

Hello I am Jesus

Jesus the Word - John 1:1-18

Today we start a brand new series and it is one of the Gospels. The gospel of John, and I want to start with this question. Have you ever developed an opinion about somebody prematurely? Maybe you meet them and you don't really say much. You just look them up and down, maybe you see what they are wearing, maybe you assume some things about them from appearances. You judge them. You label them. You put them in a box.

Then, for whatever reason, circumstances cause you to spend some time with them. Maybe you get put on the same team with them to work on a project, maybe you go on a road trip with them, or you spend 5 hours in a car. Maybe you go to a church working bee and end up cleaning church windows together.

After a while, the conversation moves from the superficial to the meaningful and one day it dawns on you, "This person isn't who I thought that they were."

Who has got a good friend whose friendship started like that? Who married a person like that, who here thought their spouse was a bit of a loser when they first met? Who here thinks their spouse is a loser now now?!! (don't answer that)

If that has ever been the case for you, if you have ever judged somebody wrongly and then you got to know them and realized, "This person is different than what I thought," that is the Gospel of John.

John is writing to a group of people who have come to some conclusions about who Jesus Christ was, maybe prematurely or falsely. So John is writing to set the record straight. John is writing to say, "You've incorrectly assumed who Jesus Christ is, and now I want to give you a clear picture of who Jesus is, what He has done, and why that matters."

Our series is called "Hello I am Jesus"

For some, perhaps a lot of us, we have a distorted view of who Jesus is, maybe because of how we were raised, who taught us, or more likely these days, because people have never actually read the Bible to see what Jesus is actually like.

The overall purpose of the Gospel of John can be found in John 20:31.

“These things,” referring to his book, “are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.”

In other words, John writes for the intended purpose of clarifying for us that Jesus was not just an ordinary bloke. He was not just a guy who told interesting stories. He was not just another philosopher in a long line of philosophers. He was not just a Jewish rabbi. He was not just a first century guru who wants everybody to hold hands and sing kumbaya. **Jesus was God with skin on, and He came to us to bridge the gap between a broken humanity and a Holy God.**

The wrong Jesus

This is important stuff, knowing the wrong Jesus can have eternal consequences. Distorted views of Jesus has created a number of religious groups over the centuries.

- **Jehovah’s Witness Jesus:** Not God, but human, created by God,
- **Mormon Jesus:** One of the man/spirit children of Elohim...the firstborn, and older brother to Lucifer (Satan) and, ultimately, us to. By hard work, through obedience and devotion, he achieved the rank of God.
- **Eastern Mysticism Jesus (Zen Buddhism, Bahai, Krishna)** Jesus is one of the long line of “masters” (along with Buddha, Muhmmad, etc.).
- **Islam Jesus: Human, the second to last Prophet, preceding Mohammad**

Or if we want to get and bit more contemporary

Oprah Jesus:

- This Jesus is spiritual but makes no claims to truth that might upset someone.
- He just wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other.
- It’s not so much about Jesus, it’s about being happy and feeling good about oneself.
- Jesus does not need to be particularly involved in your life, except when to resolve a problem, and if he doesn’t solve it according to our agenda and quickly – then that is really disappointing!

Who you say Jesus is...

As we begin our study of the book of John today, I want to be guided by the question that Jesus asks Peter, Who do YOU say that I am?

Matthew 16.13-15

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

For various reasons, a lot of people today have a skewed understanding of who Jesus is. It's not that all that we know about Jesus is wrong, but it seems that we don't always have the whole picture. My guess is that it is because many of us haven't read the whole story about him, or are just reliant on some of the Sunday school or bible in school stories we heard.

In the beginning...

So today we are going to dive into the first 18 verses of John. Matthew begins with a genealogy. Mark begins with Jesus' introduction through John the Baptist and then some chronological details, and Luke begins at Christmas. But John jumps into the deep end of a theological understanding who Jesus is. It is almost as if John is saying, "Before I introduce you to Jesus personally, let me introduce you to Him theologically."

The first 18 verses of John is arguably the best theological description of who Jesus Christ really is.

John 1

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Now that has got an awful lot in there but let's break it down and to begin with I want you to focus on that capitalized word "Word". It's mentioned three times here in the 1st verse. The literal translation of that word is the word "logos".

It's helpful to know that John was writing to Greek intellectuals. This concept of 'logos' was something that they loved to debate on a daily basis. 'Logos' was this idea of a creative or directive force that everything originated from, it held things together. So maybe one way to help us to grasp this, if you are a Star Wars fan they are always talking about the force. "May the force be with

you...” This is sort of the same idea the Greeks had when they talked about ‘logos’. It was like, “We don’t know how we got here. We don’t know how this world is all holding together. I guess it is just some sort of force, some sort of ‘logos’, where everything draws its meaning from.” They loved to talk about it.

The idea of logos was:

- the reason why something was created,
- Its purpose or reason for being.

But by the time John writes this gospel, the Greek culture had fractured so much that they were beginning to wonder if there was any ‘logos’ at all. They were beginning to wonder if there was any meaning to life. Is there any right and wrong? Are there any absolutes? What is the reason for our existence? Does that sound familiar to anybody? The Greek culture to which John wrote is very similar to our culture today.

Now there is one additional thing to help us understand ‘logos’. The word ‘logic’ comes from ‘logos’. So if you were to go back to John 1, you could read it this way. “In the beginning was the Logic, and the Logic was with God, and the Logic was God.”

So saying that Jesus was the Logic of God or the Logic of life means that you and I are never going to truly understand who we are, why we exist, what has happened, what God will one day do to reconcile us, until we come to understand the Logic of God as it is found in Jesus Christ.

That is all found in verse 1. John doesn’t do light and fluffy, he does deep. Many people think Christians are dumb, simple-minded, that we check our brains at the door, that we have blind faith and just believe. But John writes to the Greek culture and says, “No, no, no, begin with the Logic of God. And the Logic of God is not some abstract argument or philosophical construction. No, the Logic of God is found in the person of Jesus Christ.” And what has happened is that God punched a hole in the roof of our world and He climbed in to dwell among us.

John goes on in verse 4.

⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

So he is essentially saying that we live in a really, really dark world. Nothing has changed. Just turn on the news and you see the mess going on around the world. Every generation wonders, “What kind of world is going to exist for my kids and grandkids?”

John acknowledges this 2,000 years ago. He says, “The culture is dark, and it is going to get darker and darker,” and then he gives us this hope. He says, “I don’t care how dark the culture gets, it will never consume the light.” Jesus is the light that defeated all of that. It will never drown Him out. It might get pretty dark, but when it is dark, stay close to the light.

Then in verse 6 John does a really peculiar thing here. Right in the middle of his introduction of Jesus, he stops and introduces us to John. Now he is not talking about himself. He is talking about a different John, John the Baptist.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

John the Baptist was the curtain raiser to the main event.

John the Baptist was this wild-eyed, crazy haired, camel hair wearing, locust and wild honey eating prophet of God. Some argue he was the last of the Old Testament prophets.

John’s primary purpose was to come along and say, “The light is on! It has been really dark for a really long time, but the light is on!” That was John’s only purpose.

If you are a cynic like me you might be thinking, “If Jesus is such a bright light, why does He need an announcement? Since when do you need to tell people the light is on?” Well you don’t, unless the people are blind.

It seems to me this might be how salvation works. It is a light that is revealed, and you either see it or you don’t. This is why people can come to church from the day they are born and still not believe. It is as if the words that are spoken are bouncing off a brick wall. It just does not penetrate. It’s the only way I can explain why some, when they hear about the love of Jesus, just get it and others don’t.

It's not necessarily anything to do with the messenger. It has nothing to do with the words you might articulate. It has everything to do with the person's ability to see the light.

And for those who are cynical, and doubting, and questioning, that is ok. It's good to bring questions. I just simply want you to consider this one thought. Could you be in the dark? Could you be blinded? And what do you need to see the light?

Maybe you are looking for a really rational argument to believe in God. You might say Brian, if you could prove that all this is true, then I would be in. However God didn't give us rational, air-tight proof. He gave us a rational, air-tight person. And he is found in Jesus. That is why Jesus says 'He is the way, and the truth, and the life'.

Anyway, John says, "The light is on!" But look what happened in verse 10.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

This is the whole reason why John is writing this gospel. Because he is living in a culture of people who missed recognising the person of Jesus Christ.

Summary

And now due to time can I skip down to verse 14 where John summarizes, he re-emphasizes, and recaps everything that he just said.

¹⁴ So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

¹⁵ John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'"

¹⁶ From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

So John concludes where he began with this idea of Word. I think he's got one more thing he wants us to know about logos". It is this idea that you cannot

truly ever get to know somebody without receiving a word from them, without speaking to them.

So if you were to go to the same café every single morning on your way to work or wherever, you bump into the same handful of people every day, but without ever talking to them, just observe them? If you were just to see the same group of people – if I were to come to you after about three or four months and say, “Hey do you know those people?” You would say, “Well, yes and no. I know some things about them, but I don’t really know them. I know what they drive. I know their fashion sense. I know where they work because they wear their little name tag thingies. I know what they like to order on a regular basis. I know some things about them.” But you don’t know them. If you are ever going to get to know them, what would have to happen? You would need to speak to them. You would have to hear their word.

So John is saying this, “Listen, you can know some things about God, you can even believe in God, but you won’t ever truly know God until you hear His Word. And His Word is found in the person of Jesus Christ.” So when he says, “Jesus is the Word of God,” that is an amazing statement. He is saying that you cannot know God except through the person of Jesus Christ.

So I want to leave you with two questions.

1. Who is Jesus to you? Regardless of whether you would call yourself a believer, whether you have been here for a while or not. Who is Jesus to you?

Would you just say He is a good guy? He is another moral teacher? He is somebody who I draw spiritual insights from among another long list of individuals? Many people treat faith this way. Yes, Jesus had some good stuff so let me take some of His stuff and let me take some bit and pieces from Gandhi, and throw in something from Oprah, and a touch of Doctor Phil, and let me mix all of that up like a spiritual tonic and I’ll put it in a capsule, take that once a day, and that will be my spiritual growth plan.

John says, “That is not who Jesus is.”

2. Here is your second question. What have you done with Him? What are you doing with Him? Have you ever made Jesus Christ Lord of your life or is he just there in the back ground to call on when you need to get out of a spot of bother.

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