



Introduction:

- Last week we saw from John chapter 1, verses 1 to 5:
 - That Jesus gives abundant life.
 - That Jesus overcomes the darkness in our lives.
 - And that faith comes by seeing the depth of our sin.
- As we continue in our series, I want to build on what we learned, and we'll see this morning from John chapter 1, verses 9 to 13:
 - How Jesus Christ is the only way to life and salvation.
 - How, by our strength, we aren't able to receive Jesus Christ.
 - And how, it's only by the power of God, we can come to Christ and believe in him.

Point 1:

- So, first, we see from our passage how Jesus Christ is the only way to life and salvation.
- We see this point, clearly laid out in verse 9.
 - John writes:
 - **“The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.”** John 1:9
- John says that Jesus is the true light.
 - That means, there's no other way to know God, except through Christ.
 - Jesus even says in John 14:6



- **“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”** John 14:6
- Because sin separates us from God.
- It blinds us to his truth.
- But it’s through Jesus Christ, that we can know, and believe, and love the Father in heaven.

- This doesn’t mean that everything outside the Bible isn’t true.
 - You can learn mathematical equations.
 - And how to change a car battery.
 - You can know that you’re more introverted than extroverted.
 - There’s a lot of truth we can learn.

- But here, John is speaking about spiritual knowledge.
 - Jesus is the true light.
 - He’s the only light, who brings us to God, and gives eternal life.

- I know for some people, this is hard to accept.
 - They hear this, and feel, this isn’t fair.
 - Some will say that Christianity is too exclusive.
 - Others will argue that all religions are the same.

- But let me ask you this, if someone you loved was dying, and you found the cure for their disease, wouldn’t you share the cure with your friend?
 - Wouldn’t you plead with them to take the cure?
 - It’s possible that other pharmaceutical companies were trying to find the cure, but failed.
 - But it would be cruel to say to your dying friend:



- “Just take any one of these medicines from these companies. Any of them will cure you.”
- Just because you didn’t want the other companies to feel bad, even though they didn’t have the cure.
- In fact, in this case, being exclusive about the cure, would be the most loving thing you could do.
- In the same way, John isn’t being exclusive, because he thinks he’s better than others, or to judge others.
 - Rather, he’s saying that Jesus is the true light, because he truly believes that Jesus is the only way to salvation.
 - That’s why he writes in chapter 20:
 - **“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”** John 20:30-31
 - John is saying through this book, “Listen, I’m writing about what I heard, and what I saw. I saw him do incredible things. I saw him die and rise to life. I’m not lying. I spent three years with him and I have no doubt. He’s the only way to eternal life.”
- And so, instead of being unloving, the Bible is actually doing the most loving thing, by telling you the truth.
 - It’s showing you, the only cure for your sin.
- Furthermore, when someone says, that Christianity is too exclusive.
 - The person doesn’t mean, “I have thoroughly investigated all the religions of the world. I have carefully examined all



the archeological evidence. And I have no doubt, all religions agree on creation, salvation, the afterlife, and point to the same deity.”

- That’s not at all what people mean, when they say, that Christianity seems too exclusive.
- Rather, when someone says, that Christianity is too exclusive, they’re speaking about how they feel.
- They’re basically saying, “I FEEL that all religions are correct.”
- I’m not saying our feelings are bad.
 - Of course, our emotions are real.
 - They’re important for our spiritual lives.
- But you can’t live your life, by trusting your feelings.
 - In fact, it would be very dangerous to base your faith on your emotions.
 - Why?
 - Because feelings don’t always speak the truth.
 - For example, the truth may be that Sally isn’t mad at you, even though you feel that she’s mad at you.
 - And if you based your faith on feelings:
 - You might believe that God exists one day, and that he doesn’t the next day.
 - Or you may feel that God loves you one day, and that he hates you the next day.
 - Our feelings don’t always speak the truth.
 - That’s why God says:
 - **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”** Jeremiah 17:9



- Does anyone remember Xanga?
 - It was a blog site you could post your thoughts and feelings.
 - I used to journal my thoughts and feelings on Xanga during my years in college.
 - I remember, rereading my Xanga page sometime after college.
 - I couldn't help but cringe at what I wrote.
 - To be honest with you, it sounded so dumb.
 - I'm so glad, I can't look at my thoughts and feelings from my years in college.
- Now, there's nothing wrong with journaling your thoughts and feelings.
 - It can even be good.
 - But we need to remember, that our thoughts and feelings will change over time.
 - They can even be deceiving.
- And so, more than journaling our thoughts and feelings, what's more important, is that we write down what God is teaching us from his word.
 - Instead of our feelings forming our faith.
 - We need to build our faith, on the foundation of God's word.
 - Because faith isn't a feeling, it's a conviction rooted in God's word.
 - Bible Scholar Thaddeus Williams writes:



- “What God says is true about you is infinitely more trustworthy than whatever your fallen feelings say from one moment to the next.” ([Link](#))
- “What God says is true about you is infinitely more trustworthy...”
- And so, if your heart is feeling downcast, then speak God’s word, and tell your heart that you have hope in him.
 - If you feel, you can’t be forgiven of your sins, speak God’s word, and tell your heart that Jesus paid it all.
 - If you’re feeling fear about the future, then speak God’s word, and tell your heart that God will never forsake you or leave you.
 - If you’re feeling that it’s hard to believe in Jesus Christ, you have to stop looking to yourself.
 - Because you’ll never find God in yourself.
 - You have to look to Jesus Christ.
 - Look to God’s word.
 - And ask him to open your mind and heart, so you can see his truth.
 - And let God’s word be the rock of your salvation.
- Here we see, how Jesus Christ is the true light, the only way to life and salvation

Point 2:

- Second, we see, how by our strength, we cannot receive Jesus Christ.
 - By our will, we can’t receive eternal life.



- Take a look at verse 10.
 - It says:
 - **“He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.”** John 1:10
- When John speaks about the world, he’s talking mainly about people, and not about rocks or trees, or bacteria, or atoms.
 - He’s speaking about people in the world.
- And even though Jesus came to the world, the Bible says the people didn’t know who Jesus was.
 - They didn’t see that he was the creator of the universe, or the only Son of God.
- In John chapter 3, we’re told that Nicodemus, the great teacher of Israel called Jesus, rabbi, which means teacher.
 - He even said, we know that you’re from God, because of all you do.
 - And yet, Nicodemus still didn’t know who Jesus was.
 - For Nicodemus, Jesus was merely a teacher sent by God.
 - He didn’t see that Jesus was the promised Messiah.
 - He didn’t see that Jesus was God in the flesh, the Savior of the world.
- And it’s exactly the same for so many people in our world today.
 - They don’t know who Jesus is.
 - For some, he’s a moral teacher.
 - For others, he’s nothing but a good example to follow.
 - And the reason people don’t believe him, is because they don’t know him.



- Sadly, the Bible also says, that his own people didn't receive him.
 - Take a look at verse 11.
 - **“He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.”** John 1:11
- When John speaks about Jesus Christ's own people.
 - He's speaking about the Pharisees and teachers of the law.
 - He's speaking to those who studied the Old Testament.
 - The Jewish people who were waiting for the Messiah.
- And even though, Jesus came to his own, they also didn't receive him.
- This word receive has the meaning of welcoming someone.
 - And so, John is saying that Jesus came home to his people, and instead of welcoming him, they shut him out.
 - God's people didn't have any open rooms for Jesus in their lives.
 - Isn't it ironic, the Bible says that Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem, because there was no room at the inn.
 - The Son of God came to his own, but they didn't receive him.
- And do you know why, his people didn't receive him?
 - It's because, they didn't want him.
 - King Herod, the leader of Jesus' people, wanted to kill him, because he wanted control.



- He wanted to be king.
- The Pharisees and scribes, the teachers of Jesus' people, didn't want him, because they were jealous of him.
- And the crowds, the masses of Jesus' people, didn't want him, because he wasn't a political Messiah.
- They wanted a political liberator, not the Lamb of God.
- Jesus came to his own, but sadly, they didn't want him.
- After Jesus rose from the dead, do you remember how the chief priests reacted to the resurrection of Jesus Christ?
 - The chief priests had put guards in front of Jesus' tomb.
 - And in the early morning, the guards saw an angel appear and tell Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, that Jesus rose from the dead.
 - And in Matthew chapter 28, it says the guards trembled and looked like dead men, because they were afraid.
 - Afterwards, the guards went to the chief priests and told them everything that happened.
 - And so, all the elders and chief priests held a meeting.
 - And the Bible says they gave sufficient money to the guards, to keep quiet, and to tell people that the disciples came at night, and stole the body.
- Isn't this the craziest thing you ever heard?
 - You would think they would at least investigate the tomb.
 - All the evidence is right before their eyes.
 - "You guys saw an angel?"
 - "He said that Jesus rose from the dead?"
 - "Hmm, maybe Jesus is the Son of God?"
 - But instead of looking at the evidence, the priests paid the soldiers to spread a lie.



- What you see here is that unbelief isn't an evidence issue.
 - It's a moral issue.
 - It's a heart issue.
 - These leaders don't believe, because they didn't want to believe.
 - They don't want the truth.
 - Here we see how rejecting Jesus Christ, is a matter of the heart.
- Jesus came to the world, but because of their blindness, they didn't know him.
- Jesus came to his own, but because they didn't want him, they didn't receive him.
- Romans 3 verses 10 to 12 puts it like this:
 - **“None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”** Romans 3:10-12
- Here we see, how because of our blindness, by our strength, we can't receive Jesus Christ.
 - No one seeks God, not even one.
- And so, we need to ask, is there anything that can be done for us?
 - What hope is there for a world filled with sinful people?
- This leads us to our third point.



Point 3:

- Third, here we see, how you can believe in Jesus Christ, by the power of God.
- Throughout his gospel, John makes a very important point about how we come to faith.
 - The Bible teaches, that without God's intervention, none of us would see who Jesus is, and believe.
 - In other words, the reason, you're a Christian isn't because you took the first step towards God, but only because God took the first step towards you.
 - John writes:
 - **"In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son..."** 1 John 4:10
 - In John chapter 6 he states:
 - **"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."** John 6:44
 - Or listen to John chapter 15:
 - **"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit..."** John 15:16
 - And here in our passage, in verses 12 and 13, John writes:
 - **"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."** John 1:12-13



- The only way for you to believe Jesus Christ, is through the will of God, for God to open your eyes, and for God to change your heart.
 - Because there's nothing in you or me that has any power or inkling to seek after God.
 - Listen to what it says in the Canons of Dort.
 - "Moreover, when God...works true conversion in them, he not only sees to it that the gospel is proclaimed to them outwardly...He infuses new qualities into the will, making the dead will alive, the evil one good, the unwilling one willing, and the stubborn one compliant...And this is the regeneration, the new creation, the raising from the dead, and the making alive so clearly proclaimed in the Scriptures, which God works in us..." (Sections 3 and 4, Articles 11 and 12)
 - It's by God's power that we can believe and be changed.
- There was a time, I thought that teaching this truth, of mankind's inability to save themselves, would hinder, more than help people come to Christ.
 - Even though, I knew this was what the Bible taught, I thought it was better to keep it to myself, and just call on people to believe in Jesus.
 - But over the years, I've changed my mind, and I now see this is exactly what people need to hear.
 - The reason is because, not only is this, what the Bible teaches, but it's also by seeing how completely helpless we are, that leads us to cry out to God for help.
- Listen to what Pastor James Montgomery Boice, says to the person who argues against teaching that only God can save.



- “But surely we must not tell the sinner that he cannot respond unless God first does a work of regeneration in him!” someone argues. “That will make him complacent, or even despairing.”
- “On the contrary, that is exactly what the sinner needs to know. For it is only in such understanding that sinful human beings learn how desperate their situation is, and thus how absolutely essential God’s grace is. If we are hanging on to some confidence in our own spiritual ability, no matter how small, we will never seriously worry about our condition. There will be no sense of urgency.”
- “It is only as we renounce all...vain possibilities that he (God) will show us the way of salvation through Christ and lead us to him.”
- (Boice, The Doctrines of Grace, 88)
- Do you see what he’s saying?
 - It’s by seeing how completely lost and helpless we are, that we can begin to cry out to God in urgency, for mercy.
- To cling to Christ, you need to see your desperate need.
- And so, I want to ask you today, do you see how helpless you are?
 - Do you see your need for Christ?
- In these last moments, let me list for you, a few things, that may be keeping you from fully resting in Christ.
- For some, their faith in Christ is replaced by relationships in the church.



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- Now of course, community is good.
 - But friends move away, LIFE groups grow and change, and communities come and go.
 - And when that happens, those who trust in Christ, will welcome new people, adapt to change, and continue to build new relationships.
 - But those who trust in their community more than Christ, may find it hard to serve, or get really discouraged, or stop going to church altogether.
 - Haven't you seen this happen?
 - Here's a group of people in a church, and they're very close, but sadly they end up closing the church.
 - And instead of finding a new church, some of the people stop going to church.
 - Even those who faithfully served.
 - What's going on?
 - How could this happen?
 - It's because their friendships replaced Christ as the thing that gave them identity, and purpose, and hope.
- For others, instead of putting their hope in Christ, they put their hope in a Christian leader, or even a parent.
 - And haven't we all seen this?
 - A person will faithfully serve in the church, but the Christian leader they looked up to may fall into sin, and the ministry may crumble.
 - And this person may stop going to church, or get discouraged, and wonder if all they did was for nothing.
 - Now, of course, leaders should set a good example.
 - Parents should set a good example.



- But people are sinful, and even godly leaders will fall into sin.
- And we can be sad and disappointed when that happens.
- But if your hope is in Christ, we'll be able to forgive those leaders, and move forward, and trust that God had a purpose, and continue to love the church, and serve the church, because the church is the body of Christ, and not the body of some Christian leader.
- For others, they may put their hope in some emotional experience, or spiritually high feeling.
 - Now of course, we'll experience times in our lives, when God may do amazing things.
 - But you're not going to experience an emotional high every Sunday.
 - Or every time you pray.
 - Or every time you read the Bible.
 - In fact, most of the time, Christianity is mundane.
 - It's doing the laundry, and caring for our family members, and going to work, and studying for the test, and reading through Leviticus, and rallying the kids to get ready for bed for the tenth time, before spending time in prayer as your head is dosing off.
 - Some may go from one church to the next, looking for some emotional high, because they're treating Christ like a drug.
 - But those who truly trust in Christ, are those who daily depend on him day to day, even when life feels mundane.
- For others, they may put their hope in themselves, and not in Christ.



- This may be a person who does a lot in the church.
 - Or, this may be a person who has a successful ministry.
 - Or, this may be a person who has a lot of Bible knowledge.
 - But here's the truth, there's nothing in you, that you can do to earn salvation.
 - Because it's only by the power and will of God, that you can believe and receive eternal life in Jesus Christ.
- **“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.”**
 - That means, it's not through any kind of human relationship in a friend or leader, that we can find salvation.
 - That means, it's not through some emotional experience, that we can gain salvation.
 - That means, it's not through any power in us that we can earn salvation.
 - The only way we can receive and believe in Jesus Christ is through the power and will of God.
- Jesus Christ is the only way to life and salvation.
- By our own strength, we can't receive Jesus Christ.
- But by the power and will of God, we can know, and receive, and believe.



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- And so, let's ask the Lord to show us the depravity of our hearts.
 - And to show us our need for his Son, Jesus Christ.
 - And as he does, let's receive and believe, that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior.
 - Because what's impossible for us, is possible with God.