

The Person of Christ

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Preacher: Rev Gavino Fioretti

[0 : 00] You will find our text of meditation tonight in John's Gospel, chapter 1, from verse 1 to verse 5. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The Gospel of John is probably one of the books that is most well-known.

It's one of the books that is well-known among Christians, but even outside. It is a book that is often used in evangelists.

There are verses there that are often used when we try to share the Gospel. Think of John 3.16. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, and so on.

[1 : 13] Think of John 3.36, when it says, He who believes in the Son has eternal life. He who does not believe in the Son is under condemnation.

So there are many verses that are well-known in this book, and this Gospel is very popular. I remember in Sardinia, where I come from, often the Gospel of John was given to unbelievers as a witness.

Someone who had shown a bit of interest in spiritual things would be given the Gospel of John, because it was thought that it's a simple Gospel, straightforward and well-known.

So it will open the door for more evangelists. And although it is well-known, it's very profound. John 3.16, which we know so well.

We know the words, but what does it mean? In what sense does God love the world? Does it mean He loves everyone in the same way?

[2 : 17] Is He talking about kinds of people that He loves? There are mysteries there. Even that verse. Who is the Son of God?

Does God have a Son? Think of the final words of Jesus to His disciples. Before He died, Jesus spoke to them about the Trinity.

Not the easiest subject to understand and to grasp. Not one, we would think, the most important one to know. If I was dying tonight, I wouldn't be talking to my kids about the mystery of the three-in-one.

And yet, that's what Jesus did. There is so much theology. People that don't believe in election and predestination, they give this book to unbelievers where Jesus said, no one comes unto me unless the Father drags them to me.

There is profound teaching in this book. It is a fundamental book. This book tells us so much about Jesus.

[3 : 35] Not so much about His works, although we see miracles and works done by Christ here. Not even about His teaching, but about His person.

If you read Matthew, Mark, and Luke, yes, Christ is revealed there through His teaching, through His miracles and works.

But here in John, there are things said about Jesus that no other gospel writers ever mention. For us to have a better understanding of Christ, we need John's gospel.

Our understanding will be lacking and imperfect if God had not given unto us this book. It's a fundamental book. The more we are familiar with this book, the more familiar we are with the person of Jesus Christ.

And it is a book that has a purpose. At the end of the book, the Apostle John says that he wrote this, that he listed these works and these teachings of Jesus, that we might believe in Him.

[4 : 50] This book has been written to bring people to a saving knowledge of Christ. And that doesn't mean simply for the unconverted, but for us as well, who are already converted.

Because Christ is revealing Himself, as Christ speaks to us through this book, our faith in Him grows. And is strengthened. And is refined.

If you ever doubt the divinity of Christ, read the book of John. If you ever doubt the love of Christ, read the gospel of John. If your faith is weak, read the book of John.

It's true that faith cometh by hearing the word of Christ, and surely faith come by hearing His own revelation in this gospel. And what is true of the whole letter, of the whole gospel, it's true of these verses that we just read.

From verse 1 to verse 18, it is a kind of introduction that John writes in his own gospel. You know, at the beginning of a book, there is an introduction. And usually in the introduction, the author sets down, this is the theme, this is what I want to talk about.

[6 : 09] This is my objective. And so John, in these 18 verses, tells us, he summarizes what he's going to tell us in the rest of the gospel.

And so there are themes that are mentioned here that are then developed later on in the gospel. Light, life, truth, witness, becoming God's children.

This section is fundamental because teaches us things about Christ that are profound and deep that will strengthen our faith and enrich our relationship with Him.

And John is talking here about Jesus because Jesus is the theme of His gospel. The good news, according to John, is Jesus.

And so John, who was his closest disciple, the one who was loved by Jesus, that's how he called himself here. He's telling us things about Christ.

[7 : 24] And what does he say about Jesus in these five verses? He tells us that Jesus is the Word. In the beginning was the Word.

And then in verse 14, he tells us that the Word became flesh. So, the Word is clearly the title that John gives to our Savior, Jesus Christ.

And the question is, why does John refer to Jesus as the Word? Why does he not say the Son? Why does he call Jesus the Word? As far as I know, no one calls him the Word. He does. In Hebrew, we read that God has revealed Himself a long time in many ways.

He spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. So, John is saying, God has spoken.

[8 : 35] God has revealed Himself and His will in the past through His prophets. But now, at this point in history, God has revealed Himself through His Son.

So, when John refers to Christ as the Word, He is talking of Jesus as the one who reveals God. He is God's most perfect, most clear, most profound revelation of God and His will.

So that Jesus could say to Philip, He who has seen me has seen the Father. again, the writer to the Hebrews, he speaks of Jesus as the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of His nature.

Jesus reveals God. When we see Jesus, God is speaking to us through Him.

God is revealing His very being, His character, His attributes, His will, His plans in the person of His own Son.

[10 : 02] And when you see my sons and daughters, you see something of me. When we see Christ, we see something of the Father there.

He is the Word in a sense that is God's self-revelation. God's revelation of His person and being. And John tells us about the Word that He was from the beginning.

The in the beginning of John 1 is the in the beginning of Genesis 1. from the very beginning. And notice, it doesn't say that in the beginning the Word happened to be or the Word was made or the Word became.

It says in the beginning was the Word. It means that the Word was there and was before there. Before time existed, the Word pre-existed. before the Word came to pass, He already was.

[11 : 18] And so He could say when He was speaking to the Pharisees, before Abraham was, I am. Because He is the one who always is.

In Revelation, the same John speaks of Jesus as the one who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending. Because the Son has no beginning in time.

There was never a time when He wasn't. His name is the Great Hayam who always is and always will be.

The same yesterday, today, and forever. But then John tells us that He is equal with God. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. God. The Word, the Son, Jesus, is God.

[12:34] It doesn't say that He became God. Some people argue that He became the Son of God through the resurrection as a kind of reward from God for His obedience and humiliation.

but He was God. He's equal with God because He's God.

He's not a second class God. He's not the creation of God. He is God. What is true of the Father, it's true of the Son.

And so when John quotes Isaiah chapter 6, he applies those words to Jesus. In John 12, John says that the one Isaiah saw in the prophet was Jesus.

All that is true of God, the Father is true of the Son. He's equal to the Father and glory and power and honor.

[13:44] God, think of this when you think of Christ on the cross. The one who has no beginning and no ending is dying on a cross.

Think of Jesus when He was born, the one who holds all things into His hands, the one who gives life and preserves life, that sustains the whole universe by the word of His power, needing to be fed by His mother.

What a mystery. The word was God. And in the Greek, it was as a continuous action. That's something that lasts, that used to be in it, it really is.

But also John tells us that he was with God. And that's tricky now. We can understand that Jesus is God, but how can He be God and yet be with God?

The word with, in the Greek, means face to face with. And it's usually used in reference to persons. When a person is with another person, then this word is used.

[15:09] And so what John is saying is Jesus is equal with God. He is God. And yet, within the God head, there is a distinction.

There is more than one person. There is the Father and there is the Son. and the idea is that Jesus, the word, the logos, the Son, is face to face with the Father.

It's a loving picture, friends. As someone who is at the same level, equal with, and yet there is a towardness.

Jesus is toward the Father, and the Father is toward Jesus. there is a relationship of love between the two. The world was with God.

And you see them talking in Genesis 1. Let us make a man in our own image. The Father and the Son, beholding each other, beholding the beauty.

[16:40] And think of this. When Paul says in Romans 5, verse 1, justified by faith, we have peace with God. You know that with is the same with that John uses in this verse.

When we think of peace with God, we often think of feelings, a feeling of peace. what Paul is telling in that verse, if we are in Christ Jesus, if we believe in Christ, if we are justified, if our sins are forgiven, we are face to face with God.

We are not one against the other. He has brought us into his very presence. We are with him because we are in Christ. So as God sees the Son, he sees his church with him, united to him.

When God sees the church, he sees the beauty of his Son. That's why God loves the church, because he finds the beauty of Jesus in it. Despite all our failings and short comings, the Father sees him, the body of his Son, in the church.

And that's our position today as believers. We are face to face with God. No greater privilege than this. But then John tells us that the Word is the creator of all things.

[18:17] In verse 3, all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. John is saying, everything that has existence, everything that is in this world, in this universe, everything that was made, be that human, or animals, or rocks, or angels, everything that exists, exists because of him.

He's the agent of all things. God is the creator of all things. Not one thing exists apart from him, outside of him.

We think of the father as the creator, and he is, but so is the son. all things exist because of him, and through him.

In Genesis 1, we read that God spoke the word, and as he spoke, the thing came to pass. God said, there be light, and it was light.

You see how the two work together, and the creation of the universe? But all these things are scandalous.

[19 : 47] For a Jew, these things are blasphemous. How can you say these things about someone who was flesh, and bones, and blood?

How can you say these things about a man that we touched, and heard, and killed? And John is saying, he is God. And all the titles that he uses, and all the attributes that he uses, are the same things that the Old Testament ascribes to God, to Jehovah, to Yahweh.

And John would do this later on again. We sang Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd. Jehovah is my shepherd. And Jesus said, I am the good shepherd.

In Revelation, John would give to Jesus the same titles, the same worship that is offered to God the Father, to Jehovah. Because he is the great Jehovah, the great I am.

He is I am who I am. The self-existent God. The one who has life in himself. The eternal ones. This is the Jesus that saved us, friends.

[21 : 09] And he had to be God, friends, because according to the Old Testament, only Jehovah saves. Only God saves. Salvation belongs to the Lord. So only the Lord could save us.

if Jesus were just a man, you and I would be without hope. But because he's God, we are saved. Secondly, John refers to Jesus as life. It says in verse four, in him was life.

now, not necessarily he was made alive, because he was already. Before time, before creation, he already was. And he was life because he is life.

He has life because he is the mortal one. If he is God, then he has life in himself. He's not created, he's not made, he hasn't become, he is.

[22 : 18] the great I am. And life is not something that he has received, it is something that he has given, because he has of himself.

In him was life. And the context here is a context of creation. It means that everyone who has a living breath, has that living breath because of Christ.

Because Christ has given us life. Again, the same thing that belongs to Jehovah. He is the one who gives and the one who takes it away. And that's the context of living and dying.

And now John is telling us, in him was life. He was life. He had life in him himself and he gave life to us.

But there is more than biological life. There is spiritual life. Because then John says that the life was the light of man and light shines in darkness and darkness has not overcome it.

[23 : 32] So the context moved from creation to salvation. And John is saying he in was life. Not just in physical life, but in spiritual life.

And so when we are born again, says Paul to the Ephesians, the life of God is within us. The life of God. Before we were spiritually dead.

But then the life of God is within us. And John many times tells us that if we believe, one of his favorite words in the gospel, if we believe, we have eternal life.

And who is the author of this life? Who is the one who gives life? The one who has life? The one who is life? He is life.

And if we come to him, we'll receive his life. One of the doctrines I have rediscovered in recent time is the union with Christ.

[24 : 42] it is a wonderful, wonderful doctrine. Everything that belongs to Christ by right, everything that by right is his, is given unto us.

Where does our eternal life come from? Not from the tree of life, but from the one who is life. life. As we are united to the one who is life, we'll live forever.

He's the source of our eternal life. Our eternal life will be mediated and will depend on him constantly and eternally because he's the source of that life.

life. And so if you want eternal life, if you want to experience a life that is abundant and everlasting, all you need is Christ because he is life.

He said that too, I am the way, the truth and the life. Life with a capital L, real life, soul satisfying life.

[25 : 59] The church cannot give you this life. Your wife, your husband, your children, your job, your money will never give you this life. Because all these things are earthly, are temporary, are mortal.

But Christ being God, he has life for himself and is able and willing to give you this life if all come to him.

he is the word, he is life. And then finally, John says that the word, the sun, is the light. And the life was the light of man. Now, some people say that the light of man is a reference to the incarnation. When Jesus came, he brought life into the world.

but again, John says that the light was, the life was the light of man. Not that the life became the light of man, but that the life was the light of man.

[27 : 13] And light here is the context of again, of revelation, of disclosing, of making things clear. Light reveals things. If you're in a dark room and then light comes in, you see things, you understand things, you know things.

And so, Jesus is light, Jesus reveals, Jesus gives clarity, gives sharpness, understanding. And this was always the case.

When did Jesus begin to be the light of man? At the very creation of man. He was the light of Adam and Eve, friends. He was the one who gave understanding to Adam and Eve at the very beginning. We often think of God the Father when we think of creation, don't we? We think of God the Father walking with Adam and Eve late in the evening. I like to think with Jesus there, friends.

Walking with the Son of God, with the light of man, the one who gave them understanding about creation, about the revelation of God in creation. and he continued to reveal to them God even after that.

[28 : 33] Giving light to the people. He was the light of man in the whole history of man, not just since the incarnation, but before that Jesus was already shining.

Notice, the light shines. It means that when darkness came because of sin, the light of the world, the light of man kept shining.

Maybe not as clearly, not as powerfully, but it was shining. In Genesis 3, when there is the first gospel proclamation, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

There is the seed of the woman that will crush the head of the serpent. the Messiah will come and bring light and victory.

And of course, this light is now even more clear because the word became flesh. Because the one who always was, the one who is eternal, who is outside of time, came into time.

[29 : 43] The one who has no limitations, humbled himself and took upon himself the form of a man. And as he walked among men, as he tabernacled among men, he was the light of men.

He revealed God to men. He revealed men how to be at peace with God. He revealed to them how to become the children of God.

He's the light of men. And he says darkness has not overcome it. Now, there are two possible translations here.

One is the one we have here in ESV, but NIV and authorized version, they say the darkness could not comprehend it. Now, both translations are fine, but I think in the contest, the authorized version and the NIV are better than ESV, because later on John will tell us that the world rejected him.

The world did not know him, did not receive him, despite him shining, despite him revealing God, despite him coming to his own to save his own, his own did not receive him.

[31 : 09] So it seems to me that as Jesus brought light, even more light than ever in his coming, in his incarnation, in his ministry among men, the world didn't light that light, and did not receive that light, didn't accept it and surrender.

They prefer darkness to light. He came to his own and his own people did not receive him.

They prefer stay in darkness because their hearts were dark. Light is pleasant, but life reveals bad things as well as good things.

darkness. If a room is very untidy, darkness covers the mess.

When the light comes in, that mess is revealed. And when the light of men comes into the darkness, it reveals the mess that is in the hearts of men.

[32 : 26] some men, by God's grace, as they see the mess, they plead for mercy. Many, sadly, when they see the mess, they don't like it, and they go back to the darkness.

They don't like to be challenged by the light. The question for you is, what do you do with Christ? his God, his life, his light.

Will you receive him? Will you comprehend him? Will you surrender to him? Will you have him?

What the gospel offers, friends, is not just the forgiveness of sins.

What God offers in the gospel is Christ. what God is offering to you is his son. And as you receive him, you receive all the blessings that come with him.

If you receive Jesus, you don't receive a person, you don't receive a religion, you don't receive a way of living, you receive God. You welcome God in your life.

[33 : 54] You surrender to him. your fellowship with him. You are united to him. And the promise is that you will be like him.

I hope you are not among those who, when they see the light, when they see Christ and his revelation, I hope you are not like those who go away from him.

do not escape from him, do not flee from him, but come to him. Receive him. It will change your life. It will give you a life worth living in this life and forevermore. now. Let's pray. Let's pray.