

## **Season 4, Episode 2: Glorious Light (1:1-18)**

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**Sarah:** Welcome to two sisters in the cup of tea My name is Sarah and I live in the UK. And this is my sister Felicity and she lives in the US.

**Felicity:** Hi, Sarah. Hi, everyone. Great to be back again. I can't quite believe we're kind of like, you know, in the new season, we get to do this, like, read the Bible together.

**Sarah:** Such a joy, isn't it? I've got to tell you, little are doing this crazy line of biscuits right now, and I think they must have some, like, deal going on with MCVITTIES, because every week in the last four or five weeks, which is funny, because we've not been recording for the last four or five weeks, so I feel like I've been stacking up the biscuits. Yeah, every week they've got a new biscuit come out with bitties, a slightly weird kind of slant on it. So this week I've got a chocolate hobnob chocolate brownie flavor.

**Felicity:** Wow. I'm a little nervous that you're saying the little range of biscuits.

**Sarah:** MCVITTIES, though. I've obviously got some kind of deal with Little because they're there every week, but a different kind of slant on.

**Felicity:** I thought you just said Little are copying Mcfitties, which is never a very good story. What flavor was that one again?

**Sarah:** This is chocolate brownie flavor and I would say I think I'd prefer an actual chocolate brownie.

**Felicity:** Well, not much can be an actual chocolate brownie. When I was over in the UK recently not that recently, whenever it was November, I had a mince pie digested. That when they were good.

**Sarah:** Oh, I'm not sure, though. Yeah, it's a funny thing, isn't it? So I feel like I'm on this journey and you're going to see a few of these biscuits in the next few weeks, because this is what Little are offering me. Yeah.

**Felicity:** I brought back with me from the UK a bag of mini Jammy Dodgers.

**Sarah:** But they don't have the cream in them. Exactly.

**Felicity:** Which I should have thought. We've had this whole debate, but the boys are loving them and they keep on saying, can we have some of those English biscuits? Every time Ruis picks up a biscuits, he's like, Is it English or is.

**Sarah:** It like a scone?

**Felicity:** Yeah, he's got the quality control.

**Sarah:** Brilliant. So, Christine, we're getting into John, chapter one today, verse and a half as well. Not even half the first 18 verses our podcast. We want it to be about driving the word to our heart. So not just studying what it says, but actually wanting to read it in lived life outside of this 20 minutes, what do you think that looks like for John's gospel? Sorry, that's such a big question.

**Felicity:** Three bar drums in my experience of reading gospels and I think I have a temptation to get a bit kind of knowledge heavy and a bit technical about stuff. A good question I found to ask myself. A friend gave me this question. It's just been a lifesaver over the last couple of years is how does this help me to enjoy Jesus? And so I think keeping our focus on the person of Christ, there's going to be so much interesting stuff in Mister John's words. But let us keep remembering that this is about the person of Christ and so therefore how does this help me to enjoy Jesus and how does it help me to just capture more of his glory to see how glorious he really is? And I think if we keep coming back to

those kind of questions, those are heart questions, aren't they? Rather than the kind of what does it say and why does it say that? But actually how is it impacting me as I'm reading it and warming my heart or challenging my heart?

**Sarah:** And how our view of Jesus is growing, isn't it? Because as our view of Him grows, not just stuff we learn about Him, but as we can? Well, I guess that is involved as we learn something about him. But as our view grows, we will enjoy him more and that will impact how we then live for him and live in light of what we're reading.

**Felicity:** I guess, with it, I think that's right. Because then as he grows more, then he begins to kind of push out other stuff in our life. That's just the reality of as Jesus gets bigger than other things will fit into place.

**Sarah:** Should we get on with it then? Let's read. Do you want to read for us?

**Felicity:** Yes, I'm going to read. John chapter one, verses one to 18. 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 shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe he himself was not the light. He came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He 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. 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. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father full of grace and truth. John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, this is the one I spoke about when I said, he who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me out of his fullness. We have all received grace in place of grace already given, for the law was given through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

**Sarah:** Well, thank you, Christine. Well, what a cracking passage to start with. I mean, so this is John's prologue. It's kind of like his intro to the whole gospel, to the whole account of Jesus life. Where do we even start with this? Because for some it will be really familiar. It's like a familiar Christmas reading that you might get in December, but for others it might not be familiar. It just is full of massive sentences. Where do we start?

**Felicity:** I know, and I think that's the thing about it being the prologue is that actually he's basically trying to pack in every theme that has appeared in the next 20 to odd chapter. That is a huge thing to try and get your head around. And in reality, we're not going to be able to just encompass all of that, are we? Especially not in the podcast, but even in as we're just reading on our own, it's going to take several readings to kind of dig down deep into that. I think really we just need to walk through it and just kind of work out what is actually being said. He writes quite differently, I think, to if you were to read Mark's gospel or something, he's a bit more kind of poetic, isn't he? The language he uses and the concepts. I mean, even just from the very start, in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. I know immediately it's just sounding a bit kind of like mindblowingly. So the Word Jesus was there in the beginning. Before the beginning, he was God. He is God already. That's pretty big kind of status claim, identity claim as to who this Word is, who Jesus is.

**Sarah:** Yes. There's like no messing about there, is there? The first sentence and it is very kind of echoes of Genesis in terms of in the beginning. And it's taking you back not to his birth it's taking you back to the birth of creation and actually it's taking you back to he's kind of using these words light and darkness and light and it's so what's it called? He's got all the way contrasting but heavy and weighty. And there's no doubt here, he's not trying to pull the wool over eyes. He's like, no, he's God. That's who he is. And so he was there before anything else. And how it's talking about then? This word is made flesh.

**Felicity:** Yes, exactly that, isn't it? And that's kind of where we're heading when we get down towards them, verses 15 through to 18. But just on this, even just the simple act of

just looking at the repeated words helped us to see kind of what's going on with what we're being told. So, as you say, I love that verse four. And him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. And again, those Genesis echoes God gave life and light back in Genesis. And it seems that what's being said here is that Jesus is light and Jesus' life is greater even than all of that and wonderfully. That's so true because the world as made from Genesis right through to the point that Jesus arrives, is not looking very light, is it? There's a lot of darkness and life maybe just seems to be in a bit in jeopardy. Like, who could ever make it through the deserved judgment? Who's going to not be a sinner? Like that kind of thing. It feels like then, as the word is described here, this is life, this is life, this is refreshing reality for all mankind. And that just wow, completeness of who Jesus is.

**Sarah:** And it is wow, isn't it? Because then you start to get the kind of where you get very clearly John goes on to say that there's a man from God whose name is John as well, but he just came as a witness so that's John the Baptist and very clearly says he was not the light to just point it to him. And then it goes on to describe the world, doesn't it? And actually the world's natural response is they didn't recognize Jesus, they did not want Him. And that just highlights, doesn't it? Because there is no one who can possibly claim the title of the true light in the world. Jesus is the only one who could ever possibly be that because everyone else, our natural response is not to want the light and not to accept Him. And I think that's what really struck me reading this through is that we've got these kind of responses to Jesus and the natural response is to kind of disregard Him. And yet what's given to people, they're kind of repeated words again receive, receive, believe in, gave, he gives is given by God. And the right to become children of God becomes because of God's grace in Jesus. So it's nothing that we can do. It's all that has been given to us in Christ.

**Felicity:** And that's so true when we come back to the idea of light and darkness. Like when you're dark, when you're in the dark, unless someone gives you a light, you've got no way out of that darkness. And I love that the reality. I think it's a good expectation setter of what the world is like, of what we naturally are like. We need God to enter into our situation. And actually, then, as we're thinking about this, as you read these words, it seems so obvious, isn't it? Jesus is this person who has been talked about here, but the world is not going to agree with that. There is going to be a rejection of Jesus as we look around us, as we think of our unbelieving friends and family and whoever. I think that's a helpful thing as a reality check, as we're blown away by this. Actually, that's not the case for many people.

**Sarah:** Yeah, absolutely. But it is extraordinary, isn't it, as you read on and you see these just a description of Him full of grace and street and out of his fullness fed on down over 16, we've all received grace upon grace, grace in place of grace already given. Just wonderful, isn't it, to realize afresh the good news of grace. Yeah. And he starts with it at the beginning of his letter because that's what can permeate through the whole letter. It's not a letter. Sorry, the account of Jesus' life. Because Jesus is full of grace out of his fullness you see grace upon grace. Like what an extraordinary phrase.

**Felicity:** I don't think I've really properly noticed this before. In verse 16, out of silence, we have already grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. And the idea God has been graciously dealing with his people from the beginning of time. But the grace that we have in Jesus surpasses the grace that was given before the Law was a kind of a safeguard, wasn't it? We see that in other parts of the Bible. But here we have Jesus Himself, full of grace and truth. And again, just that really simple tool of just looking at repetition, this idea of truth and it being revealed and it being made known. And John the Baptist witnessing to it and testifying about Him. And everything about this is pointing to Jesus and saying, look, he is made known. In that very last verse there, verse 18, no one has ever seen God but the one any time, who is Himself God and is in a closer relationship with a has made Him known. And the reality of that revelation and the kind of concreteness of that that is so reassuring to me, I love that he really has been made no, like there's no guesswork here. This is God himself coming.

**Sarah:** Yeah. This is God himself. And we've got the testimony about Him written down for us now, and John is making sure that we know that. And that's just really reassuring again, isn't it, as well.

**Felicity:** And then when you come back to John's kind of purpose, first, you know that one we talked about in the last episode? I forgot the number 20, verse 2031. 2031. And he says that's why he's telling us this stuff, isn't he? That's why Him is so that we may believe just that reality of it. It's really kind of obvious. But as we read the Revelation, as we see it, so we believe in his name, like verse twelve here, like the receiving and the believing. So we have life. Like, this is the way this is the way to life. I don't know.

**Sarah:** So there's just so much here, isn't it? As we've been saying, you can really dwell on any of these verses deeply and get so much from it, but and I guess that's what we've kind of wanting to do, isn't it? As we drive this to our hearts, is actually thinking, what's one thing today that I can think on more, pray three more and think through? But what's it been like for you to do that? Have you done that? Tell me what's gone through your heart right now.

**Felicity:** Well, right now?

**Sarah:** Right now.

**Felicity:** I do think that one of the things that's really struck me as I've been in these verses is the certainty of the Revelation. And just being the maid known, there's no kind of if you look at it this way, or like it might be that it looks like this, or there's no kind of hesitation about it. It's like this is God Himself come to dwell with us, come to be with us, to reveal his glory and his grace in his truth. And from my heart, I think that's something that I have known and that I could explain that to other people. But functionally, do I live like this is the revealed truth? I feel like sometimes I look elsewhere. I'm just looking for hope or even looking for light from other things. I think this has challenged me to come back to the Revelation. Like what we see here. This is it like, take a good long, don't leave it kind of look that's a challenge. What about you? Where's your heartbeat?

**Sarah:** Yeah, I think I've been dwelling on the reality of light into the darkness and just thinking through, well, two big areas of darkness, I guess, in life are sin and suffering, aren't they? And so, actually, what is it like to believe that Jesus is the true light and that his life is what I need? I need his light to expose my sin, and I need his light to help me see my suffering in view of his mercy and to see it well, and to see it with a believing heart, if that makes sense. And I think I've been dwelling on the fact that he's the light. And what does the light do? The light exposes, it dries out, it warms, it brings revelation, knowledge, as you say. And ultimately his light shines grace into our hearts, doesn't it? Because he gives us what we need. He helps us to see clearly, and that is a gift. And I want to see more clearly and I want his life to be the light that does that, rather, as you say, looking for other places, for other revelations or other lights or other hope. This is it. John so clearly sets out from the beginning that he is where light is found, and ultimately that is good and great filled light. So move towards it, not hide away from it. That's where I've been sitting this week.

**Felicity:** That's so helpful. So saying that as we look at life, our sin and our suffering is a part of that in the light of Jesus, then we see it with grace and truth in there as well, which is a hopeful thing, like it's an exposing thing, but it pushes us towards the hope as well. And that is we see that a bit later on in the gospel, don't we, as people sort of shy away from the dark, from the light, but then also run towards the light as well, and those two kind of conflicting things. We've been reading a book with our boys over the last few weeks, and there's a brilliant illustration in there. It's a Patricia syngent book called Treasures of the Snow. And she talks about the grandma talking to a little girl, and she's saying, when we wake up in the morning, we don't shoot out the darkness. We don't kind of persuade it to go. We don't want to take our broom and brush it out. We welcome the light in. We receive the light, we open the curtains, we open the shutters. And that's been such a good little reminder for me of this reality, that as we welcome Jesus in and receive Him and believe in his name and trust in his grace and truth, so the darkness is banished and we live in the light and the life is just poof, mind blowingly.

**Sarah:** Will you pray for us, Christine?

**Felicity:** Absolutely. Heavenly Father, we pray you so much that you make Jesus known, that you give us light and life for all mankind. And we're sorry when we look elsewhere, when we just get caught up in the darkness and look for other lights. And Father, we pray that as we're digging into John's gospel, would you give us real clarity of vision? Would we

have a bigger and bigger view of Jesus and his glory? We pray that we be those who are running towards the light, those who are eager to receive Jesus, that we might be those of life and light for Your glory. Amen.

**Sarah:** Amen. So good to be back in the world. Isn't it? And just starts to dwell deeply on these things. What a gift of scientific.

**Felicity:** It's rich, isn't it? Rich.

**Sarah:** It's so rich. So good. Do check out our show notes. We've got questions to go with a cup of tea over there. And that will just help you if you're meeting up with a friend and other sister in Christ. And we would love any reviews. If you're able to write us a review wherever you listen to podcast that just helps to get the word out that we've got a new season and that we'd love people to be enjoying this as much as we are. Is there anything else? Sifty.

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**Sarah:** Absolutely. Enjoy. See you next time.

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