claiming that he is not the light; he is only a witness to the light, which is a great privilege.

We need to remember that God is the author and we are only the characters. We have the privilege to be selected to take part of what the author wants to do. He is kind enough to let us participate in His play. We are only God’s witnesses. We are not responsible to convert people. That is the job of Holy Spirit. As a witness, may we take advantage of every opportunity to tell others who Jesus is and what He has done for us. May we tell the truth and convince them that God is real, telling them how God has changed our life. Our testimony is very powerful. I thank God for changing a selfish, hot-tempered, loose-tongue person into a selfless, patient man that edifies others.

[ We have seen the proclamation of the Word. Unfortunately, the people responded by rejecting the Word. Let us read vv.10-11, “He was in the world, and though the world was made through him the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.” ]

1. Rejection of the Word
2. The Creature rejects the Creator

Jesus is described as being the creator of the world. He humbled himself to be a man because he loves us. He chose to identify himself with us. However, the world did not recognize who He is. Many were acquainted with Jesus personally, but did not acknowledge Him as their Maker and Savior. They were ignorant of who He is. In 2 Cor. 4:4, “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” Satan has used the false claims from the world to blind us from the truth. His people did not recognize who Jesus is because they were looking for a king to deliver them instead of a humble servant.

1. God’s Own People Rejected Jesus

It is one thing to be rejected by an enemy. But it is a whole different thing if one is rejected by those closest to you. God has chosen his people to bear witness for Him. Although Christ took the initiative to pursue and love the world, particularly His own people, but He was rejected by them.

Although Jesus knew that His people would reject Him, yet He came any way because mankind cannot save themselves through the false claims for the world. They are only imitation lights. Jesus is the True Light that can provide life, security and direction for all people that choose to place their faith in Jesus. In a dark world searching for meaning in life, John the Baptist bears witness of the true Light. May we also bear witness of the Word, who is the reason for life.