

The Word is Intentional

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 December 2024

Preacher: Robin Silson

[0 : 00] I was thinking this week about the reason we've been looking through this part of the Bible, John 1, all about the Word, the Word of God, the Word made flesh, which we'll speak about a little bit next week.

But last week was all about the idea of the identity of the Word, perhaps you might say it's divinity, who is this Word, and we thought about this Word as Jesus, but then is the Word made flesh.

This week what we see in this small section, only a few verses, is really maybe the purpose, the intention, about why the Word came into the world. And most times when people do stuff, it's because people have intentions or goals, don't they, with why they would want to do something.

I don't know about you, but people are on a scale, aren't they, of whether they're sort of driven, goal-orientated people. Often you think of people that in the world are really successful, they're often in very different fields, because they are normally very driven to achieve a certain goal.

So athletes, I was thinking about athletes, right down to their diet, they follow a specific regime to follow, so that they're in peak condition to perform at their very best.

[1 : 27] There's an intention behind doing all that, though. The intention is winning. It's all geared towards a certain end goal. There's intentionality behind every decision that an athlete, if they're at the top of their game, makes through the week so that they perform at their best.

And before they even make those decisions, there'll be a plan of action put forward as to how they need to progress to get to that, to get that optimum prime position.

Intentional planning, intentional planning to reach a goal. So my hope as we go, as I said last week, as we look at this kind of, only 18 verses, but over three weeks, John 1, is that actually, as we lift that out, that we don't just get bogged down with all the stuff that's going on about Christmas.

It's great stuff. We can enjoy all the, full of laughter, as I said, the presence and the time together, but we lift our eyes once again to see who Jesus is. We lift our eyes to see who Jesus is.

To remind ourselves of perhaps even seeing new things about this baby community in the world. So this week, just as we reflect on Jesus' hope is that we, as we think about the word coming in, his identity, that this week we think about that God had an intentional plan, had an intentional plan with specific outcomes or goals in sending the word.

[2 : 54] It wasn't just abstract or sort of spontaneous, but that it was thought through. And actually, it's even, it's, it's even more significant because when God makes intentional plans, he doesn't make them with kind of like, oh, I'll see what happens with this plan that I'm making.

I hope he gets to, I hope my outcome comes out. I hope that's what I get. But actually, when God makes a plan, he does it with the outcome is guaranteed. The outcome is guaranteed for which they were intended.

That's the question is, I want us to think about this moment is why did the word come? What is the intention behind, or the desired outcome, the goal you might say, in the word coming into the world?

Last week, divinity of the word, the word before all things, with God in relationship, connected to the word, this week, why the word came to the world.

The first intention of the word that I want us to look at is God's intention, or the word's intention, you might say, in sending a witness. The words, God's intention in sending a witness.

[4 : 02] Look with me, verse 6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The man being referred to is John the Baptist.

Whilst there is some importance throughout the gospels into who John is as a person, this is not the emphasis here. I mean, we just get, we don't even get anything else about it.

We don't get who's as different to Luke, where you get his whole sort of family history. You don't get anything about that here. You just get his first name. You don't even get what he did. You just get John in the witness. So the emphasis is not here, it's not the person of John the Baptist.

The emphasis is on the one who sent him. That's what comes first in the sentence, is it? It says there was a man sent, and then we find out who he is. The emphasis is on the sender, the one who sent him.

It's important, it's really important, because it means that John's arrival is not, first and foremost, anything to do with John's decision making.

[5 : 06] It's not that John, Jesus' cousin, thought one day, you know, I think, I really think that what I'd like to do as a career is go and witness about the true life.

That's not what happened. It wasn't as I did, it wasn't a light bulb moment, or come from some sort of brainstorming strategy. John's ministry, John's ministry, his purpose, his witnessing was brought because it was from God.

It was God who decided to send John with the specific purpose, verse 7. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light.

He himself was not the light, he only came as a witness to the light. God sent John to witness a specific purpose with the goal in mind.

The goal comes in the second half of verse 7. The goal is so that through him all might believe. Through John, so that through John's witnessing all might believe.

[6 : 11] The word for belief here is the same word for what it means to have faith, what it means to place your trust in someone. One of the sort of visual pictures of the origins of the word is actually what it means to cast yourself upon someone with the expectation that they will hold you up.

That's what it means to listen to them. To cast yourself upon someone with the expectation that they will hold you up. So that's what he's saying, so that through John's witnesses all people might cast themselves upon the word, upon the light that was come in the word, this true light that was shining might hold them up.

He was sent with his purpose for this goal. God had a goal. reminds us, doesn't it, that before the New Testament church existed, before the New Testament church existed, the living God was and has always been a sending God.

God has always had a plan. It's an intentional mission, you might say, even before the word of God is revealed as Jesus, John is the last in a long line of prophets who brought God's word, who would witness and prepare for the arrival of the word.

John came in order to witness, and notice he came as a witness. It was part of being lost, like a vocation. It's not a side agenda, he's not a volunteer doing it in his spare time, when he felt like it, he wasn't asked if he wanted to do it, he came as a witness. So that all my belief through him, the coming word, the true line. God's goal and John's are line, they match up.

[7 : 59] And this builds up to Christmas across the world and other parts of the church. This period has a name. The name you might have heard is Advent. Advent comes from the Latin word Adventus. It means coming or to come.

So if you think that there's lots of words that have that adventure, have that kind of word, dissociative rhythm. It's called that because during Advent, Advent finishes just on Christmas Eve.

Because it means coming. So what it's there is to remember the coming, the build up, the coming of the word into our world. The build up to that event. Here's the thing.

When we read in John, we're hearing about the first Advent. That's what we're hearing about. The first Advent. We still live, the church has always been in the time of Advent. We live in the second Advent.

Because we're waiting for Jesus to come again. We live in the second Advent. And if God sent John to witness about his coming so that all might believe through him, the question is, does that statement about us still apply to the church?

[9 : 12] I wonder, after Jesus' return, in the history of the church, in eternity, and to look back, would it be able to, would this be able to be written?

There was a people sent from God whose name was the church. They came as a witness to testify concerning that light so that all might believe.

from them. They themselves were not the light that they came as a witness to the Lord. I wonder if in eternity that could be written about the church.

I think it could. John was sent by God and so are we too as witnesses to the, not just to the Word who was about to, who was to be made flesh, but the Word who has actually put on flesh and sits in heaven on the throne.

there is a human, a man, on the throne in heaven like us. We're witnessing to that has happened and he is coming. It's not our idea, our decision, it's not because we brainstormed and thought this was a great strategy and something to do as a church.

[10 : 26] It's because it's God's idea to send John and to send the church to witness about his Son, the Word made flesh, so that all my people might believe in him who was.

The church, like John, has a divine authorisation in its mission. A divine authorisation in being sent.

And it's not just like he decided to, he's ascending God. He's been sending from the very beginning. He's been all the way through history. He's been coming down and sending people and empowering people to do this very thing that the church is doing.

Firstly, to send to prepare for the information and to prepare for the information. Includes us all. So that's the first thing.

What is God's intention in sending a witness? We can apply that to us today. The second thing, the second intention, outcome, you might say, was to bring about a response from the people that he came to.

[11 : 33] He has that goal. The goal to be responded to. The response to the word. And we see three responses in our passage this morning. The first two we're going to take together.

It is the response of the world and the response of God's own people. The response of the world and the response of God's own people. Read with me verse 9. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

In verse 10. He was in the world and though the world was made through him, here's the response, the world did not recognise him. Verse 11, the response from his own people, second response, he came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

The true light coming into the world was not recognised by the world and by his own he was not received. You see how these two verses, 10 and 11, they sort of come together.

You can see that they sort of mirror one another by parallel statements in how they're written down. Whilst they're different they say something very similar. Verse 10, the world was made and the world was made and belongs to the word.

[12 : 42] It belongs to God. It's his possession. He owns the world. He loves the world in every single detail. He was in it. Yet the world he made is in darkness and does not recognise the true light.

Verse 11, not only wants it in the world but he came to his own people, to the Israelite nation. A nation chosen by God to be a light to all other nations.

A nation that God has been with. A nation that God has rescued. We remember in the Old Testament a nation that had heard God's voice. A nation you would expect, you would expect to lay out the red carpet of the world.

This is the true light, the real, authentic, genuine light of the world. They've seen a light in the past. They've been led through the desert by a pillar of fire, a light.

They've been led by that. Here's the true light coming into the world that would lead them not just towards the promised land of Israel but to the promised land that is pointing forward to.

[13 : 51] Eternal life. For they did not receive them. The creation rejects its creator who loved the call the children reject their lover the one who chose and called them as a people.

When Jesus was not received by the people who he belonged to God himself was not received by the world of the land of the kingdom. And so what we see is here is the Jewish nation forfeit their status they become one with the rest of humanity and what we see is those who were called there's nothing actually to distinguish them except them apart from the work that they were given to.

They give Jesus the culture. can you imagine that in a family just picture this.

Imagine a member of a close member of the family goes away on a big adventure perhaps moves to the other side of the world and goes on a trip but settles down marries builds a family and then one day they find a big trip to come home reconnect with those of their life they move from a colleague we have family down under every now and then they come back and it's great to catch up with me imagine you'd expect the excitement they've seen for 10 years or whatever about everything coming to share experience everything that they have with their new life far away imagine the plane it lands and they come through the airport they're very excited but nobody's there to leave them they think there must be some mistake they'd better get a taxi to the family home they've got the wrong day but when they get there nobody's in and there's a sign on the door sorry we've made up a farm we've actually gone away we don't ask things have changed we heard you you better find your own place to stay you can imagine how that must have now

Jesus arrives to his own people the ones that he is the world he is God from the whole of history he's the one who loves and calls his own people right from his ancestors they arrived he called them and yet it is only they don't receive him they don't receive him they don't recognize him that is what's happening it is a not receiving and an rejection of Jesus ah we will know that still happens today but it is good to remind ourselves that it is the word it is the true light that is not received I don't know if you've experienced that personally when people hear it that you follow Jesus and then there is a little bit of an awkwardness or you're met with a bit of a control they don't treat you perhaps in the same way that they did before there is an element of truth when we experience that but the reality is it's actually you might think they're rejecting you and in one sense they are but actually they're rejecting

[17 : 33] Jesus it's not you directly that they have a problem with it's Jesus that they have a problem with they're not receiving Jesus and they don't want to recognise him it's not it's not you personally but it's who you represent it's who lives inside you it's the light in you I find that wonderful in a strange way quite encouraging it's not me it's actually it's Jesus that they are not recognising him so that's the first two responses the second the third response is to all who did receive him verse 5 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 a human decision or a husband's world were born of God to receive

Jesus into your life is to believe in his name to receive Jesus into your life is to believe in his name so we realise that God's intention his goal is the same it clarifies doesn't it that what John was sent to do so that all my faith would like believe through him his intention is the same to receive Jesus is to believe in his name God is the origin of the beginning everything has a beginning in him we've seen that in creation we saw that last week in him was life we've seen that in the sending of John John comes from God we know that about God sending the church it's made by him and here we see it once again in becoming children of God it's a different kind of new beginning isn't it it's creation but it's new it is new life new creation when a child is born into our world physically what we see here if you read in verse 13 verse 13 spells out three interconnected reasons as to how the birth of a child physically into our world matters and how it doesn't happen and how therefore a physical natural birth is different to new life being born of God spell that in verse 13 what do we realise from that it says that children are not born of natural descent which means as we know that physically children are born of natural descent a child has two parents they share

DNA from each one which means that they share a family history don't they they have every child as a genealogy that they can trace back their family history there'll be similarities if you checked between DNA and there'll be similarities between them and their ancestors there would be physical traits and character traits as well they're born with a history connected to them born of natural means a scientific birth growing in the womb of their mother that is what it means to have a natural descent takes nine months from an embryo to a baby born of natural descent next we have another one children what we realise is children are born of human decision that word for decision is actually kind of the word that means desire or will children are born because of a sexual relationship between a man and a woman that leads to the development of that embryo in that fetus you see the development in what John is saying that's how

God has designed human procreation and then the last one is children are born because of a husband's will sometimes but not all of the time children happen because it is a couple here it says the husband I think we can say that as a couple have the desire to start a family they want to have a baby they make the choice to start trying for a baby that's the process of wanting to do it wanting to have a child having a sexual relationship and then the baby grows three things that are interconnected into how physical human biological birth happens all comes into play verse 13 says all these verses it says being born of God does not require any of that none of that comes into being born of God no biology involved no genetics no genealogy doesn't matter your upbringing or where you come from or your family history nothing to do with it being born of God has nothing to do with sex being born of God has nothing to do with a parent's wants or desires for their child whether they desire to have their child receive

Jesus or whether they don't it has nothing to do with what they want it is just like creation in the beginning in the beginning God in the beginning was the word just like creation just like the sending of John spiritual birth being born of God has its origin and beginning in God its beginning in the word all other foundations of life are replaced from this origin that rests in God alone children of God are set apart and do we see the contrast between those the people of God who forfeited their rights the Jewish nation as God's people by not receiving Jesus they had all the benefits but now the benefits are those who are inherited by those who believe in his name so believe in his name is not just believing in a label it sounds believing in a name what does that mean it means believing in the character of the person to whom the name belongs believing in the name of Jesus believing in or believing you could say reading in other parts believing in the name of the Lord believing in the name who is the word the true light that is shining believing in his character means that you can cast yourself upon him and have the expectation that he will touch you can cast yourself upon him and know that he will hold the word if you receive Jesus which means if you believe in his name if you receive the word the true light that is shining it means it's shone into your heart and given a new light is happening where spiritual light shines spiritual light begins and you're born of him and it has nothing to do with anything else that God knows it means that not just as a one time offer at first when you might remember when you first came to know

[24 : 55] Jesus but it means that throughout your life you can continue to believe in his name and it means you can continue to cast yourself upon him and trust and know that he will hold you up you can continue to cast yourself upon him and trust and believe that he's having faith that he will hold you up you can do that today afresh or you can do that for the first time anybody can do that every day he gives you the right to become his child you think that that comes back to that picture the father with the child the young child when they are in desperate need to meet their mum or dad they trust and don't that they can go to their dad and cast their steps upon them and their parents have their arms open wide ready to hold them up when life seems like this when life seems what we don't have the question what's going on in life that's what you can do in the living

God you can do in Jesus Christ you can cast yourself upon more than the people who do you so as we come in for landing we talked about God's intention in the world his intention for the church his intention for John it matches up it is the church John their origin intention is from God so that all might believe through him and them through us people don't receive him people would respond to the word in the world people don't receive they don't recognize him that still happens but it is not us that they're rejecting but it is Jesus in us but for us who did receive him all of him from him we all have that right it's a right as well you are amazing we have a right to come to

God as that God nobody can deny that it's there is a right that we'll always have and never turns away we'll always be that for you and remind us again this is where we're lifting our eyes to lift our eyes to destroy and to deliver and to deliver and to deliver almighty God all our hearts are open to you all our desires are known and no part of our we have no secrets that are hidden from you and so we we praise you and thank you that you ministered to the depths of you and so as we consider the flesh you and you are the

Lord Jesus we consider the living of you and you have this opportunity to cast ourselves into you and we just want to say to people that we do that that today we do it now for ourselves our lives looking in that we have the same mass we got to that as we remind him of the case we believe it shows that you are God who came down into the dirt so you are not surprised and shocked by us because you have experienced the world in all its mess and dirt even as it so we do trust and throw ourselves in and ask that you would hold and believe in and ask me to do that till