

Post Tenebras, Lux

John 1:6-13

As we come to the word of God I would invite you to open your Bible to John 1. Our text for today is John 1:6-13 where we are confronted with the shocking reality of how mankind responds to the arrival of the Messiah.

This section is in the middle of the prologue which spans from vs. 1-18. In this prologue John introduces us to the themes that he will address in the rest of the book. In vs. 1-5 we saw last week that John proclaims the deity of Jesus the Christ, that he is God. In vs. 14-18 we'll see next week the revelation of Jesus the Christ, that he reveals God to us. But what we see here in vs. 6-13 explains to us the responses to Jesus the Christ. Follow along as I read vs. 1-18. . . .

In vs. 4-5 Jesus is called the Light, and that is further emphasized in vs. 7-10 where the apostle John wants to make clear that John the Baptist—as he's called in the other gospels—was not the light, but that Jesus is the true light who was coming into the world.

The title of this message is “Post Tenebras, Lux” which is a Latin phrase which means “after darkness, light.” This is a motto written in stone on the International Monument to the Reformation in Geneva, Switzerland, commonly known as the Reformation wall. This monument commemorates the work of God spanning the 15th and 17th centuries which saw the recovery of the biblical gospel and many aspects of sound doctrine throughout Europe.

The Reformation is a hinge on which the world has turned because the Reformation was not contained within churches. It had direct and immediate impact on every sphere of life from government to education to science, the arts, and beyond.

“Post Tenebras, Lux” became the motto of the Reformation because the light of truth penetrated a land that had been cast in darkness due to the corruption and control of the Roman Catholic Church. For centuries the Church had kept people in every nation uneducated and ignorant of the truth. They controlled people by not allowing the word of God to be read or taught in the language people spoke, which made it easy to advance false teaching like purgatory and penance and indulgences. Many priests didn't even know what the Scripture said—they would just recite Latin scripts that they themselves didn't understand.

Just imagine yourself coming to church every Sunday listening to a preacher talk in a language you don't understand, but doing so out of fear that you would spend eons in purgatory if you didn't. And because the Church was interlaced with the

civil government, if you didn't submit to church authority, you could be cast out of favor in the community, or worse, be put to death. Fear and ignorance kept people from questioning the authorities.

In a land of such darkness, there wasn't much hope that national and international powers could be held to account. But in 1517 a man named Martin Luther, a German professor of theology, began to call into question the teaching of indulgences and the Pope's authority to forgive sin. On October 31, 1517, he posted a document called his 95 Theses which he intended to be used for academic discussion. But that document was translated into German and spread among the common people.

We celebrate that day, October 31st, as Reformation Day because it was that act by Martin Luther that the Lord used to cast light on the world. And as the world turned from one day to another, the light spread farther and brighter and led to the transformation of lives and churches and cities and nations—indeed even the world.

Though the posting of his 95 Theses was the catalyst that launched the Reformation formally, the singular most effective weapon that explains the transformation that took place is the word of God—the Scripture. In that day the Bible was only in Latin, which very few could read. In fact, it was a crime to have the word of God in the vulgar tongue—what common people spoke: German, French, English, and so on. But when Martin Luther translated the Bible into German, and William Tyndale translated it into English, and Jack the Frenchman whose full name I can't pronounce translated it into French, all hell didn't break loose, the word of God broke loose and people began to see the light.

Pastors began to preach in the language of the people, and the gospel of Jesus Christ was proclaimed, and the many errors and follies of the Roman Catholic Church were denounced and dismantled.

But not everyone received the light of God's word with joy. There were many who hated the light and suppressed the light in their own heart and worked to suppress the light in society. The Roman Catholic Church which Martin Luther initially tried to reform was corrupt to its core and it refused to submit to God's word. Priests who began to preach the word of God were banned from their churches. Theological battles turned to physical battles. Many leaders—like William Tyndale and John Knox—were exiled from their countries temporarily or permanently lest they be put to death. And indeed many Protestants were put to death by beheading or being burned at the stake.

But despite the persecution and trouble and bloodshed, the word of God could not be stopped. The match lit by Martin Luther on October 31, 1517 became a wildfire which brought the light of the truth of God to the world—even down to us today.

After the darkness where the light of truth had been obscured by tradition and false religion, God caused the light to shine and it still shines today in every church that proclaims God's word.

But the Reformation was not the first time this happened. "Post Tenebras, Lux" is a pattern that we see many times throughout the history of Israel. But the greatest event in history which is most aptly described by *post tenebras, lux*, is right here in our text. After the darkness of 400 years of silence from God, and after the Jews had developed a form of Judaism that eclipsed the truth of God's word, the light of Christ came into the world.

Here in vs. 6-13, the apostle John unveils us to us the preparation for the light in vs. 6-9, and the response to the light in vs. 10-13. That's our basic outline today.

The Preparation for the Light (v. 6-9)

As we look at this text, consider the first section where John introduces us to the plan of God to prepare the world to receive the light. LOOK at vs. 6-9. . . .

The coming of the Messiah had long been prophesied to be preceded by one who would prepare the way. Malachi 3:1 says, "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me." This messenger is the to whom we are introduced here. His name is John. The other Gospels often call him "John the Baptist," but in the Gospel of John, the apostle doesn't do that. In fact, one commentator rightly noted that if the apostle John were to call the prophet John anything, it would be John the Witness. It is John's role as a witness to the Messiah that the apostle John focuses on as we'll see in the coming weeks.

But here we're simply introduced to this man whom God sent. Notice what it says in vs. 8. . . . Why does John say that? Well, John the Baptist had a significant ministry that drew thousands upon thousands to him. Matthew 3:5 says, "Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him." John was a prophet, and he baptized people as a sign of repentance and preparation for the Messiah. His message was "Repent! For the Kingdom of God is near!" And baptism was a way of demonstrating one's commitment to repent.

John 3 tells us that as Jesus' ministry increased, John's ministry decreased. But his ministry didn't die out. If you think about life without the internet and television and radio, news spread rather slowly. So when he proclaimed his message of repentance, that proclamation began to spread beyond Israel to the Jews who lived throughout the Roman Empire. And then as Jesus was ministering, the news of him began to spread. But the news about John and Jesus was like waves on the ocean—they went out slowly, and it took quite some time for the gospel of Jesus to

overtake the message of John. And then, there was the news of the birth of the church and coming of the Holy Spirit that began to spread.

We see this dynamic in Acts 19 where Paul arrives in Ephesus some 20 years after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the coming of the Holy Spirit. When he found some disciples of Jesus there, Acts 19:2 says, “And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

These people were called disciples, which indicates they had heard about Jesus, but what they heard was very limited. They were far away from Israel so the news of all that took place travelled slow and was limited. It wasn’t until Paul arrived that they came to understand the relationship between John and Jesus.

While most disciples of John the Baptist eventually became disciples of Jesus, not all of them did. There’s even a group today who still follow John the Baptist called Mandaeans. So it was necessary for the apostle John to explicitly state that John was not the light.

The purpose for John’s prophetic ministry was two-fold: First, it was to prepare the hearts of God’s people to receive the Messiah, and second, it was to point to the Messiah when he came. The first purpose we see on display in vs. 19-28 of this chapter. For now just LOOK at vs. 23. . . . There he quotes Isaiah 40:3 to explain who he is and his mission. After 400 years of prophetic silence, the Lord sent John to soften the hearts and quicken the minds of his people in preparation for the coming Messiah.

And then his second purpose which is expressly stated in vs. 7 is on display in vs. 29-34. LOOK at vs. 29. . . . After several years of John’s prophetic ministry, Jesus arrives on the scene and John has the joy and privilege of heralding the arrival of the Messiah—not only who he was—Jesus—but what He came to accomplish—take away the sin of the world.

We’ll study those section in depth when we get to them, but coming back to our text, the significance and spread of John the Baptist’s ministry made it necessary for the apostle to introduce John the Baptist as a prime witness in his case that Jesus is the Messiah.

Notice that word “witness” in vs. 7, “He came as a witness, to bear witness.” The noun and verb forms of this word are usually translated either “witness” or “testimony.” Those words are used some 40 times in John’s Gospel. Combining that with his purpose statement in John 20:31 helps us to see that the Gospel of John is a courtroom drama.

Every time we sit to read and study the Gospel of John, it’s as though we’re sitting in the jury box listening to arguments and testimony for the purpose of coming to a decision. In this case, this issue not a matter of guilt or innocence, but a matter of identity and significance. The question before the court is who is the longed for Messiah?

As we walk through the Gospel we’ll hear from the following witnesses: John the Baptist, Jesus himself, God the Father, the Old Testament, the works that Jesus did, the crowds, and the apostle John. By the time we get to the end of the book, the testimony of these seven witnesses make a case that cannot be denied. The Christ is Jesus—he is the light of the world. He is the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world.

Notice again what it says in vs. 7. . . .

John came so that he could bear witness so that “all might believe through him.” I want you to see afresh the grace of God in this. Note the grace of God that he did not limit the proclamation of the coming Messiah to a few. In an age where the horse was the fastest way to travel on the planet, John’s ministry had its limitations, but the purpose was so that *all* might believe. This is the universal call of salvation.

At this church we teach the sovereignty of God in salvation which means that in the mercy and grace of God, rather than leaving all sinners to their will which is enslaved to sin, he extends grace by choosing to save some of his own free will. But sometimes people take that doctrine and run to unbiblical conclusions, saying that we don’t need to evangelize because God will save whom he wants regardless of what we do. Or that we shouldn’t evangelize because people are dead in sin so it doesn’t matter.

The problem with those ideas is they go against what God does. God doesn’t limit the proclamation of the gospel Jesus Christ. God doesn’t limit the exposure to the light of Christ. Did you notice that in vs. 9? It says. . . . Our God “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth,” 1 Timothy 2:4. So he is extravagant with the offer of the gospel.

So the purpose of John’s ministry is that all might believe through him. But also consider the other part of that, that all might *believe* through him. Now think about

this—we're so used to the need to believe in Jesus that we can gloss over this without much thought. But I find it amazing that the appropriate and necessary response to the coming Messiah is to believe in him.

To a people who were under the Law, John's message was not to prepare for the Messiah by cleaning up their lives and making themselves acceptable to their king. To a people who were expecting the Christ to be a conquering king, John's message was not to prepare themselves to join the Messiah's army and prepare for battle against the Romans. No, the purpose of John's prophetic ministry was to prepare the nation of Israel for a Messiah they weren't expecting. And because the Christ would not be what they had been told to expect by their leaders, John's ministry was to prepare the hearts of the people to believe in the one that God sent, not the one they wanted.

In principle this was the purpose of all the true prophets of old. There were always false prophets who were glad to lie to the king and the nation promising success and blessing and prosperity. They knew they could tickle ears and flatter the king and get away with it. It was the true prophets who usually brought messages of judgment and destruction, and they were rejected and despised.

And you know what, beloved? The same is true today. There's a lot of teaching and preaching out there that leads people to believe that Jesus exists for them, for their welfare, for their happiness and success and prosperity. Many people embrace an idea of Jesus that fits their desires and hopes. But the word of God declares to us who the real Jesus is so that we would lay aside our preferred Messiah and embrace the true Christ.

To believe in Jesus is to affirm and embrace what God says about him and his purpose to save us from our sin, adopt us into his family, and grant us eternal life. John the Baptist is the first voice that points to Jesus as the Christ who takes away the sin of the world, and that is the message we must proclaim to a dark world today.

The Response to the Light (v. 10-13)

Having introduced us to the purpose of God to prepare the world for the coming Christ, John then moves to prepare us for the three different responses to the Christ's coming. Throughout the gospel we'll see these responses unfold, and these are the same responses we see in the world today. What we see in vs. 10-13 is John move from the most common response to the least common response.

Consider the first response: ignorance and apathy. LOOK at vs. 10. . . .

This speaks to the time before, during, and after the coming of the Christ. When it says, “He was in the world,” he refers to the fact that the testimony of the Light of God has always been present in creation. Paul refers to this in Romans 1:20, “For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.” Or Psalm 19:1, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.”

Not only does creation testify to the eternal power and divine nature and glory of God, the Lord graciously used Israel to spread the knowledge of Yahweh to the nations. When a number of us went to Israel back in April, one of the first lessons we learned is how the Lord so arranged the geography of that region that for the nations to pass from one land mass to another, they had to pass through Israel where they heard about Israel’s God.

Then when Israel was exiled due to their disobedience, they were spread far and wide by the Assyrians and Babylonians. And there were some Jews among them like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah who gave testimony to Yahweh by their faithfulness, even leading Nebuchadnezzar to make a public proclamation honoring Yahweh.

Remember that when Jesus was born, wise men from the east came to give gifts to the newborn king. Though we often think there were three of them because of the three gifts, the truth is it was probably a large retinue of people with many camels and servants to care for the wise men during their multi-month travels. No doubt as they encountered people on the way, they made it known where they were going and why.

All this to say that when John writes that the Creator of all was in the world, he means that there was ample testimony to his existence and majesty and glory. A great many people in the world knew that there was a God named Yahweh, but, as John says here, they did not know him. The response of the world to their Creator? Ignorance and apathy. With few exceptions, they may have known something about him, but they did not know the truth about him. And whatever they heard—they were apathetic. They didn’t care.

This the same today. You talk to people on the street today or you go on campuses today and you will encounter people who have certainly heard the name Jesus, but they are ignorant of the truth about Jesus. And frankly, they don’t care. There are even some who think they know Jesus, and they find him attractive, and they are glad to say that they follow him, but in reality they are ignorant of who he really is. The Jesus they know is more a figment of their imagination than the one who came history.

The same goes when you look around the world. As I mentioned last week billions of people in the world know the name Jesus, but there is complete ignorance and apathy about him—no desire to actually know him.

For this reason, when we proclaim the gospel, it is vital that we don't limit what we say about Jesus to, "God sent Jesus to die for our sins." If that's as much as you say about Jesus, you're leaving people in their ignorance. We need to be clear that as the Son of God, Jesus is God and worthy of all glory and praise and worship. The right response to the gospel message is not just belief in what Jesus did in history, but who Jesus is. So let us make sure that we don't prevent people from having true faith because they don't know who he is.

So ignorance and apathy is the response of the world. LOOK at vs. 11 to see the response of God's own people—the Jews. . . .

Here John narrows his focus from the world to Israel. He does that geographically and relationally. When it says, "he came to his own," that is a phrase used two other times in this Gospel and both other times it refers a man's own house. For example, in John 19:27 as Jesus hangs on the cross, he entrusts the care of his mother to his disciple John, who wrote this Gospel. And it says, "And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home."

So John seems to be saying here that Christ, the Lord, came to his own home—the land of Israel—the place he chose to make his home for thousands of years. This is where he manifested his presence through the tabernacle and the temple. This is the place where he promised to establish an everlasting kingdom. If there was anywhere where the Messiah should be welcomed and received and celebrated, it was the land of Israel.

And then it says, "and his own people did not receive him." "People" there is implied, though he uses the same phrase "his own," he changed the gender from neuter to masculine indicating that he changed his focus from the land to the people. What John describes here is a travesty! We've all no doubt seen, and some of you have experienced, what it's like when a soldier comes home from deployment. There's overwhelming joy and excitement and love and hugs and kisses. Imagine coming home from a long deployment and no one is there to pick you up. When you Uber home you call out, "I'm home!" and no one responds, or worse, they express that they don't want you there. It tears your heart out for someone to go to their own home and be rejected.

And yet that's precisely what happened with Christ. Sure, there were moments when it seemed like people received Jesus. When he was healing and feeding it was easy for people to accept him and even want to make him king. But when they

realized that he wasn't going to meet their demands, they rejected him. It was not difficult for the leaders of Israel to turn the people against Jesus—they played on the fact that Jesus was not the kind of king they wanted.

One of the most haunting declarations in all the Bible is found in John 19 when the people call for the crucifixion of Jesus and as Pilate tried to release him. Vs. 15 says, "They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar.""

The chosen people of God, the people to whom Paul says in Roman 9:4, "belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises," these people who were prepared by John the Baptist, did not receive the Messiah. They rejected him. They were in the best position, they had all the information, they witnessed his glory in signs and wonders and teaching, and they didn't just turn away, no they turned against him.

Beloved, when you explain the gospel to someone and they reject it, don't think that if you could only explain it better they would believe. Or if you were more passionate or more thorough or simpler or clearer, *then* they would believe. If only you had the answers to their questions or could defend against their objections, *then* they would believe. That's not true. It's true that we can grow in clarity and our ability to explain and defend the truth, but it's not true that the reception of Christ depends on that.

If Judas could walk with Jesus for three years, hear everything he taught, and see every miracle he performed, and yet reject Christ, that tells us that salvation is not matter of intellectual understanding or personal experience. If the Jewish leaders who of all people were the most knowledgeable in the Scripture and Jesus answered all their questions and addressed all their objections, and yet they didn't believe, that tells us that salvation is not a matter of having more Bible knowledge or getting questions answered.

Jesus was the greatest teacher that ever lived. He performed uncountable miracles experienced by thousands and seen by hundreds of thousands, and they did not believe. Jesus came to his own homeland, and his own people did not receive him. Let us never think that we can produce faith in Jesus by the strength of our arguments or the clarity of our explanations. Yes, faith does come by hearing, Romans 10:17, but there's more involved. And that's what vs. 12-13 tell us.

The responses to the Light of Christ are ignorance, apathy, and rejection. But sometimes, people receive and believe. LOOK at vs. 12-13. . . .

To receive Christ and to believe in his name are the same thing. In receiving Christ we accept Him as Messiah because we believe that he is indeed the Messiah. The Bible doesn't teach that we receive Jesus into our hearts, but that we bow to him as Lord.

Some people have a kind of superstitious view of the name of Jesus—almost as if his name is an incantation that brings healing or peace or solutions to our problems. But the name of Jesus is who he is—his being and his character. There is no power in the word “Jesus”—it is the person of Jesus who powerfully works on behalf of his people.

To believe in the name of Jesus is not merely an intellectual matter—mentally assenting and affirming that he is the Christ. It is a giving of oneself to him—putting oneself in the posture of submission ready to follow him wherever he leads. It is a dying to yourself acknowledging that he has the authority and the right to direct our lives as he wills.

To believe in Jesus is to acknowledge that we are sinners and thus in need of a savior—in need of a Christ who will take away our sin, reconcile us to God, and rule over our lives.

The kind of belief that saves doesn't require that you clean up your life first and make yourself acceptable to God, nor does it require that you know as much of the Bible as possible before you can believe. No, to believe is to acknowledge your need, entrust yourself to Christ, and then, knowing that one is forgiven and set free from the power of sin and brought into union with Christ, *then* we have the joy by the power of the indwelling Spirit to pursue a radically different life in active submission to Christ.

Now, LOOK again at vs. 12 to see what happens when one believes. . . . This is incredible. The right to become children of God? To be a child of God is to be a sharer in all the rights and privileges of being in God's family. This includes the right to come directly to God without a priest or mediator. This includes the right to call God your own Father and experience the care and love he has to give. This includes the privilege of being a co-heir with the Son of God such that all that belongs to him also belongs to us. This includes the privilege of being related to all other children of God and enjoying the blessing of connections all around the world.

There's a lot more we can say about what it means to be a child of God, but I would direct you to the message from Father's Day where we considered the wonder of having God as our Father.

We've seen that the world at large is ignorant and apathic about Jesus. We've seen that his own people did not receive him and in fact they put him to death. If you put the world and the Jews together, there aren't any people groups left. So the question becomes, who are these people who believe? Vs. 13 gives us the answer. LOOK at it. . . .

Those who believe are not a people group distinct from the world and the Jews—they are a people from those two groups who have been given new life by God. Consider how John rules out any human explanation for those who believe.

First, he says that they are “not of blood.” This is to say that biological descent is not what produces the new birth. Who your ancestors are, who your grandparents are, who your parents are have no bearing on your relationship with God. Kids and teenagers, you cannot ride on your parent's faith and think that you will enjoy favor with God. Some of you were wonderfully influenced by your grandparents, but their belief in Christ has no bearing on your standing before God. You cannot be saved by being born into the right family or being in the line of the right heritage.

Second, John says, “nor of the will of the flesh.” This is to say that your will is not the explanation of your salvation. Yes, you must believe. But John here says it is not the exercise of your will that explains your reception of Jesus. You cannot will yourself into the kingdom of God. This rules out the concept of so-called “free will.” Why? Because the Bible does not teach that our will is free—it teaches that it is enslaved to sin, Eph. 2:3, Titus 3:3 and other passages.

Third, John says, “nor of the will of man.” This is a little trickier, but the best understanding seems to be that this refers to man-made religion. Mankind cannot devise a system whereby they can offer salvation if people follow their system. This is what the Pharisees tried to do, and in fact this is what all false religion tries to do. But no system of mankind can bring you to God. They all fail from the start because they exist out of the fundamental rejection of God's word.

Your bloodline, your personal will, and your effort to follow man-made religion all fail to explain how it is that some believe. What's the explanation? It's the end of the verse. . . .

Because the world is ignorant and apathic and the people of God rejected him, the only way for anyone to receive the Christ is for God himself to produce spiritual life and faith in a person. This is affirmed by Jesus in John 3:3 when he said to Nicodemus, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” And then in John 6:63, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.” And then a moment later he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

This is nothing new. Jesus is only teaching what is revealed in the New Covenant in Ezekiel 36. In the New Covenant God promises that in the future, solely on the basis of his will and not dependent on the repentance of the people, “I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”

And it's only after God does these things that he says, “Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations.”

This pattern of God's initiating work to produce spiritual life and which is followed by faith is also taught in Ephesians 2:4 where Paul says, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.” This is why he can say in vs. 8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Let me give you one more. In Titus 3 after Paul reminds us of our depraved nature before salvation, he says, “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”

The Scripture always teaches that God is the actor in salvation. This is called monergistic salvation, meaning, it is the work of one.

Now, some struggle with this doctrine because it doesn't seem to fit with their experience. “I believed!” they proclaim. Others struggle with this doctrine because it takes salvation out of the hands of sinners and, so it's said, makes people robots. To that I would say that if you take at face value what the Scripture says about the nature of man, if God left it up to man to believe, no one would believe, but all would go to hell gladly in their hostility against God. To the first point, I would say to you that this doctrine looks at salvation from God's perspective and His work in the spiritual realm. But we primarily experience salvation from our perspective in the physical realm.

We heard the gospel, it made sense to us, we recognized we were sinners, so we put our faith in Christ. This doctrine doesn't deny that, it merely explains why the gospel made sense to us and why we were able to recognize ourselves to be helpless sinners before a holy God. And that explanation is that God put new life into us, giving us capacities we did not have before.

God's work of birthing people into the kingdom of God allows them to see the glory of Christ and believe in his name is what makes him worthy of praise. And it's what prevents anyone from boasting in their salvation.

This truth enables us to be faithful to proclaim the gospel far and wide, and trust the results to God. This truth allows us to be the faithful farmer who spreads the seed and then goes to bed while the seed grows without his involvement. This reality keeps us faithful to God's ordained means of evangelism—proclaiming the gospel with simplicity and clarity—rather than trying to manipulate emotions through excitement or music or unbiblical promises of happiness.

Beloved, we have no control over the hearts of people. We can't argue people into the kingdom and we can't convince people to believe in the Messiah they don't think they need. What we can do, what we should do, is find any and every avenue possible for getting the gospel out and let God save those whom he will save.

Conclusion

As we walk through the Gospel of John we will see all of these responses and here John prepares us to understand why the glorious Jesus the Christ was rejected and disbelieved.

Some people say that a common reason people don't evangelize is the fear of rejection. That's a terrible excuse. That didn't stop Jesus from coming to give his life. Of course people will reject the gospel. But the more faithful we are the more we will see the Spirit work to give life in the hearts of His people. Let us go out and shine the light of Christ in this dark world.