Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Jesus: The Divine Word
Scripture: John 1:1-5
Code: 43-2

We begin today the study of the gospel of John, and I'm so delighted to do this. This was really the first book that I taught. I did some series when I first came in 1969, preliminary to this, and we did a few book studies which were redone as the years went by. But this was the first book of certainly any length that I taught originally way back in 1970, and what a joy it was at that time and the Lord has used even the messages from that series through the years to be a blessing to other people. But I'm really thrilled to be back at the gospel of John.

I love the author, John himself, who never refers to himself in his gospel. In fact, none of the four gospels identify inside the gospel the author. Church history tells us who the author is. It's universal history going way back to the apostolic era, so we know it's Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And while John is mentioned twenty times in the other gospels, he's never mentioned in this gospel at all by name. However, he chooses to refer to himself in another way. He calls himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved." And if you had the choice between calling yourself "John" and calling yourself "the disciple whom Jesus loved," that's not a tough call. He was always in wonder and awe over the fact that he was so loved by Christ. He is the one we find leaning on Him, as it were, at the end of life.

He starts out as the son of thunder. He has a brother, an older brother named James. They are called *boanerges*, "sons of thunder." They want to call down fire from heaven on some people who are mistreating Jesus. They needed to be tempered. And obviously, over the years, John was wonderfully tempered--so much so that he is known in history as the apostle of love. And the reason he's known as the apostle of love is because he makes reference to love eighty times in his writings, eighty times. So he is genuinely to be identified as the apostle of love. It's also true about John that he was concerned concerning the truth. He mentions truth twenty-five times in his gospel and twenty times in his epistles. So forty-five times he talks about truth, eighty times he talks about love. But one hundred times in this gospel he uses the word *believe*, *believe*.

Putting that all together, he wants us to believe the truth so that we can enter in to a relationship of love with the Lord. That's...that's really tying John together with the use of his most familiar vocabulary. John has a father named a Zebedee. They run a fishing business in Galilee. His mother's name is Salome, and according to John 19:25 she may have been a sister to Mary, the mother of our Lord, which would make him a relative of Jesus. Small group up there, folks, who knew each other well, and intermarriage over the years could have led to that kind of relationship. As I said, he starts out pretty radical and severe and self-serving, even as his mother asked Jesus if he and his brother

can sit on the right hand and the left in the kingdom. Over the years the work of the Lord on his heart, the Holy Spirit further working on his heart, a few years with the beloved apostle Peter, and he becomes the apostle of love, the apostle of truth, and the apostle of faith. And that's what we're going to find as we meet him in this wonderful gospel.

Now the gospel of John is in itself identified by many through the centuries as the holy of holies of the New Testament. It's the most sacred place you can go. In fact, if there's a most sacred chapter in the entire Bible, it would be the seventeenth chapter of John where our Lord Jesus prays to the Father in that intimate inter-Trinitarian prayer, the likes of which appears nowhere else in Scripture. That might be considered to be the very mercy seat of the holy of holies. But John is often called the holy of holies, because in this gospel the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ is fully displayed. And what was not accessible to people in the Old Covenant, namely the Holy of Holies, has become accessible to us in the New Covenant because the veil is down, the way is open, we come boldly into the presence of God. And as we enter the gospel of John, we--like a priest of old on the Day of Atonement--have access to the Holy of Holies to see the glory of Christ.

In this gospel, we will fellowship in the deepest way with the Lord Jesus. We will hear His beating heart. We will touch His wound prints and hopefully with Thomas we will say, "My Lord and my God." In some ways, John's gospel is simple enough for a child. In other ways, it is sublime as an angel. It is both as gentle as a lamb and as bold as a lion, as deep as the sea and as high as the heavens. And yet its truths must be and can be contained in one human heart. It is an amazing account.

John's message is simply this: the eternal God Himself has become human. That is John's message. The Creator has become a part of His creation, fully God and fully man. And why? In order that He might save sinners from their sin, death, judgment, and eternal hell. That's the message of the gospel of John, that the eternal God, infinite, transcendent, all-knowing, all-powerful, all-present, everlastingly unchanging, that one true and living God who is at the same time one God and yet three persons has become man. In verse 14 of John 1, the phrase establishes that when John writes, "The Word became flesh." "The Word became flesh."

"The Word" is a title given to Jesus. In Matthew 1, at the birth of Christ, the angel says, "Call Him Immanuel," which is "God with us," because that very baby is indeed God with us. In Luke 1:32 and 35 He is to be "called Son of the Most High," Son of God because He is deity in human flesh. This, the essential truth of the Christian faith, that Jesus is God in human flesh, God the eternal, infinite, transcendent, all-knowing, all-powerful, all-present, everlastingly unchanging God has come into His creation in human form. That massive reality is the foundation of the Christian faith.

There are four gospels that tell the story. Three of them, Matthew, Mark and Luke, give us the earthly history. Three of them look at the birth and the life and the experiences and the travels and the calling of Jesus upon His followers, and the teaching and the parables and the events of His life, including

His arrest and His trial and His execution and His resurrection--and many of the features with which we are so familiar in those so-called Synoptic Gospels, because they're the synopsis of His earthly life.

John doesn't give us the earthly story. John doesn't give us the historical view of the life of Christ. John gives us the heavenly story. He gives us the supernatural view of Christ. And in that way, John is unique. Ninety-percent of what is in John is not in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. Ninety percent of this is John's alone to declare under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing in John's gospel about the birth of Christ. There is nothing about the early life of Christ. There is nothing about the baptism of Christ. There is nothing about the temptation of Christ. There is nothing about the transfiguration of Christ. There is nothing about the travels of Christ. There is nothing about the garden of agony of Christ. There's nothing about His ascension into heaven, because John is not focusing on the history of His life. There are no parables. Parables were earthly stories. There are no earthly stories. This is a heavenly book. This is a heavenly look at the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the most heavenly of all the gospels by far.

The purpose of John is to convince the sinner of the true person of Christ, the true person of Christ. "That you might believe," John 20:31, "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have salvation in His name." This is a salvation book. This is an evangelistic book. And in order to have salvation, you must believe in the true Christ. Write it down somewhere, John 20:31, "These things are written that you may believe"...There's that word that he uses a hundred times..."that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life"...eternal life..."in His name." To have eternal life, you must believe in the true Christ. You must believe in the true Christ--not a false Christ, not a misrepresentation of Christ, not the Christ of human intuition, human philosophy and false religion, but the true Christ.

John, therefore, gives us this immense treasure, twenty-one chapters demonstrating in every paragraph that Jesus is God in human flesh, that He is true God and true man, fully God and fully man. That is the Christ who is the true Christ; that is the Christ that must be believed on in order for one to be saved. John supports that fact about the identity of Christ by showing His divine claims, supporting those claims by the record of divine works, miracles, divine words, divine titles, and divine worship.

John pulls all of that together to demonstrate that we are talking about a divine person, a divine person. And that's the objective of John. John authored three epistles at the end of the New Testament and, of course, received the glories of the book of Revelation. But here in this book he gives us his great evangelistic tract, if you will. Only when you understand Christ to be who He is and understand His person first, and then His work, is there any possibility that you could be saved. You must believe. You must believe the truth. You must believe.

When we go through this together, we're going to have reasons to affirm what we already believe as Christians. And it's going to arm us and equip us to declare the truth concerning Jesus Christ. I told you last week that it seems as though this is under assault and always under attack. People wanting to talk about Jesus but they don't want to define who He is. This week that came to light when Billy Graham met with Mitt Romney in a private meeting. And the next day the Billy Graham organization removed Mormonism as a cult from their website. Really unimaginable. You can see it on the website. It's their proclamation, with a statement that they didn't want to get into theological issues that have political overtones. So we give honor to the false Christ of Mormonism and dishonor to the true Christ? How can that be? People play fast and loose with the glory of Christ, don't they? In the most amazing ways. How sad.

The message of the New Testament, the message of the Old Testament, as we saw from Isaiah 52, is that Jesus is God. He is nothing other than God, nothing less than God. He is not a created spirit-brother of Lucifer and Adam as the Mormons say. And there are many, many other aberrant views of so-called Jesus Christ.

The New Testament is full of evidence that He is God. I don't need to parade all that before you; you know that. It's everywhere in the New Testament. Philippians 2 would be a good place to start. "He thought it not something to hold onto to be equal with God, but humbled Himself, took on the form of a man." You know that great passage. We just read from Hebrews chapter 1 that He is the exact representation of God, that God says to Him, "O God, Your throne is established in heaven," as we read in Hebrews 1. The Scripture is loaded with evidences that He is God. If you just take titles given to Jesus and also given to God, you can see the equality there. God and Jesus are both called Shepherd, both called Judge, both called Holy One in Scripture, both called First and Last, both called the Light, both called the Lord of the Sabbath, both called Savior, both called the pierced one (in the same verse, Zechariah 12:10), both called Mighty God, both called Lord of Host, both called Alpha and Omega, both called Lord of glory, both called Redeemer, and I can go on. Titles are given to Jesus that belong only to God. Our Lord Jesus is described as eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, immutable, unchanging, sovereign, all glorious, and eternal. Jesus did works that only God can do--He created; He raised the dead; He overpowered the kingdom of darkness; He forgave sin; He received worship on many occasions through His life and ministry. He declared that He had a right to be worshiped after His resurrection. He says in John 14 that He is the one who is the qualifier for all prayer, that is to be accepted by God and answered by God: "If you ask anything in His name, He hears and does it." He answers prayer as God alone can do.

He does works that only God can do. He receives worship that only God can receive. He answers prayer that only God can answer. And we're going to see as we go through the gospel of John evidence upon evidence, upon evidence of His deity.

The summation of what John is going to show us in this gospel is found in verse 14, “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.” “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.” That’s the most concise statement in the Bible on the incarnation. “The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.” “The Word” is none other than Christ, and I’ll explain why that is the term John uses. But the Word, who is Jesus Christ, is God who took on humanity. The infinite becomes finite. The eternal one enters time. The invisible one becomes visible. The Word--He is called “the Word” in verse 14 and three times in verse 1, three times in verse 1.

John doesn’t explain that. John does not explain that. You might ask, “Well, why doesn’t John explain it? Doesn’t it seem a little bit oblique? Why doesn’t he just say ‘Jesus,’ it might simplify things.” He says the Word because that was such a perfect term to use to identify Christ on the supernatural side, on the supernatural side. There was a philosophical understanding of the word, that’s the Greek term *logos*. The philosophers talked about *logos* as the reality that was visible in creation. They believed in a *logos* spirit, some non-personal power source, some non-personal energy entity. They believed in some abstract kind of principle of reason, they called it, or principle of order and structure--some non-personal force floating around in the universe, some non-personal entity of wisdom, because they understood that you couldn’t have the creation in which they lived without having some source for it. But they believed it was impersonal, or even better, non-personal.

And even the common people saw the *logos*¸ the philosophical identification of this powerful, non-personal force in the universe as being responsible for the way things were. John comes along and says, “Let me introduce you to the fact that the *logos* is not an impersonal force; the *logos* is a person. The *logos* is a person, not an impersonal reality, but a personal God who came into the world in the man Jesus--not just a concept but a person.

And then even beyond that, for the Jewish people, they didn’t need an explanation because the phrase “the Word of the Lord” appeared so many times in the Old Testament, and the Word of the Lord was simply the revelation of God. You wouldn’t know anything about God if He didn’t speak, and that’s why Hebrews 1, I read earlier, begins this way, “God who in time past, by the fathers and through the prophets, spoke in many ways in many portions, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.” As the Old Testament is the written Word and the revelation of God, the New Testament is the account of the incarnate Word in the person Jesus Christ. So He is the Word, in that in Him God speaks, and that concept was well established among the Jews--“The Word of the Lord came to So-and-so, the Word of the Lord came to So-and-so.” You read that through the Old Testament. The Word of the Lord came often to the prophets, and it often came to the fathers, and it was the will of God expressed and communicated through Revelation.

So the Word of the Lord is the expression of God to people. There’s no greater illustration of that, there’s no greater representation of that, manifestation of that, demonstration of that than Jesus

Christ. He is God speaking to us. If you want to hear from God, you can read the Old Testament and you will hear what God spoke to the fathers and the prophets who wrote that. But if you want the fullest revelation of God, you go to the New Testament because God most fully spoke in Christ, in Christ.

So John is telling us that Jesus is the incarnation of God. As I read, He is the exact representation of the nature of God. God speaks in Christ most clearly, most fully and savingly. So “the Word became flesh”--“became,” *ginomai.* Though God is immutable, God is pure eternal being and is not becoming, that is he’s not changing, developing, growing. He is pure, eternal, constant, immutable, unchanging being, yet He becomes…He enters in to creation and takes on humanity which is in the process of becoming. And He starts out in a womb and He becomes a child, and He grows in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. The One who is pure being becomes a man, becomes flesh--that’s what that means--and dwelt among us. He’s not a vision. His humanity is not an apparition. His humanity is not a phantom, as we pointed out last week. Some people have said--the Docetists, namely that group of heretics. He didn’t take on the appearance of humanity or some apparition of humanity, or some illusion of humanity. He actually took on flesh and dwelt among us. Philippians 2, He was made in the likeness of men. He partook of flesh and blood, Hebrews 2:14 says. For thirty-three years, the fullness of the Godhead, Colossians 2:9; the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily, fully God and fully man. Not half God, half man, fully God and fully man--that’s John’s message through this book. You must be right about Christ, fully God, and fully man. Any assault on His deity is a heresy; any assault on His humanity is a heresy.

Now, in order to demonstrate that Jesus is fully God in human flesh, emphasizing the deity aspect, John takes us through three very important truths. If you remember back Christmas a year ago--I didn’t know I was going to go into the gospel of John--and we looked at this chapter and saw some of these things from a little different approach. There are three things that demonstrate the deity of Christ: His preexistence with God, His coexistence with God, and His self-existence with God. He is pre-existent, co-existent, and self-existent. I don’t want you to get tangled up in terms. Those are not complicated, and I’ll hope to be able to make them easy for you to understand.

Here’s John’s message: “In the beginning was the Word,” simple statement. “In the beginning”--What beginning; the beginning of what? In the beginning of Genesis 1:1--that’s the beginning. If you don’t qualify “the beginning,” then it’s “the beginning.” “In the beginning”--the same beginning that is Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” In *that* beginning, the Word was. What is the importance of that? The Word was already existing. That is to say the Word who is none other than the Son of God, Jesus Christ, was already in existence when God created everything that exists. Now, if you’re not a part of the creation, you’re not a part of time and space. If you’re not a part of time and space, then you’re eternal. That’s a very important statement. John affirms His preexistence. He existed before the beginning of everything that exists. He was already existing. It’s the imperfect tense of the “to be” verb, the verb *eimi*. The imperfect tense means continuously. He

was continuously existing already when the beginning began. He didn't begin with the beginning. He's not a part of the creation. He's not a created being. He's an already existing being. Time began with creation. Time began on the first day when God created, and the second day, and the third, and on time has marched until time will one day end and we will live in eternity, without time. But since time began, with the starting of time was the starting of creation; this Being, the Word, existed before time and therefore is outside of time, and therefore is eternal.

At the point that everything began, He already was, describing continuous existence before creation--the eternal pre-existence of the One called the Word. So very important and unmistakably clear. That is why Jesus, and we'll see this all the way through the gospel of John, borrows a title that God uses to describe His own eternality. When Moses wanted to know the name of God, God said, "My name is I AM that I AM. My name is the verb 'to be.' My name is Eternal Being." And repeatedly in the gospel of John, Jesus will say, "I AM, I AM, I AM, I AM"--the verb "to be"--and He will even be so bold as to say to the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58), I AM. He only speaks of Himself in the present, continuous tense because there never was a time He didn't exist.

This then is also reinforced in verse 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." The Word was with God--that's repeated in verse 2, "He was in the beginning with God." It's interesting that that's said twice, "the Word was with God," verse 1. Right back, "In the beginning with God." Repeats twice: "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God." He was in the beginning with God. This is an emphasis to make sure we don't miss the point.

Now listen to this. When the beginning began, He already existed. He existed as God. He's outside time; He exists as the eternal God. But listen to this: He not only exists as the eternal God, and it says it in verse 1, "The Word was God," but He existed eternally with God. This is very, very important because what it tells us is that not only is He the eternal God, but He is distinct from the eternal God. And this is where we come to understand that there is one God and yet there are three persons. And here we find two of them, He is God, the Word was God, but the Word was also with God. How can you be God and with God? Only in a Trinitarian way can that be explained--to be God by nature and yet be a distinct person, being with God.

There's a beautiful illustration of this relationship that could well be the intention of the writer of the Proverbs, if you listen to the eighth chapter of Proverbs where there's a record of creation from a most wonderful perspective. This can be the testimony, perhaps, of the Son of God, who is God and yet is with God, verse 27, "When He established the heavens, I was there, when He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep, when He made firm the skies above, when the springs of the deep became fixed, when He set for the sea its boundaries so that the water wouldn't transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth; then I was beside Him, as a master workman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in the world, His earth, and having my delight in the sons of men." Could this be the testimony of the One who is the Word who was with

God when God was doing the creation? We know from Genesis 1 that the Holy Spirit was there brooding over the face of the waters and bringing shape into the creation. The whole Trinity is involved in this creative work. Yes, God the Father is the Creator, of course. Yes, the Holy Spirit participates in creation, of course. The Holy Spirit is the One who moves over the inanimate creation and brings life to it.

But listen again to the explanation of how they work together, from Hebrews 1 that I read you. It simply says this, verse 2, God "has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." God is the Creator, but the agent of creation that He uses is the Son, the Word. So what we have here then is a very important distinction that answers the Sabellianists, the Modalists--the people who say God is only one--like the oneness pentecostals I told you last week. There are about 25 million of them who believe there's no Trinity but there's only one God, and sometimes He acts like the Father, sometimes He acts like the Son, and sometimes He acts like the Spirit. And they have no idea what's going on at the baptism when you have the Son being baptized, the Father saying, "This is My Son in whom I am well-pleased," and the Holy Spirit descending like a dove--What is that? Of course there are many other questions they can't answer, but they didn't come to their heresy by reason. They came there by demonic revelation. It is He who is the agent through whom the Father creates.

God in the Old Testament, for example, is the God...is the Judge of all the earth. And yet in the New Testament, the agent of judgment is clearly Christ, 'cause He's committed all judgment to Him. Now you're getting into the inner workings of the Trinity. Not important for me to sort all that out, only to the degree that we know Scripture, what it's saying to us. Can we do that anyway? But the point I'm making is simply that while He was God, He was also with God as a distinct person, as a distinct person. So we have His pre-existence.

John starts with the fact that when you're talking about Jesus, you are talking about a pre-existent, eternal God, not a part of creation, not a part of creation. By the way, in Mormonism they not only believe that Jesus is the created spirit/brother of Adam and Lucifer, but they believe the God of the Bible is created by another god.

Alongside the truth of pre-existence comes the second truth of co-existence. And we already established that just by making a comment on the last phrase of verse 1, "the Word was God," "the Word was God." If He preexisted time and space, if He preexisted creation, if He existed already before anything was created that was created, then He has to be uncreated. If He's uncreated, He has to be God. All angels were created. All fallen angels fell from a creation in which God had made them holy, and they defected and rebelled and fell. Every person in the universe, every person in the universe is a created being except the Creator Himself. This is a powerful expression, by the way, a very powerful expression. "The Word was God"--four words: *theos an ho logos*; literally in the Greek, "God was the Word," "God was the Word." Powerful Greek expression. Jesus in John 17 talks in His

prayer to the Father in verse 5 about the glory that He had before the world began when He was *pros ton theon*, “on equal level with God.” Something, as I said, in Philippians he says, He did not hold on to but gave up for the sake of incarnation. Colossians 2:9, “In Him the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily.” He is full deity; God was the Word, God was the Word. Four words in Greek: the clearest, most direct declaration of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ in all four gospels--God was the Word. So He is preexistent, outside time and space before anything that is made is made. And He is co-existent, He is fully God. These are essentials for salvation faith.

Thirdly, His self-existence; He’s self-existent. This is obvious. If you’re not created, then you’ve existed outside creation. You must be self-existent. Pre-existent, co-existent, self-existent.

How do we establish that? Verses 3 and 4, “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” This is a reiteration essentially of what I read to you in Hebrews, that God made all things through Him. In Him was life, and we’ll stop at that point.

Here is the proof of His self-existence. Everything that exists came into being through Him. That’s a positive declaration, simple, clear, flawless evidence--not even arguable--that the Lord Jesus Christ is eternal deity. Everything that exists, He made. It all came from Him. He didn’t come from anyone, or anything. Everything came from Him.

Listen to 1 Corinthians 8:6, “There is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things...and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.” It’s the same thing--God is the Creator; the Holy Spirit is an agent in creation; but at the end, God does all His creating through the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. This doesn’t deny God as Creator. It doesn’t deny a role that the Holy Spirit plays in bringing order to the creation. But it says that the Son of God is the agent by which the creating is done. We know the Old Testament says that God is Creator. You can read it all through the Psalms. Read, for example, Psalm 102, a wonderful testimony of God’s identity as Creator. Read Isaiah 40, Isaiah 42, Isaiah 45--lots of places in the Old Testament talk about God as Creator, to say nothing of Genesis 1 and 2. Mark 13:19 speaks of God creating. Romans 1:25 talks about God as the Creator, and all through the New Testament God is referred to as the Creator. And so, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ by whom God made everything that He made, as we read here and in Hebrews chapter 1.

The positive confession is that “all things came into being through Him.” The negative confession is, same verse, “apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” That’s the negative declaration. You have the positive declaration and the negative. Not one thing--that’s the literal Greek--not one thing exists that He didn’t make. The Creator of everything that exists, listen, must necessarily then be uncreated. If He’s not a part of the creation, then He’s uncreated, right? This is necessary. Only the eternal God is uncreated. The Jews would agree with that. Only the eternal God is uncreated. If Jesus is the Creator of everything that is created, then He too is uncreated and

therefore He is the eternal God. Jesus is God; you can't escape His deity. And yet while He is God, He is with God. He is God and yet is distinct from God. He is God and yet is the means through which God creates, which again emphasizes His distinction. Again, the argument is simple. Since God the Son is the Creator of everything that exists, He has to be outside the creation and that would be to be uncreated. He has to be outside time and that would be to be eternal.

Now this also leads to another conclusion--very obvious conclusion--stated at the beginning of verse 4. "In Him was life," "in Him was life." He didn't get life from someone; nobody gave Him life. In Him was life. Now this starts to get...this starts to get you in places that you can't escape from. You start thinking about God being eternal and being eternally alive, never a moment when He did not exist. That's more than your feeble mind can handle, or mine--the eternality of God. But as an essential part of His eternality as evidenced by His creation, was life. He was alive and the source of life. That is such a profound statement. "In Him was life." And the word used is not *bios*, 'cause He's not just talking about biological life, which is one form of life. But the word is *zoe,* which has to do with spiritual life, the life principle, the reality of life. When a little baby comes into the world, that baby has biological life and that's the functioning of the human body.

But there's another kind of life existing in that little baby that can't be quantified; it can't be found and can't be located, and can't be tied to DNA--it's a spiritual life. It's an essential life that is not observable, and that's the life that comes from God. Of course, as in Himself, the components that create biological life at every level--all the way from the simplest one-celled animal to the most complex being, the human being, and even a more amazing and complex being, the supernatural realm of angelic beings. God has the power in Him for all of that kind of life, including and stretching to the reality of spiritual life. And spiritual life lasts forever. So in Him is biological life and spiritual life by which He can create the physical world, which will die and by which He creates eternal being so we'll never die. In Him is life.

When you're looking at the Lord Jesus Christ, you're looking at the one who is Himself life. He said that, "I am the way, the truth and"...What?..."and the life." He can't look at Christ in any other way. It's a massive, massive statement--massive statement. He is life. He is the fundamental reality of all that exists. It's in Him we live and move and have our being, have our existence. All that exists, exists because they have life from Him. "In Him was life."

People come along with some nonsense about Jesus being a created being. This is where you want to take them. He is not the Jesus of the cults; He is not the Jesus of the liberation theology realm; He is not the Jesus of liberalism. He is the Jesus who is fully God, fully Man, who is the means by which everything that exists. And not only is He the means that came into existence, but Hebrews 1 says, "By His power He upholds all things." He not only gave life, but He sustains life. He not only created, but He sustains the creation because in Him was life. And then John makes a wonderful statement, "The life was the Light of men." And while you might distinguish between life and light, you can't do it

here. What John is saying is the life is the same as the Light of men. It's the same phrase--the life was the Light as the Word was God. It's the same Greek construction. And John is connecting life and light. The one who was the life became the Light of men. That's why He was incarnate, right? That's why He came into the world, to shine light into the darkness, to reveal God. The life was the Light. That's an equal statement; that's a parallel statement. The life and the Light in this case are the same, the same. The Light is the revelation of the life. Jesus said in John 8:12, "I am the Light of the world," right? Whoever "follows Me will not walk in darkness," John 8:12. "I'm the Light of the world"--we'll see that when we get to John 8. It's an amazing statement.

He is the life manifest, and the life manifest is called Light, the metaphor of light against the darkness of fallenness. Jesus is the eternal life source, the eternal divine life, manifest in the world like light shining in the darkness. Amazing. And "the Light," verse 5 says, "shines in the darkness." Verse 9 says, "The true Light comes into the world and enlightens every man." "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness didn't comprehend it."

You probably have a marginal reading. I don't know why they don't replace this word "comprehend" because comprehend is an old English word. For us it means to understand, and that's not what this is saying in the original language. What it is really saying is the darkness doesn't *katalambano*. *Katalambano*, the most vivid way to explain that would be "to pounce on and overpower, pounce on and overtake, overcome." And what it's saying is the one who is life has come into the world and is the Light of the world and the darkness cannot overpower it, cannot overwhelm it. You know that, darkness cannot overcome light. Light always overcomes darkness.

You go into a pitch-dark, isolated place in a room and light is one candle, and the light will overpower the darkness. The life of God, the eternal one, the eternal life--Jesus--comes into the world as light and He lights the world and He's continuing to light the world. And notice this, the darkness can't overpower it. What is the darkness? What's it referring to? Well, if you go to Luke 22:53, Jesus was coming to the cross and He said, "This is the hour of the power of darkness." "This is the hour of the power of darkness." This is when hell is going to throw everything they've got at Me. The darkness refers to Satan, demons, and the whole complex of darkness. All that the domain of darkness, Colossians 1:13, has to bring against the light. Satan's world, Satan's realm of which all men are a part of your father, the devil, he is the prince of darkness. This is the kingdom, or domain of darkness. That's what it's talking about. The demon-darkness cannot overpower the Light, cannot overpower the Light. Darkness has tried to do it. Satan tried to destroy the Messianic line many times. Satan tried to kill all the babies and catch the Messiah in the slaughter when Jesus was just a child. The demons came after Jesus again and again, and again, and again. They tried to get Him every way they could. Satan himself comes at Him at the temptation to get Him to bow down, to get Him to violate God's Word. Satan does everything he can in the garden, as you know, to get Him to go the other direction from the will of the Father and the sacrifice of the cross. Jesus through His travels ran into demons everywhere He went, who came after Him, assaulting Him for all time, you could say.

Since the promise of God to bring a Redeemer, Satan has done what he could to extinguish the Light, the light that has now come in Christ. But the darkness, all the demon darkness, all the forces of hell and all their accommodating human evil, cannot successfully shut out the Light. The Light still shines. The Light still shines.

This opening of the gospel of John is such a powerful statement of the person of Christ and His impact on the world. The demon darkness cannot extinguish the Light, and the Light is shining in the world, it is shining in the world--it has been shining in the world for a long, long time. It has been available to any who would listen, who would hear.

You know, in Romans chapter 10 we are reminded of the fact that God says to Israel, “All the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.” “All day long I have stretched out My hands to an obstinate people.” You should have heard and believed. Verse 18, “Surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” The message of the light has gone out to Israel, to the end of the earth. The darkness can’t extinguish the message. But you must believe it--“faith comes by hearing the truth concerning Christ and believing.”

A final verse, John 8:24; Jesus said this, “I say to you, you’ll die in your sins unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” You don’t want to die in your sins, dear one. You don’t want to die in your sins and go to everlasting hell, but you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am He, that I am the one described here in these opening five verses and proven in the rest of this amazing gospel. Do you believe that Jesus is God in human flesh? That’s the foundation of saving faith. If you don’t believe that, you will die in your sins, unforgiven, and bear the full punishment for those sins. Put your trust in Him and His sacrifice on your behalf, and your sins are forgiven. Verse 12 says, “As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who”...What?... “believe”...What?...“in His name”; His name meaning who He really is.

Father, we thank You again this morning that we’ve been able to come together to worship, worship You and to worship You, O Christ, and You, Father, and You, Holy Spirit. Lift up our songs of praise and hymns of praise and prayers of petition, adoration, gratitude. We’re thankful that we have been exposed to the wondrous, amazing, divine text of Holy Scripture which gives us the most profound and comprehensible truth in language that even a child could understand. The simplicity of this, the economy of it, the clear power of it is evidence that we’re dealing with a supernatural book and not the efforts of men. What it says is true. What it says about our Lord is true about Him. May we believe that with all our hearts, believing have life in His name.

Father, we thank You for the grace that has extended itself to us. We are unworthy. We don’t deserve to be a part of Your kingdom. We don’t deserve to be called Your children, to have the right to be the children of God. What an amazing gift, amazing gift, to live in your eternal heaven with all its glories

and joys forever. If this is what you give to the one who believes in Your Son, I pray, Lord, that You will work a work of saving grace in the hearts of many today who would turn from their sin and turn to the only hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You for the clear Word that You've given to us. We express our love and gratitude in His name. Amen.

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