

Week 5
February 13, 2019

We're in John Chapter 1, studying the mind of Christ. You all know that in 2010, I did a 7-year study on the mind of Christ. So the 21 journals I filled are the basis for this study.

We're in John 1, and I'm going back to verses 4-5. **"In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome [a] it."** We talked last week about the idea of 'comprehending, or seizing or grasping or understanding' the light. We talked about ways that same word was used in other contexts. When we think about the mind of Christ ... to understand His mind being the essence of the light that he shines into our lives, the challenge before us is to grab it and to seize it making sure we have grasped the light and understood it. We don't want to be like the darkness that cannot grasp the light and be like the world spoken of in verses 11-13 NASB. **"He came to His [h] own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were [i] born, not of [j] blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."** We want to be able to see Him as He really is, grasping and understanding Him. That is the challenge before us now.

So I'm reading May 18, 2010. The ability to grasp or understand is critical to bearing fruit in Christ. If you don't grasp or understand, you won't be able to bear fruit. There is no change that actually occurs in our lives ... no relationship with Christ, unless we understand Him and know Him. The desire of knowing Christ is found throughout Scripture. There is no spirituality in our lives until we make that connection. It's kind of like this battery. So, we want this vital, essential connection.

1 John 1:5-9 tells us about the continual walking in the light. **"This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** This walking 'in the light' also puts me in fellowship with others who are in the light and puts me in a forgiving, cleansing connection with Jesus.

Back in John 1:6-7 it tells of John the Baptist and his role in the process. When I was studying this and began to think about the first part of John chapter 1, I got up to about verse six, and then it switches and I am reading about John the Baptist and about his role. And I am wondering, 'why are they putting this in the middle?' I mean, the Holy Spirit

wrote the Bible and He can put in anything, anywhere he wants. But I had to figure out what this has to do with understanding Christ, or the role of any man in the process. It was a big deal to me to understand that because ‘if God wants to use Jesus as the perfect instrument to reveal Himself to man, where does human agency come in to this process?’ It’s like if God wants to get it out to the world that He is real, that He exists, and the gospel is what saves, He could find a very direct way to do that without using human agency in the process. But he relies heavily on human agency in order to communicate His message to man.

Jesus spent just a few years down here training about twelve guys and then went back to heaven. He left to give us as the agency. So if we’re going to understand the process that leads to understanding the mind of Christ we have to understand the nature of human agencies. So in John 1:6-7 He tells us:

“There came a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that all might believe through him.”

This tells us that John’s role through this process was that he was **sent from God for a purpose**, and that purpose was **to be a witness who bears witness of the Light**. So he’s not the Light, but he will bear witness **to** the Light. Why? His purpose is ‘so that all may believe Him’.

This idea of “witness” ... (the Greek being, “marturian” (μαρτυριαν), means **to present evidence** or **to bear witness to the truth**.” It has to do with testimony at the risk of one’s life. We get the word, “Martyr” from the word witness. Martyrs are people who bore witness. In the first century when one was called to testify about a belief, he bore witness risking his very life. Many lost their lives because of the witness that they had.

This process of human agency in understanding or grasping the light is essential. This is not to say that God couldn’t do this a different way, but God saw the need to do it that way. It might relate to this: when God was trying to find the perfect vehicle in order to help man understand who He was, He sent His own Son in the form of man in human flesh. Therefore, what was embodied in Jesus was TRUTH ... grace and truth. So God used the humanness of Christ to be able to communicate God to us.

Jesus, then, took that TRUTH and transferred it into the minds of men so that now ‘they’ could be the human agency to **continue** to communicate that truth of Him. To me, it’s almost like taking out a 55 gallon drum of ‘knowledge of God’ and you are dipping out of that and putting it into smaller containers. (Now, my container is like a thimble. How do we try to get 55 gallons of water into a thimble?) That’s like trying to get the mind of Christ into our little minds ... to be able to understand and grasp what that’s all about.

So he said he came to bear witness to the truth—to give testimony even at the risk of his own life. To tell the truth or point people to the Light threatens many who wish to remain in the darkness. The reason there is a risk when trying to bring people into the

light is because their deeds are evil and they don't want them to be exposed. So, with John the Baptist, who did he confront that got him killed? It was Herod and Herodias, his illegitimate wife ... his brother's wife who he took. John confronted them about their sin, but they loved their sin and darkness and didn't want to come into the light. So what did they do? They tried to snuff out John's life (which was light). The life is in the light. The world thinks that if you can snuff out the life, you can snuff out the light and they can remain in darkness. How do you put out the light? So if I see light bulbs on the ceiling, I can turn the switch off and they'll go dark. Or I can shoot the light. Then I can flip the switch all day long but it's not going to come on.

The world thinks that if you kill the messenger, there will be no more light and then they can do whatever they please. They tried that with Jesus. He confronted the darkness of the religious leaders of His day, and what did they do? They got Him snuffed out! They snuffed out his life, and in doing so, they snuffed out **the Light**. But **He** had another plan. They called it resurrection. The resurrection was He came back to life and He was able to shine brighter when He came back to life, than He was before He died.

Comment: They persecuted the early church. And when they persecuted the church trying to snuff them out, they scattered everywhere.

Rod - It's like you have a fire, maybe an oil fire, and you try to fight it with power and try to beat it But all it's going to do is spread! When you beat a fire, it spreads out and pops up somewhere else. And that is what was happening here in the early church. So, here's John who is a witness, and that may be the first indicator that it won't end up well for him.

Now in this work, what is in the mind of God that says witnesses are needed for other humans to grasp the light – that is, “come to believe”? Like Paul in 1 Corinthians 9 says, he will use all ‘possible means’, ‘all legitimate means’, to save some ... he is not going to save them all.

¹⁹ For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. ²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under [h] the Law, as under [i] the Law though not being myself under [j] the Law, so that I might win those who are under [k] the Law; ²¹ to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. ²² To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. ²³ I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

If Paul did this, then certainly God does the same thing. Of course, Paul would not do something illegitimate to save a person, like pass out \$100 bills to get a person baptized.

That would be illegitimate. I might baptize a whole lot of people, but I'm not sure that that would be salvation.

So God uses every legitimate means to save the people He can.

But then there's another factor here. In John 1:8, he said he was not the light, but came that he might bear *witness* to the Light. John wanted to make it clear that John the Baptist was *not* the Light, but only provided *evidence* to the Light. This is important because man tends to fixate on the object, or the person who reflects the light, instead of on the true source of that light. This becomes idolatry. We must not get the *means to an end* mixed up with the *end* itself or someone, or something, even in nature that points to the real deal. Some examples of that are where God created natural things and what does man tend to do? He tended to {*put his hand to- not sure of wording*} things, made an idol out of it and fall down to worship it. They would even worship the sun, moon and stars. Or in the case of 1 Cor. 3:1-4 when Paul talks about them fixating on the messenger:

“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, ³ for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking [a] like mere men? ⁴ For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not mere men ...” They were so fixated on the one who brought them to Christ, the preacher, rather than on the **Son of God**. All those men were only reflecting the truth, the real deal. They had no light in and of themselves.

What I am trying to get across is that created things are *witnesses* to the Light. This is one way we can learn more about the mind of God: by the things or the persons He has sent, that He named, that He put His glory into, but they only reflect the real glory. They have no light of their own but merely *reflect* the Son's Light.

John 1:6-9

- Witness=to give testimony at the risk of one's life
- Why did God think we needed human witness to grasp the light?
- John not light-reflects-what God puts His glory into.
- Enlighten=Photizo=to make us see (Eph. 1:8; 3:9; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 6:4; 10:32)
- Initial Enlightenment and Continued Enlightenment

In John 1:9 says “There was the true Light [g] which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.”

We want to camp out on this one a little bit because we need to get this idea of enlightenment. We talked a little about it before. The central nature of illumination, to understand the mind of Christ, is that His Light is the Light that lightens every man.

He comes to enlighten us. What does enlighten really mean? What does it mean for Jesus to enlighten us? We have a whole period of history called “The Enlightenment”. There were the Dark Ages, a period of relative ignorance from what we know today, and then there was “The Enlightenment” because, in a sense, light bulbs were going off in peoples’ heads.

Newton was sitting under a tree and an apple fell on his head, and he said, “Oh, gravity!”

Louis Pasteur was looking through a microscope and all these squiggly things were crawling around and he said, “Germs”!

Then, instead of the earth being the center of the galaxy, Nicolaus Copernicus looked up into the sky and said, “Oh, the Sun is the center of the galaxy, not the earth.” ***That changed everything!*** They began to make maps differently because they were beginning to understand that the world was **not** flat. It was a circle that had the ability to rotate on its axis. The whole world began to open up to them. Scientific discoveries were being made right and left changing the way people perceived reality. And it was really a fundamental change in reality. That is a kind of example of how, when we discern the mind of Christ, it changes our reality. Before you have the mind of Christ, it’s like living

in the Dark Ages. You live with superstition. You live with not knowing cause and effect, how things work, and then when you begin to put it together, it's a "wow! That's how it works?" Yes, this is how it works!

Let's get this idea about blindness. The word "enlightened" in the Greek is photizo (φωτιζει). It means to shed range, to shine, to brighten up, enlightened, enlightenment or illuminate. So let's look at some other passages where this word is used to enlighten us about enlightenment:

Ephesians 1:18

I pray that the eyes of your heart [x] may be **enlightened**, so that you will know 'what is the hope of His calling', what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the [y] saints.

When the eyes of your heart are enlightened, it opens up the storehouse of things like 'hope' and all the things He has given us. We will be able to understand things now. Our eyes are enlightened.

Remember when Saul was on the road to Damascus and a bright light came out and it blinded him. Then when Ananias arrived, he was able to open his eyes ... he was able to see. **But that was really a metaphor for what was happening in his heart.** He was now able to see the world from a completely different angle. In 2 Corinthians he said that there was a time when he looked at Christ from a worldly point of view, but after that experience on the road, and he was **enlightened**; he was able to look at Christ differently. And after that, he was able to look at other **people** differently. When people are enlightened, it changes their view of God and it changes their view of other people because we can see more clearly. And it changes our view of ourselves because we see ourselves differently as well. We see ourselves realistically, truthfully, honestly – both the amazing things about us and common sense.

Ephesians 3:8-9

"Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ,⁹ and **to make plain** to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things."

Here he is talking about the mystery that proved what Jesus did 'so that all men, Jews and Gentiles, would be united in one church under one head, even Christ'. He is bringing this to light. It's a mystery that was shrouded in darkness. Now it has been brought into the light having been revealed. Now not only do we get a different view of ourselves and of the world in Christ, but we begin to get a different view of His plan—of what He has in store for us.

So these are the kinds of practical things that are happening when you know the mind of Christ. You begin to say, “Oh, this is a plan. This is what God had in mind for the world ... to bring everything under one head, even Christ.” This **had** been hidden.

1 Corinthians 4:5

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

There are some things that are difficult for us to see now, but when God comes back again, He will enlighten everything. Everything will be coming into the light. It will be disclosed. It will be made clear, even what the motives of men’s hearts are.

So the enlightenment doesn’t just **end** with us becoming Christians. There will be a HUGE enlightenment when Christ comes back. A lot will be revealed then. So, we’re in the **process** of enlightenment that will have a consummation, if you will, when Christ returns and everything becomes clear, and we’re going to see Him and know Him as He is.

2 Timothy 1:10

“This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

The means by which he brings things to light is the gospel; the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. So He brings to light two things: life and immortality. He brings those into perspective.

Hebrews 6:4-6

“It is impossible for those who have **once been enlightened**, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age ⁶ and who have fallen [c] away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.”

We talked about a point in time when a person becomes enlightened. It’s when they know the truth ... they **see** it. But He also says it is possible that once a person comes into the light and given life, they **can** go back into the darkness. It doesn’t mean that just because we experience enlightenment, we will stay in the light. It **is** possible to go back into the darkness. He warns us about that. To me, that tells me about the mind of Christ. It’s not just one of these things where you just grab it and you’ve got it forever. No. You have to keep grabbing and keep grabbing and keep grabbing. You have to keep pursuing it. It takes constant effort to be able to know the mind of Christ because if you don’t continue to do that, you may lose it. You must continue to hold **on** to it.

Hebrews 10:32

“Remember those earlier days after you had **received the light**, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering.”

Now He’s talking about people who are under persecution. He’s talking about that time when they first saw the light. He wants them to remember that time ... that point in time where they “got it”. The light wouldn’t go off because if you really understood it, that is what would cause you to endure this persecution.

Buffy: Is he talking about the time when you were baptized?

Rod: Well, that certainly is involved at the time of enlightenment. Yes. But there is much more to it than just the point that they were baptized. It’s that point **when we recognize** the central nature of God and we recognize who Jesus is. Understanding who He is causes so many things to fall into place in our lives. You know that the person who lives in denial of who Christ is, is going to have all kinds of trouble in this life. But when Christ is put in His proper place in our lives, everything begins to come together. He is the cornerstone. He is the One who causes the rest of the building to fit together. He’s the most essential **part** of the building. He’s the ground ... He’s the foundation ... He’s ground zero of everything. So when our lives are built on that kind of foundation, everything begins to fall into place.

The verses said that once Light has come, there is enlightenment. So Eph. 1:18 means that the eyes of the heart must be enlightened. He’s telling us to turn our “eyes” back on. Before Christ, your eyes were turned off ... your heart was turned off. Now you have to turn your eyes and your heart on.

When Paul was praying for the Ephesians, **this could not be for salvation** for they were already in Christ. They were already “in the light”. This additional life and enlightenment is when the Holy Spirit helps us to understand or comprehend what we have been freely given.

So in 1 Corinthians 2:10 b-16 it says that the Spirit continually helps us to understand the things that we have been freely given:

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so **that we may understand what God has freely given us**. ¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. [c] ¹⁴ The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. ¹⁵ The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things,

but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, ¹⁶ for, **“Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” [d] But we have the mind of Christ.**

This constant enlightenment, the eyes of our heart, is that God is aiding us to grasp that light that when it shines into our darkness. In this case, it is to know hope and power. A Christian can have hope and power without even knowing it. In other words, he’s praying for the eyes to ‘know what to have’. This is what we have been talking about in our “Victory Over the Darkness” study on Sunday mornings. We’ve been given everything we need for life and godliness. He has equipped and supplied everything for us. But sometimes we’re not **aware** of it. It’s like having all these resources around us and we’re blind to them. We don’t even know what we have! **That’s** what Paul is praying about ... that they will understand.

In this case, there’s no hope and power—at least of their comprehending it. I see this frequently in experiences. I see in Ephesians 3:8 that Paul’s job is to bring to light, or to enlighten the administration of the mystery. Gentiles can be saved! This mystery is part of the unfathomable riches of Christ. The riches of the ocean are being fathomed, but not the unsearchable riches of Christ! In other words, we are spending so much time trying to uncover all the riches of the ocean, but how much time do we spend diving down into the unfathomable riches of Christ?

Enlightenment continues even in the judgment when God will expose the motives of men’s hearts. It is God who brings to light what is hidden.

Hebrews 4:12 says, **“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”** The word of God serves its purpose even now.

Hebrews 6:4 says that the two realities that accompany enlightenment are ‘tasting the heavenly gift’, and ‘being made partakers of the Holy Spirit’. That is why it’s so important. At the same point in time, when the light bulbs go off (those are the eyes), the eyes are open and the taste buds come to life. We begin to “taste” the heavenly gift. We begin to become partakers of that Holy Spirit. To partake of him; his spirit, is similar to a tasting of His Flesh and His blood. It is to participate in it or to partner in what He did. It is from the word Koinonia, meaning “common sharing”.

Buffy – Are you talking about the taking of the bread?

Rod - Communion, the Lord’s Supper, is the representation, or an outward symbol of the true bread and the true blood. When we are partaking of the Holy Spirit or partaking of the heavenly gift, we are interacting with this.

You interact with food. Most of us don't just sit there and look at it saying, "Well, that's really pretty. Just look at that steak. Look at that cupcake." We interact with it so we taste it; we experience it in order to get the "good" out of it.

He's almost saying that this is why you put your five senses into the world. The more you want to experience the world, the more you have to touch things, smell things, see things, taste things and hear things. The world is made more understandable and more exciting when we can put our five senses into it.

And Paul says that the same thing happens when you put your spiritual five senses (or more) into an experience with Christ. When you do that, then you begin to open up a new world. New doors open up. So, when Helen Keller was locked up in a very dark place in her life, she was very frustrated with her life. We can see that in the way she behaved; but when the enlightenment came (Annie Sullivan) ... Now she **was** able to see, she was **unable** to hear, and she was **unable** to speak. (She did learn to speak later.) BUT, it was when she began, through touch, through that experience, the one thing she had that she **could** use, that opened up her world. She found that there were some things that she could 'hear' and 'say' through her other senses. It was amazing how her life was transformed because they found a way to teach her ... to get the experiences inside of her. The same thing is true with our relationship with Christ.

I **will** be woken up! We have the **ability** to experience what enlightenment and illumination is all about. That's when everything opens up. The greens are greener and everything seems to become 'loud'. We are seeing things that we could never see before. These are the kinds of things we're talking about. Jesus brought **life**. Now if we want to know about life and immortality, the purpose of being here and the purpose of life, He brings us life. We want to know if we will live after we die ... is there another life. The Light opens up all these visions of possibilities. Left to ourselves, we would do crazy things from our crazy ideas about what life and immortality are about. He opens that up for us.

We think that there was an initial enlightenment that continues throughout our lives. Usually when one is searching for salvation they spend more time in serious study of the word, but later it slows down, the light becomes dim and things go dark. That is why we must **continue** to be seekers, constantly seeking how I might order my life so that Jesus continues to shine into my darkness.

Being enlightened means looking into the mind of Christ and going challenger deep... the deepest hole in the ocean. If you go down deep enough into that 36,000- foot hole, it is going to get very, very, very dark.

But if you look down into the hole that is the mind of God or the mind of Christ, it gets brighter and brighter and brighter the deeper you go into it. It doesn't get darker and darker.

