

Guest Preacher -Rev George Macaskill

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Preacher: Rev. George Macaskill

[0 : 00] Let's turn in our Bibles to the passage of Scripture which we read, the Gospel of John, chapter 1. And as God would help me, I'd like to concentrate on verses 11 and 12.

The Gospel of John, chapter 1, verses 11 and 12. He came to his own, speaking about Christ. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

John wrote his Gospel several years after Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Some people maintain it was 20 years after Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote theirs. And you might say, do we need a fourth Gospel?

[1 : 22] We already have three accounts. Do we need a fourth Gospel? And it's John himself who says at the end of his Gospel that if everything about Christ was written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that were written.

So John, if you're writing a fourth Gospel, there's no need to repeat what Matthew, Mark, and Luke have written about. If there's plenty of other things to write about, no need to repeat these things. But what do we find? We find John telling us for a fourth time the story of feeding the 5,000. We find John telling us for the fourth time about Peter's profession.

And then a few hours, I think, or a few days at the most afterwards, he denies Christ. You find him writing a fourth time.

And you say, why repeat what we've already been told three times, John? Then you might say, well, okay, John. If you're going to repeat something, tell us more about the temptation.

[2 : 43] That's a terrific story. Who'd like more details? Tell us more about the transfiguration.

That's amazing. Moses and Elijah coming back for the day. Tell us more about that if you're going to repeat things.

Tell us more about that. The perfect sermon. The sermon on the mount. Tell us about that. Tell us more about the second coming if you're going to repeat things.

What did we find? He doesn't even mention them. He doesn't mention these things. What's the explanation? The explanation is that the real author of Scripture, the real author of the Gospel of John, is the Holy Spirit.

We are told that's the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. That holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to write what they did write.

Now, John tells us in the second last chapter of his Gospel what his purpose was in writing the Gospel. You see, God moved.

[4 : 06] God put into John's mind. God gave a burden to John about something and made him write what was in his heart.

But it was the Spirit that was putting it into his heart to write. And he tells us in chapter 20, verses 30 and 31. Truly, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

But these are written that what? These are written in order that you may believe.

That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you have life through his name.

Have you read the Gospel of John? Have you read the whole Gospel? Tell me, do you believe?

That's why the Holy Spirit put it into John's heart to write the Gospel.

[5 : 26] Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? And by believing that you have life through his name.

That's why John's Gospel is a bit different from the other three. The other three Gospels, they're called the Synoptic Gospels. Well, they are called.

That's what they're called. They focus on what Jesus said and what Jesus did. But John is slightly different.

John's Gospel. John wants us not simply to know about Jesus. He wants us to trust in Jesus. To trust everything he's said. To believe that when he died on that center cross, that Calvary's cross.

[6 : 38] To believe that he was taking away the sins. All the sins of every person that will be in heaven. Do you believe that?

That's why it was written. That's why the Gospel is written. That you might believe. And that it might change your life.

So let's look at our verses. He came to his own. And his own people did not receive him.

God took the initiative in salvation. Man did not discover God.

God came down and revealed himself. God made the first move. There was no plea or cry on earth.

[7 : 49] Ascending to heaven. Can you please send someone to us to explain what's gone wrong?

We're in an awful mess. Please tell us how to get out of the mess we got ourselves into.

No such plea. God took the initiative. Long before we were born. To send his son.

And he came. To his own people. Where you'd expect a welcome. The people called the people of God.

He came to the Jews. The people of God. Who were looking for a Messiah. And he came to them.

And they did not receive him. Now. Why? Why did Christ's own people.

[8 : 57] Not receive Christ? Well the first five verses. Give us a clue. The reason is.

They did not have. Three spiritual things. Things. And they all begin with the letter L. Because they had no.

Spiritual. Life. In him. Was life. No spiritual life. Human beings.

Are born. Spiritually. Dead. In trespasses. And sins. And only. Christ.

Can give them. Life. All. Life. In the last analysis. Resides. In Christ. When he was on earth.

[9 : 58] Christ's voice. Look at the power. Of his voice. His voice. Calmed the sea. He'd be handy and loose. We've got the storms.

How often are the ferries cancelled? Wouldn't it be great just to speak? Calm the sea. And notice what the scriptures say. The wind. And the sea.

As we islanders know well. You can stop the wind. But there's a swell for a day. But Christ stopped the swell. As well as the wind.

Just by speaking. Just by speaking. His voice. His voice. Healed diseases. Killer diseases. Healed by Christ.

Speaking. He forgave sins. Just by speaking. They had no. Spiritual life. And none of us. Have any.

[10 : 56] Spiritual life. Until Christ. Comes into. Our lives. But secondly. Not only did they have no. Spiritual life.

The explanation. Why they did not. Receive him. Is that no. Spiritual. Light. Very clear. From verses. Four. He was.

The life. Was in. The light. Shines. In darkness. Human beings. By nature. Are in darkness. And we need.

Light. To see. What is. Spiritually. Obvious. We're spiritually. Dead. We're spiritually.

Blind. And we need. Divine light. To see. What is. Obvious. Spiritually. But we're. Spiritually. Dead.

[11 : 49] We're spiritually. In darkness. Now. Light. And darkness. Darkness. They are.

Not. Equals. They are. Direct. Opposites. But they're not. Equals. Never get mixed up.

About that. Our Bible. Tells us. Wisdom. Excels. Folly. As much. As. Light. Excels. Darkness.

What's the definition. To darkness. Blindness. It's the absence. Of light. I. Think. I've probably said it. Here again.

But it bears. Here. I'm told. Better watch. There's opticians. In the congregation. The real test. For blindness.

[12 : 43] Blindness. is to. Put someone. In a dark room. And then. Shine a torch.

And ask. Can you see the light? And if you cannot see the light. In a dark room. You're blind. It is certainly.

True. Spiritually. Can you see. The light. Of the world. Can you see.

It's Christ. How often did we eat it? In these first few verses. The light. Shines.

In the darkness. And the darkness. Has not overcome it. Light and darkness. Are not equal.
Darkness. Can't shine. In light. But light. Can shine.

[13:39] In darkness. The definition. Of darkness. Is the absence. Of light. So. They didn't receive him. Because they had no. Spiritual life.

And because they had no. Spiritual light. Third. They did not receive Christ. Though he came to. His own. People. Because they had no.

Spiritual. Love. Love. Now listen. They had love. For themselves. We have.

Lots of. Self. Love. But we have no. Love. For God. By nature. Am I right?

By nature. We don't love. Holiness. Am I right? By nature. We don't love. Righteousness.

[14:38] Isn't that right? But we love ourselves. Oh. We love ourselves. We love. What we like. We want.

What we want. But we were made. To do what. God wants. That's why we were made. We want control.

Actually. In the last analysis. The real reason. We reject Christ. Is that we want. To be in control. Of everything.

Especially. Ourselves. Am I right? Is that right? Do you feel it? Do you sense it? Are you having any conviction?

Are you sensitive? What kind of consciences have we? Are we sensitive? Have we the. Courage to say yes. I'm living.

[15:36] To please myself. Well in that case. And it's true of every one of us. Especially true of me. That by nature. We live.

To do. What we want. That we were made. To please. What God wants. He came.

To his own. But his own. People. His own. People. Did not. Receive him.

But. That glorious. But. In the Bible. What an important word. That three letter word. But. Is. Oh it's true.

He came to his own people. That wouldn't have him. But. To all. Who did. Receive him.

[16:34] To all. Who did receive him. Who believed in his name. He gave the right. To become. Children of God. God. Note how.

Faith. Is. Defined. In the Bible. It's defined by. Receiving. Gospel.

Faith. Is not. Doing. Something. It's receiving. Something. I remember. Reading about. A man.

That was dying. And he was. Converted. Possibly. On his deathbed. I can't remember. How. How near the end. It was. But he said. All my life.

I've been trying. To find out. What have I to do. To be saved. And I've discovered. Now. It's not doing. Something. It's receiving.

[17:32] Something. It's receiving. All. That Christ. Has done. As my salvation. As my only hope.

For heaven. That's faith. It's not faith. In what. We do. It's faith. In what Christ. Has. Done.

Once. And for all. There's. There's levels. Of faith. The first level. We might call. Ascent.

Believing. About. Jesus. I'm sorry. There's. There's nothing. Saving.

About that. Believing. About. Jesus. Very. Very few. Intelligent. People. Do not believe.

[18:29] Jesus lived. Jesus. And was. Crucified. In fact. I remember. I remember. Doing. Open.

University. Course. On. Christianity. And. I was so. Encouraged. When the. Tutor. Gave a wonderful. Account. Of the. Crucifixion.

And. Of course. I was a bit. Green. And. Just assumed. He was a Christian. And I said. Oh. Very. Pleased. To hear. That you're a Christian.

Oh. He says. I'm not a Christian. I said. You've just given us. An excellent. Account. Of the crucifixion. Oh. He says. I believe. It happened. But I don't believe.

He died for my sins. See. Faith. In. Not. Believing. About. There's not a person.

[19:24] In this room. Who doesn't believe. About. Jesus. Coming. Down. To earth. Being. Crucified. That's about it. But there's a deeper level.

That we need to get. The only prepositions. Used. In the scriptures. About. Faith. In Jesus. Is. Preposition.

In. And the prepositions. Or the preposition. On. We're to believe. In Jesus. And we're to believe.

On Jesus. Not about Jesus.

You see. What's the difference? Well. Put it this way. Do you believe. In. Rishi Sunak. As prime minister.

Or just about him. Do you believe in. Boris Johnston. Do you believe in. Do you believe in. Nicholas Sturgeon. Who's that. Yusuf. Do you believe. In them.

[20 : 23] Their policies. Or just believe. About them. Oh. Prime minister. First minister. No problem. Do you. Do you. Do you trust them.

So the second level. Of faith. Is. Reliance. Personal. Trust. In. An utter. Dependence. Upon. Something. That's a level. Of faith. Reliance. Do you. Do you trust. In Christ. Do you trust. On Christ. That his death. At Calvary. Paid. God. Atoned. For your sins.

If you believed. It's a personal dimension. It's subjective. It's not objective. I believe. About him. That he did this. And that he did that. Do I personally.

[21 : 19] Trust. In him. And on him. There's a third level. Two actually. It's. Perseverance.

Faith. Is not actually. A single. Step. It begins. With a single. Step. But it's an ongoing. Relationship. With Jesus. Perseverance. So. Which faith. Saves the soul. I put it this way. A persistent. Reliance. On Jesus. Death. As an atonement. For my sin. And I'm accepted. Before God. I'm on the way to heaven.

I'm not much better than I was. If I'm any better. But I am depending. That Christ's death. Paid. For my sins. At the place called. Calvary. Why? You see.

[22 : 19] Reliance. On Christ. Saves. Persevering. In relying on him. Is the evidence. That you're relying on him.

You're continuing. Despite. The trouble. That might get you into. And let me tell you. Christianity. Will get you into trouble. But you still love Christ.

You're still going to stick with him. He's still the only hope there is. It's interesting.

In both Hebrew and Greek languages. The word. The word. Faith. And the word. Faithfulness. Are both the same. Exactly the same. The word for faith. And the word for faithfulness. Is exactly the same. In both Hebrew. And Greek.

[23 : 15] God. Knew. What he was doing. When he had the original languages. Of his word. In Hebrew. And Greek. Receiving Christ.

Into our hearts. And lives. Mean. Receiving. All that he said. All that he did. Receiving his teaching. Receiving. His. His authority. Receiving. His will. And we're challenged. In the gospel. Faith. Is. Depending. Upon him. For salvation. We can't atone. For our own sins. But Christ. Died. To atone.

For other people's sins. And these other people. Are all. Who receive Christ. As the only. Way.

[24 : 11] To heaven. The only. Way. To forgiveness. All. Who. Did.

Receive him. Wonderful term. Eh? But. All. Who. Did. Receive him. No. Exceptions. No. Exceptions. The gospel. Excludes. No one. Irrespective. Of. Background. Condition. Culture. Lifestyle. Irrespective. Of your past. Doesn't matter. What you've done. Doesn't matter. How often. You've done it. Doesn't matter.

What condition. You're in. All that matters. Is that you're. Depending. That he paid. God. For the sins. Of all. Who. Believe.

[25 : 06] In him. And trust. On him. The only. Qualification. For the gospel. Is that you don't. Deserve it. Now.

What. Does it say. About those. Who did. Receive. Christ. Who believe. In his name. He gave them. The right. To become. Children. Of. God. That. Is amazing. He gave them.

The right. To become. Children. Of. God. That word. Translated. Right. Is elsewhere. In the bible. Translated. As. Authority. Or. Power. It's a word. Well. It can be power.

[26 : 03] Or authority. Or right. Isn't that amazing? Imagine. Having. The right. To be a child. Of God. Whatever.

Anyone. Says. About you. From now on. You're the right. To be a child. Of God. You have. Divine. Authority. To say.

You're a child. Of God. If you believe. On the Lord. Jesus. Christ. You have. Divine. Authority. To be a child.

Of God. That's. That's. That's. That's. That's tremendous. That's. That's. What our Bible. Is telling us.

Here. Is that. No one. Is. Merely. Forgiven. When he believes. On the Lord. Jesus Christ. The moment. You believe.

[27 : 00] In Christ. Every sin. You've ever. Committed. And every sin. You will commit. Is. Forgiven. That's. Tremendous.

But God. Goes further. Than men. Everyone. He forgives. He adopts. Into. His family. As a child. Everyone.

Consider. God. Adopting. Sinners. That's. An amazing. Thing. It really is. Consider.

Who normally. Adopt. Children. Normally. Not always. But normally. It's people. That. Don't have children. And would love them. But God.

The father. No child. Why. Does he adopt. Children. Had he no sons already. Yes. Yes. Something wrong with him.

[28 : 05] No. No. No. No. No. No. Absolutely. Perfect. Absolutely. Perfect. Why does he want more? Think.

Not only. The fact that he had. Already. A perfect. Son. But think of. Who. He adopts. To be his children.

Worms. Of the dust. Children. Of wrath. Wrath. That's who he adopts.

He takes them. Into his family. Brothers. And sisters. Of an absolutely. Perfect. Brother. Isn't that something?

But here's the most amazing thing. He had to pay for it. He had to pay for it. I suppose I'm back to the children's story.

[29 : 08] He had to pay for it. He made us. We turned against him. We kept him out of our lives. And he wants to adopt us. And the price.

The cost. That one. Perfect. Son. He had already. Has to be crucified.

In agony. That's the price. Isn't it amazing. God adopts. Isn't it amazing. If you're a believer in Christ.

If you just. Believed last night. You have the right. To call yourself. A child. Of God. Well.

Our time's up. Just two things. In conclusion. If. You are. A Christian. What reason you have.

[30 : 12] To be. Holy. Happy. Humble. Oh you can't be proud. Come on. You can't be proud. A proud Christian.

Is a misnomer. A contradiction. In terms. How can you be proud. God. God's. Blessed you. Yes. You're a child.

Of heaven. Yes. No thanks to you. Thanks to Jesus. Thanks to Christ. What reason you have. To be humble.

What reason you have. To be happy. Who else has a right. You're standing. In a no penalty. A penalty. Free zone. You're immune.

From prosecution. From God. Not from prosecution. Of men. But prosecution. From God. You're immune. What reason. To be happy. You're going to heaven.

[31 : 08] To glory. What reason. You have. To be happy. What reason. You have. To be humble. What reason. You have. To be holy. Nobody. I want.

That. But what. You're not. A Lord. You're not. For a christian. For a christian. every single blessing that belongs to Christians is offered to you in the gospel right here, right now.

You can become a child of God by repenting of your past and depending on Christ's death as a sacrifice for your sins.

And you've immediately the right to call yourself a child of God. The gospel is wonderful. Wonderful. He came to his own and his own people did not receive him. But, but to all who did receive him who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God.

[32 : 34] May God, the Holy Spirit, make his truth, his word effectual to every one of us. Let's pray.

Amen. Our Father in heaven, be pleased to take the things of Christ and to make them ours.

Bestow upon every single one of us from the youngest child upwards that saving faith which unites us to your Son.

hear us in mercy, answer us in peace as we pray all in Christ's name for your glory.

Amen. Amen. We conclude our service of worship by singing from Psalm 31 in the Scottish Psalter.

[33 : 37] Psalm 31 from verse 21 to the end. That's on page 243. Page 243, Psalm 31 at verse 21.

All praise and thanks be to the Lord for he hath magnified his wondrous love to me within a city fortified.

Down to the last verse. Be of good courage and his strength unto your heart shall send all ye whose hope and confidence doth on the Lord depend.

Psalm 31 at verse 21. O praise and thanks be to the Lord for he hath magnified his wondrous love to me within a city fortified.

For from thine eyes cut off I am I am in my haste and said my voice yet as the plenched in with cries my bone I bid O love the Lord all ye his saints because the Lord hath hath hath the faithful and and ■■■' hath hath hath hath hath hath hath hath hath hath hath hath hath hath hath hath
[36 : 27] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forevermore.
Amen.