

Open your Bibles to John 1

We are finishing our journey through the minor prophets with the culmination of what all of them were waiting for: the faithful Husband, the God of Justice on the cross, the one who would come out of Bethlehem Ephrathah, the new temple of God that dwells within the souls of His children! JESUS CHRIST HAS COME AND HE IS ALIVE CHURCH! The long expected prophet, priest, and King, has come to make all things new!

I am so excited to announce that today will begin a long series of sermons in the Gospel of John. We are going to go right through this book together to find out who Jesus is, and why he's worth treasuring! John is different than the other three gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They are pretty similar in their structure and detail, but John is the oddball. They all seek to give a record of the events that took place in Jesus' life, but John gives us a theological treatise on his Christology, and it is absolutely amazing. He teaches us so much about who Christ is and what He came to accomplish. But do you know what I really love about John? He tells us why he wrote the book in chapter 20:30-31, "so that you may believe." If you don't believe in Christ and treasure Him as the greatest good your soul can attain – by the end of this study, I pray that you will. This is the Word of God. And I expect it to change you greatly. It is more powerful than you think it is. Prepare for your life to be radically altered for the glory of Christ!

John 1:1-18 (ESV)

1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. 8He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

9The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

14And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15(John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") 16For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Prayer

We begin this morning with what we might call a prologue for the entire book. We will consider and apply three truths about Christ this morning:

- 1. Christ the Word**
- 2. Christ the Light**
- 3. Christ Full of Grace**

CHRIST THE WORD

Look at v.1-3 and consider the greatness of Christ

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In the beginning was the Word...

Hopefully you read these words and are immediately reminded of the first verse in the Bible! Genesis 1:1, In the beginning “God...” Now in John we have “in the beginning, the WORD...” What we are seeing here is an deep, theological concept between God and His Word where they become almost as synonyms. ***God’s Word, in many cases, is what makes God who He is!*** You can literally read this, “in the beginning was the *communication*.” God SPOKE and creation came. Therefore, through His Word, God is the Creator of all things, heaven and earth, and all that has life and breath. Similarly, God SPEAKS promises, and thereby proves His faithfulness through His Word. The primary way that God has revealed Himself is through His Word, the Bible: the Old Testament, the New Testament, the holy and inspired Word of the One True God! Now here’s what’s marvelous about this... John isn’t only talking about the Scriptures, or God’s promises, or His power. John is talking about a person. He tells us later in *John 1:14* that God’s Word became flesh and dwelt among us. God’s Word is none other than the only Son, Jesus Christ. God LOVES to communicate, and He has communicated Himself to this world through the Son – HIS VERY OWN WORD. So if the Word is Jesus, that changes how we read the rest of this text.

Jesus Was There In The Beginning

It was not only the Father who spoke all creation into being, but in perfect harmony with the Son, the One triune God spoke creation. This tells us that Jesus has always existed. It was not his birth in the manger that God brought Him to be. He has always existed in perfect unity with the Father, and He is the Word that created you and I.

Jesus Is Eternally In Relationship With The Father

The Word was with God = the Word was continually toward God. In other words, the Son and the Father were continually face-to-face even before the foundations of the world were built. This might sound strange for some of us here, but here’s the thing: God has never needed any thing, for He is in relationship with Himself. He is totally self-sufficient, dwelling with the Father, Son, and Spirit. The eternally satisfied three in one.

The Word Was God

Now things are getting real. Jesus is God. We cannot get this one wrong church. John begins his great testimony by setting the record straight: the Christ that I am writing about is not just a messenger, a prophet, or some other lesser being – He is none other than YHWH, the Great I Am, the Creator of all things, the Sender of the Flood, and the holy Judge of heaven and earth. Christ is God in the flesh. Jesus is God, and He has never stopped being God.

All Things Were Made Through Him (V.3)

Now it should be noted here that this is the first time the “Word” is given the pronoun “He.” We’ve already touched on this, but let’s take it to the next level here. Einstein will help us out. There are about 100 billion stars in a galaxy... There are at least 100 million galaxies in known space... Einstein believed that we have only scanned one billionth of theoretical space! So based on what we know, there are probably about 10 octillion stars in space. That is a ten with 27 zero’s behind it. I am standing here in this pulpit, telling you that Jesus Christ created every one of them. Not only that – but he created every soul sitting in these pews. He created YOU. Guess what else church. That same Jesus who created 10 octillion stars and billions of human souls throughout history is the same Jesus who came to earth in flesh and died at the hands of the sinners He created. Let that sink in for a moment. The Creator of Life died at the hands of His creation. We’re going to talk more about that in a minute. Christ is the Word of God – and this truth is truly epic. But John has more to say! Look at verses 4-13.

CHRIST THE LIFE AND LIGHT

Verses 4-13

4In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. 8He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. 9The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Life And Light Have Been Revealed

Christ is described not only as the Word, but now as LIFE AND LIGHT. We also have a new character introduced here: MEN. Christ revealed himself brings life and light TO PEOPLE. The Word was made known so that people could have life and light! So they could breathe and see! So they could know the fullness of purpose and wisdom and knowledge that comes from the Father! We cannot know LIFE outside of Christ! Just a few months ago I met a young man whose name I will give out. He said he had just gotten out of prison and was trying to get back on his feet. He needed help. He needed money to get where he was going and to get him through until he found another job. My heart bled for him, but instead of giving him

money, I asked if he would like to talk and receive counsel, if he wanted to enjoy the church service with us (he came on a Sunday morning), and if he wanted to go out to lunch. He was not interested in a relationship. He wanted cash. He approached me for about 3 or 4 weeks, and I prayed with him every time. Yesterday, he came to our youth car wash and immediately came up to me not to ask for cash, but proudly tell me that He met Jesus. He said, “it’s amazing what happens when you quit buying dope and surrender to Jesus.” Life is found in Christ alone, and there is no life outside of Him.

Listen how John describes the detail of Word of Life and Light:

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it! We have to learn to think in abstract principles here. Light is all that Jesus is and what He came to accomplish. But do you know what darkness is? All that this world is and what it seeks to accomplish. If you read this verse again, you’ll notice the continued nature of the word “shines.” In Christ there is a light that will NOT GO OUT. The darkness of this present age and the depraved mind of man may seek to close in on the light of Christ, but let me tell you right now – CHRIST WILL NOT BE VANQUISHED. The Word of Life and Light – the Creator of the universe! – Jesus Christ - came to die on a tree... And for a brief moment, though the light had been revealed, it appeared that darkness had overcome Him... The skies cracked and the earth shook at His death. Three days of silence passed in dread and fear of the future. But then, on the third day, as Mary approached the tomb, a little glimmer of light appeared. THE TOMB WAS EMPTY. Hope and optimism began to fill her mind! What has happened to his body? Where is Jesus? And as she’s walking back home she hears his voice, “MARY.” And a raging beam of LIGHT powered through the darkness as Christ revealed His glorified body, triumphing over all death and hell! He is ALIVE! The grave could not keep Him! Death could not stop Him! Hell could not hold Him! DARKNESS COULD NOT VANQUISH HIM. Listen at John 16:33:

John 16:33 (ESV)

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

The Light of the Word of God is overwhelmingly bright and powerful for those who see it. A light so bright – don’t you think the whole world would just love it? John the Baptist (not the same John who wrote this book) came to preach about this light. He was desperate for ALL TO BELIEVE through Him. That’s the message of this John as well and a perfect statement for the purpose of this book. The light has been revealed – John saw it, he’s testifying about it, and there is no good reason not to believe. However, ***the Word, which is Christ, who is God, who is Life and Light was indeed rejected by His creation.***

Light Rejected

Even though this light was Christ Himself, the Creator of all things, v.10 tells us what the world thought of Him. The world was MADE through Him – yet the world did not know Him. Even though He was physically there, proclaiming Himself to be one with the Father and the prophesied Messiah – they did not know Him. This shows us why Christ came into the world in the first place. Because the world was full of DARKNESS.

Look in your Bibles at Romans 1:18-23

18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Even though the light and the glory of God was CLEARLY made known to man, their foolish hearts were darkened and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for nonsense. Church this world is so dark. I beg of you – don't be foolish! Turn your eyes upon the light of Christ that was rejected by men! Even His creation rejected Him! Even His own people rejected Him! Will you reject Him too? We have already crucified Him, blasphemed His name, trampled over His glory, and traded Him in for petty cash. HE IS THE LIGHT OF LIFE! Reject Him no longer! Go to Jesus today! Surrender to the glory of the immortal God and enjoy His LIFE AND LIGHT FOREVER!!!!

And though many reject Him, some respond...

Look at verse 12-13

12But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Light Received

This is what it means to be "born again." If you receive Christ and believe in His name, He has given you the right to become a child of God. This means that you were reborn. But this time, there was no womb, there was no blood and flesh, there was not even the will of man in your procreation! GOD ALONE HAS GIVEN YOU LIFE. Christ gave you HIS RIGHT as a child of God, to be a child of God in His place. ***Who doesn't want that???*** O how foolish our darkened hearts are to not want Christ! There's an old hymn that sings:

*I'm so glad that I'm part of the family of God
I've been washed in the fountain
Cleansed by the blood
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,
For I'm part of the family of God.
From the door of an orphanage to the house of the King,
No longer an outcast, a new song I sing;*

*From rags unto riches, from the weak to the strong,
I'm not worthy to be here, but praise God I belong!*

The cosmic Christ, the eternal Creator who became one of us, took our sins upon himself and paid for them, was resurrected and now sits at the Father's right hand is calling you to come and believe in His name. The Word. The Life. The Light. Receive Him this moment and join the family of God.

Finally, the last passage here has a word that is repeated, teaching us one last truth about the Word of God – HE IS FULL OF GRACE

CHRIST FULL OF GRACE

Look at verses 14-18

14And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15(John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") 16For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

If the Word hasn't been explained clearly enough yet, John comes right out and says it: **THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US!** Listen reader – I SAW HIS GLORY. We all did! The disciples, the Jews, the Gentiles! John the Baptist! The glory of God was revealed! And what did His glory look like? It was of the only Son from the Father, **FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH.** You want to know what Jesus looked like? He looked like grace. Even John the Baptist had to testify, "The one who comes after me, will be greater than me, for He is before me!" The grace and truth of Christ will FAR transcend that of John the Baptist.

In other words, what are you waiting on? Please. Believe in Christ and receive GRACE UPON GRACE

Now what is grace upon grace? It literally means that Christ does not run out of grace. He provides grace for His children, and then he heaps more grace on top, and then he heaps even more grace on top of that! Grace is simply forgiveness and patience. He goes on to compare Moses and Jesus. Through Moses, God gave the Israelites incredible amounts of grace by giving them the law. He established His covenant with them and His Word is good! Now, through Jesus, grace and truth have come as the definitive Word of God! He has revealed His glory once more and grace upon grace has been given! Rather than destroying this dark world that deserves judgment and damnation – HE SENT LIGHT INTO THE WORLD! God's grace does not run out. ***Listen – Christ literally died for sinners, rose from the dead, and is seated at the righthand of God calling home the same sinners that murdered Him.*** Jesus is the definition of grace. Martin Luther speaks well to Jesus' grace in comparing Him to the sun:

Martin Luther:

“The sun is not dimmed and darkened by shining on so many people or by providing the entire world with its light and splendor. It retains its light intact. It loses nothing; it is immeasurable, perhaps able to illumine ten more worlds. I suppose that a hundred thousand candles can be ignited from one light, and still this light will not lose any of its brilliance... Thus Christ, our Lord, to whom we must flee and of whom we must ask all, is an interminable well, the chief source of all grace... Even if the whole world were to draw from this fountain enough grace and truth to transform all people into angels, still it would not lose as much as a drop. This fountain constantly overflows with sheer grace.”

Christ is FULL of Grace. You are not too far gone to receive Him today. *“But where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” – Romans 5:20*

Finally, we’ve come to verse 18

18No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

No one has ever seen God. Isaiah tried to and almost died. So did Moses. Sinful man cannot look with a bold face into the glory of a Holy Judge without perishing. So that means therefore – no one has ever seen God... UNTIL NOW: **The only God, who is at the Father’s side, has made Himself known.** Jesus is the Word of God. God has made Himself known through His Word. What are you going to do about it?

There is either an incredible Master of all things who dwells on High, yet made Himself low, bore the sin of the world on a tree, rose triumphantly from the dead, and now stands today to give grace upon grace and LIFE and LIGHT...

OR there was a lunatic who made some Jewish people mad a long time ago.

Remember the words we just read:

He has made Himself known – so that you may believe.

Prayer