

Bro. Jeff Brown John 1:1-5

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Bible Text: John 1:1-5; John 1
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1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Let's pray.

Father, we come before your throne in the name of the Word, Jesus Christ, I pray your blessings now on this sermon. I pray that you'll be with the pastor, heal his body, strengthen him so that he can occupy the pulpit this upcoming Wednesday evening. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

You may be seated.

Philosophers approach a problem by unraveling the problem. As they unravel the problem, they're hoping to find the ultimate route to the problem so that they can solve the problem with their answers. The problem with their unraveling is they prejudice their unraveling with their own predispositions and faulty experiences. This is the reason we have hundreds of different schools of philosophy. John approaches the gospel of Jesus Christ just the opposite. Instead of viewing the problem first, he gives us the answer. The answer is in the first 18 verses of this gospel. Jesus is the answer. He's the answer because the first five verses describes him as God, and he's the answer because verses 6 through 18 says, this God became man. The rest of the gospel of John points us right back to the prologue and the preamble to this gospel.

And so with that being said this morning, I want this evening, some things never change, right? So with that being said this evening, I want to highlight three things about the Word but before I can highlight these three things, we need to look at just two ideas. First is, why did John describe Jesus as the Word? There are two possible reasons. The first was in Greek philosophy they viewed the word abstractly as creative force or wisdom. So it's very possible that John personifies the Greek's view of the word in Jesus Christ, how that he is the creative force and the ultimate wisdom. Within Jewish philosophy, they viewed the term word as this power and revelation and it's very possible that John's point

was to say Jesus is the incarnate power and revelation. And it's very possible he had both in mind.

Second is in verses 1, 2, and 4, we come across the word "was," a number of times and it's really important that we know what that word "was" means in those three verses. The best way to understand what the word means is to view this word in present tense. In the present tense the word means "am." For instance, Jesus in John's gospel chapter 6 and verse 35 says, "I am the bread of life." There the meaning of the word "am" is to exist. Here it's in the past tense, but it's in the imperfect past tense, which means that whatever is being described has always existed without a beginning.

And so with that being said, let's first see that the Word is God in John 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word," and remember what the word "was" means. It means something that happened in the past that has continuous existence, which means it has no beginning. So in the very first phrase of this gospel, John brings out a contrast. History has a beginning. Creation has a beginning. Both invisible and visible things that have been created have beginnings. But Jesus has no beginning. He has always existed. There has never been a time when Jesus has not existed. We're confined by time. Oftentimes, we're defined by time. Even when I was in my mom's stomach, I'm sure someone said, "How far along are you?" And every day, or once a day, once a year, there's a day that says, I'm a new age. And one day, if the lower terrace is coming, I will pass, and there in my obituary, people will know how long I lived. We're defined by time, and we're trapped by time but because Jesus existed before the beginning, he's not trapped by time. He's not limited. And even though Jesus came for a particular moment in time, that is to die on an old rugged cross, because he created time, he wasn't confined by that time, and in the end, three days after his death, he conquered time by resurrecting from the grave.

Second phrase, "and the Word was with God." Remember the word "was" means the Word was always with God. There was never a time when the Word wasn't with the Father. Now this word "with" is important because there are two different ideas for with. It could mean in the presence of, and for certain the Word was always in the presence with the Father. But that's not what this word "with" means. This word "with" means that the Word was toward God the Father or face to face with God the Father, and the idea is that the Word has always been in intimate relationship with the Father.

Now this is striking particularly in the time frame that John lived in because when you view the Greek and Roman gods and all the religious systems before that embraced polytheism, their gods could never agree on anything; there's always envy and jealousy and hatred. And yet, even though Christianity isn't polytheistic, we do have a plurality of people within the one Godhead, and it's nice to know that there had never been a time when they disagreed on anything. They have always been in harmony, always been in unity.

A few weeks back, I was in a Bible study with a couple of guys, and this struck one of the guys absolutely. He was shocked. He said, "Do you mean to tell me that before 'In the beginning, God,' Jesus was okay with being the one who would be sacrificed for man's

sin? He wasn't forced to? He wasn't outvoted in the Trinity?" He was just shocked because that's how we think. Jesus had the hard task. But it's nice to know that when God decided to save Evan, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit had always been in complete agreement as to how Evan would be saved. There was never a dispute, never an argument. There was never disunity or no harmony when they came up with salvation's plan. Jesus was a lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and this was approved by Jesus Christ himself.

Third phrase, "and the Word was God." Not to get into the technicalities of this last phrase, but the focus of the last phrase is, "and the Word was the very nature of God." Jesus is God because he's the only one who possesses the nature of God. When God saved me, he gave me the divine nature but I also have this sinfully corrupt nature. Jesus was the only one who could exist with the divine nature and it wasn't given to him like us. He had the divine nature from his very existence and this is important because oftentimes we view God the Father as this, almost this, this judgmental being but we view Jesus as this merciful being. And yet, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, they're merciful, they're loving, they're caring, they're compassionate. In fact, Paul, in I forget which epistle, I think 1 Timothy, mentions God the Father as the Savior.

Now why is it important to know that Jesus is God? Turn in your Bibles to the book of Lamentations. If you're unsure where Lamentations is, just go to your concordance. No, I'm just kidding. It's in the Old Testament right after the book of Jeremiah. The verses that I'm about to read doesn't happen if Jesus isn't God. Notice verse number 25. "The LORD," if you see the word there, each letter is capitalized, therefore the meaning of the word Lord there is Jehovah. In the New Testament, Jehovah is always described, not always, but oftentimes described as Jesus. "The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off for ever." The focus there is, is that the Lord, he is good and he satisfies those who seek him. He couldn't do this if he wasn't God.

Early in Lamentations, it focuses on how every morning the Lord provides us with new mercies. There are times when I go to bed eager to wake up in the morning, not very often, but there are times because I'm eagerly waiting the new mercies that God has for me. Jesus as God can provide these new mercies. If Jesus wasn't God, then there wouldn't be new mercies every morning. If he wasn't God, he wouldn't be good unto us. If he wasn't God, there would be no hope for those who seek after him. So when you lay your head on the pillow this evening, think about the new mercies that are guaranteed for you the next day because Jesus is Lord.

Notice a second thing in John's gospel, chapter 1, not only is he the Lord, but notice verse number 3. John states something twice in two different ways. He does so both positively and negatively, but the same message comes across. Verse number 3, "All things were

made by the Word; and without him was not any thing made that was made." Jesus is the Creator. Everything that we see and don't see have been created by Jesus. One of my favorite movies to watch of all time is "Apollo 13." I love "Apollo 13." After the Houston we have a problem appears, there seems to be this emergency crisis team that huddles in this room and Mission Control ends up saying the guy, whoever he is, says, "Listen, you need to wake up every engineer that designed every part and then get the assembly line workers that built those parts. We need to find out all there is to know about this spacecraft so we can get it home." The idea in that scene was, we need to find out those who created this machine if we're going to get this spacecraft home. Our world has a lot of problems. Jesus is the Creator of this world. He's the one we need to go to for the answers. He's the one that has designed this world. The Bible speaks of how wonderfully and fearfully we've been made and Jesus is the one who made us.

We need to go to Jesus because he's the Creator. If you want to know what's going on in your family, go to the Word. If you want to know what's going on in our government, go to the Word. If you want to know what's going on in our nation, go to the Word. If you want to know what's going on in the world, go to the Word because Jesus has created and designed and has created a plan for this world. Sometimes it's frustrating if I'm honest. I don't like the direction our world is going. I don't like the direction our government's going. I don't like the direction our people are voting. You know about this with the abortion vote that happened not too long back in Ohio? But it's nice to know that God is the creator of plans, and he has a plan and in times and seasons like this, I have to trust in the Creator. If Jesus wasn't the Creator, then I would not have a lot of trust. I wouldn't have a lot of trust in politics. I wouldn't have a lot of trust in my family. And I wouldn't have a lot of trust in the church if Jesus wasn't God and if he wasn't the Creator. But because he's the Creator, I can go to this book and life, oddly enough, in an amazing way just starts to make sense.

And notice third this evening, verses 4 and 5, "In him was life," now remember that word "was" means without a beginning, just continuously. In the Word, he has an attribute that's life, and it has always been a part of the Word. There has never been a time when the Word has not had life. He has always had life, but it's important to know what kind of life that the Word had. I think I had mentioned this before, but in the Greek, in the New Testament, there are three different words for life, the physical life, the inner life, and then God's life. God's life is uncreated and indestructible. The life that John says the Word has is God's life, this uncreated and indestructible life.

"In him was life," has always been life, "and the life was the light of men." When God saves us, he gives us this life. We call it eternal life. How do you know that you have eternal life? Because you love light. If you loved darkness, then perhaps you don't have the life. That's what John's point is. If you have life, then you will manifest this life with light. And you might ask, "Well, how do I know if I have light?" Do you love Jesus? He's the light of the world. Do you love God's word? God's word is the light that brightens our path. And do you love the Lord's churches because the Lord's churches reflect the light? If you don't love those three things, then possibly, more than likely, you don't have the

life that God gives to those who repent and believe the gospel, and if you don't have that life, then the life that you have is the physical life that has been marred by sin.

Satan is so good at deceiving us, right, by making us think that our sin isn't all that extreme or acute or egregious or stain-rich. How many people have you talked to who says, "Yes, I know I'm a sinner, but I'm also a good person"? Timothy will remember this lady in the nursing home, Dorothy. She would just say every time, every time we would go there to preach the gospel to her, she would just, she just kept saying, "I know that I've sinned, but I'm still good." She didn't love the light. If you don't love the light, you love darkness.

And so verse number 5 says, "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." Now that word comprehended is translated in other places as conquering. It could mean conquering, it could mean comprehending, it could mean both, but the idea here is that, at least from John's perspective, the reason the world rejects the light is because they simply don't understand. Now if you go to John's gospel chapter 3, you understand why they don't understand. They don't understand the light because they're too much in love with their darkness, with their sin, with their lifestyle. The day after Ohio had that abortion vote, there's a caption on the Cincinnati Enquirer, at least their online edition, where you had a bunch of women just gleefully rejoicing over the vote. They don't understand what they're doing because they're in darkness and they're blind and they're dead in their trespasses and sins. They don't understand the light.

Paul mentions this in Romans chapter 1. Well, back in John 1, John says that every person has this light and in Romans chapter 1, somewhere around verse 17 or 18, Paul says that what mankind has done to the light that he or she has been given is they have buried it in the layers of unrighteousness. Trans buried in the layers of unrighteousness. Atheism buried in the layers of unrighteousness. Murderers buried in the layers of unrighteousness. Moralists buried, they buried the light in the layers of unrighteousness. Their hope is you. The only message that can break through those layers of unrighteousness is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul says it is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the preaching of the gospel that is the power unto salvation. No other message can break through the layers of repressive unrighteousness. It's the gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You have new life if you're saved, right? I have new life. I did this at Bible Baptist and I'll do this here this evening. Every two months I go to the Albany City Rescue Mission to preach. They have a fantastic program there that's centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ. They have an amazing discipleship program. So homeless people or just hungry people can go there for food and they can go there for beds and cots at night and showers and bathrooms, but before they can engage in any of those activities, they have to stay for the preaching. So as they take attendance, because there are just a certain amount of beds or mats that they have, so they take attendance. The last group of people would be the New Life people. The New Life people are those people that have been converted to Jesus Christ through their ministry. Many of those people, homeless people, people that have been addicted to drugs, alcohol, pornography, criminals. It has been more than once

that I've met people that were in Ohio whose parents sent them to the Rescue Mission in Albany. And once you're converted, you stay on the campus and they disciple you. But when you get to the New Life attendance, they're always sitting in the front row, front rows, and as soon as they finish the regular attendance and the attendance, I guess, taker says, "Now to the New Life Program, all of those in the New Life Program will say, New Life!" And they'll sing with enthusiasm and excitement and there's a thrill and a freshness because, yes, God saved them from their sin, but God saved them more than just from their sin. He saved them from addictions. He saved them from abuse. He saved them from homelessness. He saved them from dead ends. So when it comes to the gospel of Jesus Christ, this group is a bit excited and they're thrilled, and here we are, it takes all that we have to sing a few songs.

There was a time when I wished I had Bill Green's salvation story. If you haven't heard of Bill Green's salvation story, he could tell it to you after the Super Bowl. I'm just kidding, brother. Talk to him tomorrow. No, just kidding. And there were times when I was envious of his salvation story. So dramatic. So powerful. Amazing. A huge difference between darkness and light, and all I had was this dull salvation story from a self-righteous moralist church kid to a Christian. But looking at those folks in the Rescue Mission made me to appreciate my salvation even more so because I wasn't caught up in all of those vices. He saved me before that. I should be more ecstatic than Bill Green because I don't have the pain that he has. I have new life.

And so what I want to do this evening is this, maybe close the sermon this way. If you could please stand for just a moment. I want to count to three and I count to three, I want you all to bellow out New Life like you mean it. This won't be like a vacation Bible school where the weak side here has "new" and the heavy side here has "life." We'll just all echo, bellow out, New Life. I think sometimes we need to be reminded that we have new life in Christ Jesus. So on the count of three. One, two, three. "New life!" I have to be honest with you, I'm a little bit disappointed. I really feel like you have so much more to offer this evening. Listen, this is it. So let's do it again. All right, on the count of three. One, two, three. "New Life!" Amen.

Brother Tim, if you'll come and let's ask God's blessings as he comes.

Father, I am so thankful that Jesus came so that we can have new life. The best life there is to have is new life and I pray that this message or devotion was a help to someone this evening who may be struggling in their walk and their pilgrimage, maybe would help them to be refocused and recalibrated. But more than that, I guess I pray, Father, that I honored your scriptures as I preached. Thank you for your word and thank you for your love. In Jesus' name, amen.