



Sermon Transcription • John 1:9-13

Christ is Our Light

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[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

I've found, actually, that Christmas lights are a bigger thing here than a lot of places that I've lived in my life, maybe it was when I was young, of course living in the States, they were kind of a big deal but not like now; it seems like everybody puts up Christmas lights, and if you have a home on your street that's not like that they're kind of like a little bit of the sore thumb. When I lived in New Zealand one of the funny parts about living there was that they didn't really, they didn't really do Christmas lights. I think the reason for that, of course, is that the weather's opposite right, so this time of the year - it's summer time there. So December 25 is equivalent to June 25 for us. And so think about June 25 - long, long days, right sun goes down at 9:00/9:30 pm. So I think some people are just like, "Oh why put lights up you're not going to be able to see them much at all because the nights are short." But there's also the reason that New Zealand, they're very subtle, subtle people. There's a thing in New Zealand called, the tall poppy syndrome, which means that if you stick your head up above the crowd, the culture at large will like to lop it off, right. And so people don't like to put lights on their house, cause that's basically saying, "Hey look at us, look at our showiness." And that sort of thing. At least that's the way it's perceived. There was one house though, in our area, and I don't know where the people were from. But there was one house, on the main road leaving our town that used to put up lights, and by lights don't, like don't think of the big light displays that are done around here to draw people in. I want you to think about your house lights. So maybe a few along the frame of your home and some lights around a tree. So people would stop on the main road and get out of their cars and walk across to see the lights [laughter]- they would stand there with their cameras and take pictures of this house and I remember standing there on one occasion and one of the people who is staying there who I knew said, <New Zealand accent> "Oh this is so over the top at that house." Right, like you shouldn't come to where I'm from. We do it here now, especially in the states like if you get into a neighbourhood you all get together so that people will drive through your neighbourhood and see all the lights, or you might have competing homes; your neighbour across the street on a Tuesday night will have their light show put to music and all the people come and you get on TV for it, or on Youtube and then you'll do it on Thursday night. They're crazy these light shows - we love our lights. I'm sure that many of you here in Abbotsford have been to the house across from Delair Park over on East Abbotsford, kind of on the Whatcom Road area. There's this massive light display there. I've been, in several times, almost been in car accidents because people will stop in the middle of the road, "What is that up on the hill?"

"Stop it! Keep going, it's just some crazy guy who loves to put his lights up." Kidding, I don't know him, he's probably fantastic man in general. But it's lovely that we have this light display. You might



take a date to the, what is it, the Festival of Lights in Vancouver, or the Santa Train, and you're like, "Ohhh look at all the lights." And you're thinking that, I don't know that you'll be able to stand under the lights and get a smooch or something, it's going to be great you know.

We love the lights, love the lights. And that's kind of appropriate, it really is, and as a Christian, and a pastor, I mean, the idea that light would be associated with Christmas is *totally* appropriate. And I say that because Jesus is called the light of the world, he calls himself that in John 8. In fact in the Old Testament, that's what it says he's going to be. So you get passages like Isaiah 9:2 when it tells the coming of the Messiah, and when he's going to be born - what's he going to bring. Isaiah 9:2,

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."

John 1:1-5,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the *light* of all mankind. The *light* [of Jesus] shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

Christ is our light, shining forth in the darkness. And you know it's an important image because like any light, depending on your current situation you're either going to receive that light or you're going to reject it. That's what people do with the light. They don't always welcome it. They do welcome it, like if you're in a situation like I was years ago and I was in a Cave ... I was with some friends, I had never been in a cave before and I was under ground and it was a long cave and they give you this little headlight that you could walk along in the cave. There was section in the cave that was a little bit of a ridge and on either side you couldn't see the bottom on either side - the guy who's behind me said just straight ahead and we got about half through, I was quite a ways ahead of them, we got halfway through and my little light went out. So here I was on this ridge and this is not the time to run right, you stop. And the guy behind me was around the corner, so it was basically pitch black where I was, I said, "Oh my light went out, my light went out!" And he came immediately and he gave me light. I was very thankful for the light, welcomed the light in this moment. But if I were going to come and rob your home, which later I have planned to do, [laughter] I'm not going to do it, I don't know, at 3:00 pm - you know I'll wait til it's dark at 3:20 pm or whatever it is now right. [Laughter] There's a reason that it's under the cover of darkness people come because you don't want the light to reveal what it is that you're doing. So people reject the light and they receive the light. And that's really what John's talking about here. Jesus is the light, he says in the beginning of John 1, but then he gets in in John 1:9-13, and says okay so some people are going to reject that light - why is it that they do that. And then some people receive the light - why is it that they do that, and what does it look like to receive it. Okay so those are kind of the two steps we're going to take here. What does it look like to reject the light, and what does it look like to receive the light, and why is that people do those things.

[Rejecting the Light]



So here's the first of those; rejecting the light, John 1:9,

“The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.”

Right so this is a description of Jesus, he's the true light who gives light to everyone is coming into the world. What does he mean by that? In what way does Jesus give light to everyone ... in what way? Well have you ever been to one of those hotels where you walk into the bathroom and they have that mirror - some of you have these at home - that circle mirror, so there's the big mirror and then there's this little circle mirror on an extension cable or something and around it are all these lights and if you put your face really close, you recoil in horror, because it shows you all of the contours of your face and you realize, “Oh my goodness look at all the pores, they're all clogged, every last one of them is clogged. I didn't know I had that many wrinkles.” Well this, this mirror because of all it's light and magnification is revealing, that's what the light is doing in that case. It has a revelation of you, and your imperfections or your perfections if you look like my wife, right. [Laughter] When John says that Jesus is the light who enlightens every man who's coming into the world, what he means by that is to say that Jesus is the one who shows you the face of God. That when God gets really close and the light shines on God and all his character, the reflection that God sees in that mirror is Jesus. If you want to know what God's like, just look to Jesus, he's uniquely that way - and by uniquely I mean there's no other revelation in the history of the world or ever will be that shows us God like Jesus does. Now I get that from both John 1 but also other passages in the New Testament. Hebrews 1:1-3, the first verses in the book of Hebrews say this,

“In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, [Right so if you think about the way that God spoke to people for example in the Old Testament; right through a burning bush, on the top of Mt. Sinai, through the law, face to face with Moses even. God spoke in all those ways, but none of them compares to how God has spoken to us in these last days. Listen to the way he writes,] but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. [See] The Son is the *radiance* [notice the light language there, he's the radiance] of God's glory and [he's] the *exact* representation of his being.”

The language in Greek there that's used is the words that is used to talk about the way you make a coin in the ancient world right. So you have a mould, you put some metal in the mould and then you press it together and then you let it cool, and the coin that is produced is the *exact* representation of the mold. So Jesus is the coin of God, he is the exact representation of God. Even Moses didn't know God whom he spoke with face to face, as well as you do because you've seen Jesus. Now here's the thing, you would think - so put yourself back in the days of when Jesus was born. You would think that all of the people that had longed to know God, “Oh if only I could see God, if only I could know God.” All of those people who longed for God, you would think that when Jesus showed up, the exact representation of God right, the perfect image of God who reveals his glory, radiance of God's glory, you'd think that when he showed up, they would lunge at him and hug him - yes? Welcome him. Ehh is that what happened? Well John says no, John 1:10-11,



“He [Jesus] 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.”

A number of years ago my, my son, my oldest son, was about 6 months old - I had to go with my wife and travel to another place by plane for a weekend. I was interviewing at a church at that time to be one of their pastors, and we just thought it was going to be too much to take our 6 month old son with us, and so he stayed with the grandparents. The first time we had ever been away from him for any period of time really, the first 6 months, first child, so we're freaked out of our minds by it right, the grandparents are going to kill him, we're worried cause you know look how we turned out and this might happen too. So we were worried, we ended up going away, we interviewed for the few days, you know you make the phone calls back, “How is he doing? Is he okay? Does he remember me?” Like my concern was like does he remember me, right I wasn't worried about my wife because she was nursing him all that time and stuff so he is going to remember you right, you've got the goods, so he's good with you. But for me, I don't know, is he going to forget me? I didn't know what was going on, it might sound silly to you now, but as a young father, I was like, I was genuinely concerned. So we flew back, we got in the car, we had to drive about an hour and a half back to the house and I was telling my wife along the way, “I'm really concerned that Ethan's not going to recognize me or he's going to be frightened of me.” We got back to the house, I knocked on the door where he was staying, walked through the front door. And my little boy was being held at that moment by my mother-in-law, and when I walked through the door, I stood there, and I said, “Ethan.” And he turned his head toward me - she was holding him - he turned his head toward me and no joke this boy lunged out of my mother-in-law's arms and just flew toward his father. Right, this is one of the greatest moments of my life I'm sharing with you, right so he lunges toward his father. I grab him and I pull him to me and he grabs his arms and he just wraps them around my neck and he squeezes as tight as he can, this little six month old baby - squeezes as tight as he can, he keeps pulling back and looking at my face and smiling and then putting his head on my, ohhhh geese, he's 18 - he still does this, he's 18 [laughter].

That's the way that somebody who is longing for their father, for someone responds when they show up - right? If your beloved comes off the plane, “Ohhhh!” you hug. Why then, why then is it that when Jesus shows up, the exact representation of God - shows up, the people who said that they longed for God are like, “Nah.” To put it more properly, why do people reject the light? Why is it that he came to that which was his own, but they did not receive him?. Why is that people in our world, people you know, maybe you, think about Jesus, “Meh.”

I was teaching a theology class a number of years ago, it was on a topic called, what we call, Christology, the study of Jesus, the study of Christ. Taught day after day about it. Talking about how Jesus is both 100% divine and 100% human and work that out and what does the Bible teach about that, and oh my goodness, blow people's minds and what is the incarnation which is the theological world means the birth of Christ, how does that happen and what's gone on there and at the end of like several classes, one of the students just said, at the end, just raised their hand and they said, “Listen after all of this I got to tell you, I do not understand why it is or how it is that someone can look at how beautiful and glorious and majestic Jesus is and turn away?” But they do - so why do they reject the



light. It's funny John actually answers the question later on in the book of John. So if you get to John 3, we are in John 1, and you go two chapters later, John 3:19, Jesus is having a conversation with a religious leader by the dark of night, this guy is named Nicodemus and Jesus explains this problem. Why's it that people reject the light? Here he says, John 3:19-20,

“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people *loved* darkness instead of light *because* their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for *fear* that their deeds will be exposed.”

See behind my house there is this field right and if you live near a park or near a public space you'll know full well what my experience living in this house has been over the last 12 years. Several young men, and sometimes young men and women, and older men and women, will go into the back field always in the evening - right and they will do things in our back field, city land, that they probably ought not do. Right, lots ... you think about all the things that people might do in the midst of the bushes in the back of the field. So I ride my bike around town, and I have these high powered lights on my bike so that you won't kill me, right. And in fact I've been blamed by people who have seen my lights before, like they'll come toward me in their car and they'll be flashing their bright lights, because I got my lights pointed directly in their eyes. They're like, “That's so bright.” Yeah, that's right, you see me, that's right, so you're not going to hit me. So I've got these lights, high powered lights, so when I find out there's somebody in my back field, okay our neighbours have a dog that they bought so that he would bark all the time - he does that all night long; when there's somebody in the back field I grab these lights, I go sneak, I open the back door quietly, I take a few steps out off the edge of our deck, and boom right <swoosh>, like the light of heaven coming down on them, and then, “Woah!!” They start standing up, running around sideways, and I'm following them around with the lights - little cockroaches that, nah I'm just kidding, they're not. But why are they running away? Well because what they were doing, whatever it was, was not something they wanted people to see. That's what Jesus is saying here.

The reason that people that people don't want him, he's saying is that they, they think that their lives, in the darkness, are better lived there than the way that Jesus calls them to live in the light. In other words he's saying, when they hear me call them to repent and believe - turn away from their former manner of life and adhere to this new manner of life they think, “Well I don't like that new manner of life. I think my life is going to be better if I do it in my dark ways.” That's why people don't believe. It's not because they looked at all the evidence and come to some reasoned conclusion on why it is that Jesus is or is not who he claims to be, it's not because they have some philosophical objection - even though they might have those, those things come after the fact that they just don't want to listen to the commands of Jesus. They think they're lives are better lived in the dark.

There's a philosopher, he's an atheist, Thomas Nagle is his name, he wrote a book called, *The Last Word*, a number of years ago. In it he was trying to make sense of like why is it that so many of the friends have are philosophers and their atheist and they don't want to follow God, they don't believe in God, they don't believe in Jesus. And yet I have all these philosopher friends who are Christians who I



really respect. Why is that so many of these people don't believe? So here's what Thomas Nagle said, he said,

"In speaking of the fear of religion [which he was]... I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that... My guess [he says] is that this cosmic authority problem is not a rare condition and that it is responsible for much of the scientism and reductionism of our time."

What he's saying there in the end is, "Look all these friends of mine who are scientists, they mount their scientific reasons or philosophical reasons, and say, that's why I don't believe in God." And he saying, "Actually I kind of have this sneaky suspicion that the reason they don't believe in God is that they just don't want the universe to be like that. They've got a cosmic authority problem." And that's true.

I had a friend who was over the back fence of my house in New Zealand and I got to know him really well, his name was Craig, we'd have conversations, he loved philosophy, so I like philosophy a little bit so we'd go back and forth about it, he had all sorts of reasons for why it is that he didn't want to believe in God. I have lots of philosophical reasons why it makes a lot of sense. So we go back and forth - he came to my church several times. I remember one day we were standing out in his backyard, we'd gotten to the point in our debate, dialogue, where he was willing to concede that his reasons did not match mine. He was like, "Okay, I give up, I can see you're right about what it is that you're claiming philosophically, evidentially, there's more evidence that Jesus lived, that he actually was who he claimed to be and that there's a God in the universe." And I'm like, "Oh my gosh this is fantastic, so will you trust Christ."

"No!"

"Why not?"

"I'm not wanting to listen to what someone else wants to tell me to do with my life." Right...right. But you know, can I just push back just kindly about that. Can we just consider together who is more qualified to determine the right direction of your life - you or Jesus. Can we just do that for a second - me - Jeff, or Jesus? Cause here's my argument, Jesus existed before all time, he created all things, he came back from the dead, it was through him all things hold together right, and I'm 46 years old and have been to Paris a couple of times. When it comes to the level of knowledge that the pre-existent Son of God, the incarnate God-man has versus Jeff Bucknam, I mean it's close but you know like - what?! Really - which one of those people do you think should be in charge of my life. Which one of those people is better suited to determine the right way forward. You know what's crazy? I know the answer to that question and you know the answer to that question, you and I recoil at the idea that Jesus would tell us what to do. We *love* living in the dark, standing on that ridge in the middle of the cave saying, "No, no, I've got it taken care of it's not a big deal." What, are you nuts, you're going to fall! There's danger around you - wouldn't it be helpful if you had light?



I mean imagine your kid goes down and he grabs the chainsaw out of your garage <revving engine noise>. He looked on YouTube so now he knows everything <revving engine noise>. You hear it start going, you're like, "What he's got the chainsaw!" You go downstairs, you're like, "No put that away!" "No, no Dad, I got it, I'm 13 and I've figured it out." [Laughter] And you're like, "What... no!! Stop, put it down!! My knowledge about this dangerous thing and the good for your future, is much greater than your knowledge." You're in the dark man, I'm in the light - let me show you where the right way to go is. See I think that Jesus has better plans for your life than you have plans for your life. Why not step into the light.

[Receiving the Light]

Alright so that's why people reject the light. Here's what it looks like to receive the light. John 1:12-13,

"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."

Now listen, notice what he said there. Those who did receive, so not everybody rejects, some receive him - to those he gives the right *to become* children of God. Not everybody's a child of God, only those who receive the light. So what does it mean to receive the light? You can see what he says right there. It's those who believe in his name. How do you become a child of God? You believe in his name. Now here's the crazy part here - you and I most of us, you know you read that to somebody and they're like, "Yeah, yeah, okay. I believe." For John, when he uses that word believe, he might not mean what you mean by it. See for John, as I'm going to try to prove to you, there's belief, "Yeah, yeah." Kind of a mental assent, "Yeah, yeah okay, I can see the case, yeah, ah ha." And then there's *BELIEF* - like the deep seeded submit to the authority of this other one, Jesus. Now I'm using the same words because John uses the same words. In some story he's like, "Yeah these people believe but they're not actually believers." What?? Want me to prove this to you, you ready? Yeah, you better be ready. Here we go, here it is, this is going to be fun. I've got two passages in John's gospel that I want to walk through really quickly, just to prove to you that there are different kinds of belief for John. There's the kind of tepid, "Oh yeah, yeah, I believe." And then there's the real genuine belief. And John's going to make the argument that only one of those is going to save you. So first example, John 2:23, John 2:23-24,

"Now while he [Jesus] was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and [they] believed in his name. [It was this point that we would write our missionary letter and say, 'We got 1400 people,' or whatever it is, 'Give us more money because we got 15 people who prayed to receive Jesus.' They believed in his name, they saw the great works, they believe in his name - praise God. But notice what it says next.] But Jesus [verse 24] would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was [really] in each person."



In fact that language there, you see where it says that they believed in his name but Jesus wouldn't entrust himself, that word entrust and believe are the same word in Greek. So the right way to say this is they trusted in Jesus but he didn't entrust himself to them. How's that work? I thought that you were saved by belief in Jesus. For John, he's like, "No, no, no, no, you're saved by *BELIEF* in Jesus." Cause Jesus knows what's in a man. Doesn't need your testimony about it, he knows what's under the surface, he knows if it's real. So you see there's belief and there's *belief*.

Another example, longer one. John 8:29-47, Jesus is speaking to a big crowd - Jewish people, he says,

“The one who sent me [verse 29 of John chapter 8. The one who sent me] is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.’ [Jesus says my ministry is that God sent me, and I just do what he tells me to do. Like I submit to his word, his commands, that’s what I do. So] Even as he spoke, many believed in him. [Praise God, let’s write the missionary letter and send it out, right. Look at all these people who believe in Jesus! Awesome! Well hold on,] To the Jews who had believed him [those were the same people who had just believed in him to those people], Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. [What you’re not really his disciples yet? No, no if you hold to his teaching, then you’re really my disciples.] Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’ They [they being the Jews who believed in him. They] answered him, ‘We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free? [Don’t like the way you talk. I’m going to go to another church, Jesus.]’ Jesus replied [verse 34], ‘Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin [so it’s okay for me to use freedom language cause you guys are slaves to sin]. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a *son* belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you *free*, you will be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me [you Jews who believe in me. You’re looking for a way to kill me], because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father.’ ‘Abraham is our father,’ [don’t you love it, religious people they’re so, ‘Abraham is our father!’ Okay] they answered. ‘If you were Abraham’s children,’ said Jesus, ‘then you would do what Abraham did. As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. [So,] Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the works of your own father.’ [You can hear them in their minds, ‘But who’s your daddy? Who’re you saying our daddy is?’ You are doing the works of your father.] ‘We are not illegitimate children,’ they protested. ‘The only Father we have is God himself.’ [verse 42] Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. [See] I have not come on my own; God sent me. [So] Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father [you Jews who believe in me, you belong to your father], the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. ... Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me? [Here’s the answer] Whoever *belongs* to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.’”



Okay, this is a crazy passage, so what you got here is a bunch of people who believe in Jesus, and yet they're children of the Devil. How's that work? What makes them children of the devil even though they claim belief? What's their problem? Just so we're clear, I want to show it to you, it's embedded in that whole story. What is Jesus issue with them? What makes you go from belief - ah yeah, mental assent, to genuine belief! Note what he says in John 8:31, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples." John 8:37, "You are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word." John 8:47, "Whoever belongs to God hears what God says."

So here's the point just so we're absolutely clear. True belief is more than mere mental assent. It's more than just agreement with who Jesus is. True belief is a persistent and joyful submission to Christ's commands. I'll say that again. True belief is more than mere mental assent, it is a persistent and joyful submission to Christ's command - you have room for his word if you hold to his teaching, you'll truly be his disciples.

So what does that look like? What does genuine belief look like? Well okay I'll give you a couple examples; one biblical, one just hypothetical. So in the Bible, when the Biblical writers want to talk about this issue, they talk about the people of Israel. So the people of Israel, what they come across the Red Sea, they're saved! Great experience right, they come into the wilderness and God provides for them manna in the wilderness and water from the rock. They are God's people, yes, community of faith, have all sorts of experiences. You can imagine their testimony at testimony time. "I was standing on the side of the Red Sea and I saw a" That's better than yours. Saved people, God brings them through, they get to the edge of the Promised Land, the reason he saves them is for the Promised Land. When he gets to the edge of the Promised Land they send 12 guys in, <singing>10 were bad, 2 were good, yeah! They come back out, and God is saying to them in the edge of the Promised Land, saying, "Go forward and take the land, that is my command to you." They listen to the 10 people who come out and they're like, "Guys there's a lot of really big dudes in there and we can't take them." So they hear the word of the Lord and they have a moment in this time where they explicit word of the Lord and they either are going to listen to the word of the Lord or they're going to listen to the voices around them and they choose the voices around them and they die in the wilderness and they never reach the destination. Why not? Well they had no room for his word.

"Ok... I'm not on the edge of the Red Sea, Jeff, I'm not standing on the edge of the Promised Land, give me a real example." Okay, real example, imagine, there's a man, he makes an awful lot of money, he's claimed to be a Christian, has stories about how he came to faith in Jesus at the Alpha program, or at the altar call or whatever it is. He has all his stories, he goes to church, here you have a man who's got a lot of money. And the Scriptures have explicit statements on the authority of God on how people ought to use their money. Give a lot of freedom in it, but the reason that you have your money is for generosity, to be a conduit of God's grace, not to hoard but to be generous toward others. He knows this and yet he has voices all around him all the time saying, "Yeah actually the reason that you have money is to, what - get all you can, can all you get, sit on the can." "He who dies with the most toys wins." "Just buy more stuff, build bigger barns guys." And he chooses that way, "No, no, I'm still a Christian, I still believe." Do you ... do you have room for his word?



So let me just finish by being really clear with you okay. Are you all listening? We are saved - Christian people are saved, anybody is saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. There is nothing that you can do to earn your salvation before God, it is a free gift. But it has an outworking, it has to, we are saved by grace through faith, unto obedience. And if your obedience isn't there, I'm going to tell you on the basis of what James says, your faith is no better than a demon's, who acknowledge that God is one, yes. And they think Jesus did all sorts of great stuff too. But they don't submit to his word, do you? There's this great scene in Luke's gospel where God comes to Mary, and he says to her, "You're going to have this baby." And it's going to throw her whole life in turmoil. She's going to, she's at a point where she's either going to accept the word of the Lord and she's going to walk forward in faith, trusting him that he can provide for her and take care of her - she's going to follow his commands and throw her heart into it completely or she's going to turn away. And some of the best words in the entire Bible happen and come out of the mouth of Mary. And she says, "Lord let it be to me as you have said." Folks that is the mark of a genuine believer in Jesus. We say, let it be to me as you have said. We welcome the light, we don't want to stay in the darkness. Is that you? Maybe the best gift you can give Jesus this year is your bended knee.

Let me pray for us, Father I'm thankful for your grace, I'm thankful Father for passages like that. I'm thankful for John - sneaky John, who pushes us in places like this. So God I pray that you would work your will amongst us. And that there are many of us Father, many different points in our life who are saying no to you, I pray that through the power of your Spirit you would turn our no's into yes's. Let it be to us as you have said, we pray. We bow to the newborn king, for he is a king who will reign forevermore. Glory to the light, in Jesus name. Amen.