

Jesus: A Formal Introduction

The Story Of Jesus

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It is so good to be taking some baby steps to be back together again. We look forward to and anticipate the time that all of us can be back under one roof praising God and enjoying the fellowship of one another with giving praise. Once again, I would like to welcome each one and if we have any first-time guests either on the Facebook Live or here, we're glad you're here and we trust that you would just join in and worship with us.

This is the time of the service that we focus on the word of God, but before we do, I would like to just relate a story from World War II that I think sheds some light on what's been going on in our country and in our own experience the past several weeks. So it was June 6, 1944 and that was the date that was scheduled for the US invasion of France to take France back from Nazi Germany. So all these throngs, just hundred and hundreds of US Forces were on these transport ships and there was one gentleman, and the story is primarily about Brigadier General Teddy Roosevelt III, he was 56 years old, he had suffered a knee injury in World War I, he had just overcome a bout with pneumonia, he could barely walk, he had to use a cane when he walked, his nose had been broken many times. 56 years old. By that age, most Generals had been retired or they've got a desk job somewhere, but Teddy Roosevelt kept leaning on his superiors to allow him to be part of the invasion of France that day. He had powers of persuasion and he had an iron will and he kept telling them, "I want to be part of this invasion force." Well, his superiors didn't think he had really any value, he didn't have anything to offer. I mean, he walked with a cane. He kinda limped along. But he had a huge smile and he had a real desire to be there for his men because he wanted to be an encouragement to them when they hit the beach.

Well, they did not want him to be part of this. There were a couple of reasons. 1. His physical limitations. 2. He was the son of a former President and he was a distant cousin to the current President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Now they didn't think it'd be good publicity for him, anything to happen to him during the conflict, nevertheless, he wouldn't be denied and they finally granted him the opportunity to be with his men. There were two people that gave a speech before the invasion unfolded, one was Eisenhower and one was Roosevelt, and the last thing Roosevelt told his men was, "Tomorrow morning, 6:30, I'll see you on the beach."

Well, time came to load up. It was about 1 o'clock that morning, June 6. He could barely go from the big transport ship to get on a landing craft. His men wanted to help him but he shooed them away. They get to the beach. He keeps thinking, "I want to be an encouragement to my men." They hit the beach that morning and it didn't take him long to figure out that they were not on the spot of the beach that they thought they were gonna be. There were several reasons for that: one was the strong current in the English Channel; and the other was the fighter pilots that went over France preliminarily before the beach assault, they had blown up some of the landmarks that they were looking at. Well, when they landed on the wrong part of the beach, Roosevelt knew it immediately and this caused great chaos because these guys have a job to do and they were so far away from where they were supposed to be. Roosevelt looks at everybody and he says, "We'll start the war from here." And after that, the rest is history. They didn't lose their perspective. Those guys didn't have a spirit of fatalism about them or defeatism, but they took Roosevelt's words and they started the battle, started the war from right there.

Now what does that have to do with us? Well, I think that story really best explains what we've seen throughout the Auburn Baptist Church family and friends the last 7-8 weeks ever since this Covid-19 began, and that is without ever saying it, we all kept carrying on. It wasn't a situation that any of us would have hoped for, wished for, none of us would have predicted it, yet here we are. And what has been so encouraging to so many is just the spirit of going forward in Jesus and being the church that God has called us to be. I'll always remember those words of Roosevelt and I'll forever connect them to this church body and how thankful we are that we're gonna start and carry on the war, the spiritual battle, from here. So what does that mean? That means that we're gonna continue to keep our eyes on Jesus, we're gonna continue to uphold his word, we're gonna continue to look for opportunities to share our faith, we're gonna continue to be prayed up, we're gonna continue to be the people of God that God has called us to be in good times and in times that are a little confusing.

So this morning, I feel like it's a fitting time to begin a new series, a new topic, if you will, a new study, and so for the next several weeks, we want to preach the story of Jesus. Now we want to do it in a way that I can tell you, I'm not very accustomed to doing, and that is chronologically. A lot of times we'll just preach through a book, we'll take a book, we'll take, say, Matthew or we'll take Mark, Mark's a little shorter, or Luke, or John, and we'll just preach through the book and that's wonderful and we appreciate what that particular writer brings to our minds about Jesus, but to do it chronologically means we're not gonna be in the same gospel book every time. Like this morning we're in John, we're in the gospel of John 1:1-5, next week looks like we're in Luke as we look at the life of Jesus chronologically. So we give God great praise and we ask him for great grace to be upon us to share this story. I'm so glad you're here today, I'm so glad you're there today, that we're together, that we're reaching out to one another in worship of our God to celebrate Jesus and to learn some things possibly we didn't know before, and to allow those truths of the gospel to ignite something within us that we haven't felt in some time. So it's our prayer that this is not just some intellectual or religious exercise but the truth of God will be proclaimed and we'll be better for it and better prepared to continue to persevere the times in which we live.

So I want to begin with doing something I've never done, to my memory, never done before and that is to read out of the original language John 1:1-5. It'll be in the Greek translation. I want to read it out of the Greek so you can just hear it, what it might have sounded like in the first century for someone to read, or second century, for someone to read it out the original language then give a translation of it, and just start that way and then God's gonna drop some things into our hearts that I trust will propel us forward in him by igniting the Lord Jesus in love for him in our lives. So John 1:1. You're welcome to listen, John 1:1-5.

1 En arche en ho Logos kai ho Logos en pros ton Theon kai Theos en ho Logos. 2 Houtos en en arche pros ton Theon 3 panta di'autou egeneto kai choris autou egeneto oude hen ho gegonen 4 en auto zoe en kai he zoe en to phos ton anthropon 5 kai to phos en te skotia phainei kai he skotia auto ou katelaben.

Translation,

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. 2 The same was [or this One] was in the beginning with God. 3 All things through Him became, and apart from Him [or without Him] became not even one thing. 4 In Him life was, and the life was the Light of men 5 and the Light in the darkness shines, and the darkness it not overcame [it did not overcome].

The word of the Lord. We'll pray and we'll explain the text and look at it more closely.

Father in heaven, we thank You for Your word, we thank You for the reliability of Your word, that it is truth. Your word is truth, that Your word is established from of old, and that heaven and earth would pass away or will pass away but Jesus in the word will not pass away. We thank You that we live by Your word, that we don't live just by bread alone, by the physical sustenance, but we live by Your word. We ask, Lord, today that You just do a work in us. We're here, our minds are open, our hearts are open to You, toward what You would have to say with us, and we want to hear from You, we want to hear from heaven. So help us in the next few moments, Lord, to receive what You have for us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

John 1:1-5. So in these verses and when we put it in context of the entire study or a chronological study of the life of Jesus, we are looking at the story of Jesus and I think it's really encouraging and interesting that John takes us beyond Bethlehem. I mean, I think that's where many people would think, well, we're gonna start the story of Jesus, we're gonna see Jesus in a manger, and we're gonna be back at Bethlehem, and we're gonna be talking, first of all, about shepherds and wise men and angels and all these things that went on during the time of Jesus' birth, but what's interesting is John goes way beyond Bethlehem, he goes back to before time began and he gives us a formal

introduction to Jesus. And that's what we need, beloved, we need a formal introduction to Jesus.

So what does John tell us? Let's just begin there in verse 1. He says, "In the beginning was the Word." Now the "Word" there is "Logos." The "Word" is the Greek for "Logos, the Word." Now when you think about "word" you think about, what? You think about language. You think about communication, somebody who's using a word or somebody's using words to express something or to describe something; they're trying to communicate something and they do it through a word or through words. Well, when we see "Word" here, when we look at that and John says, "In the beginning was the Word," he's putting Logos in the very beginning, we need to think in our minds that God is wanting to communicate something to us. You see, it's not just that God is alive, it's that this living God who created all things is also a speaking God. He is a God who speaks. He is a God who discloses truth and he does it so that those with whom he's communicating will receive the truth.

So I think it's safe to say and it is an astounding thought, that this living God, this all-powerful God wants to speak to your heart. He wants to say something to you and to me. He wants his word to penetrate all of who we are, all of our existence. The things that we experience growing up and the good parts about us, whatever that is, and definitely the bad parts, God wants to speak and he wants his word to penetrate our hearts. And our hearts many times can be hard. Our hearts can be wayward. We so often lean away from the Lord but his word is sent and it's so encouraging to look at this, "In the beginning was the Word." God from the very beginning wanted to communicate something of truth to you and me, and when you think about what that doesn't mean, it's pretty important, that we don't have a living God, Maker of heaven and earth, that wants to keep secrets from us; that wants to hide himself or his purpose from us; that wants to cover up how he feels about you and me. We have got a great God of the universe who wants to speak truth to you and I. He wants to penetrate the hardness or the veneer of our lives and get to the recesses of our being and there's only one thing in the world that can do that, and that is the Word of God.

So I trust today you will acknowledge that you're not here by random chance, and I trust that you will acknowledge that there is a God in heaven who is a speaking God and he wants to speak to your heart. He wants to communicate something of divine importance to your heart and your soul. And it's not enough just that God is a speaking God but we have to ask why, why would God, I mean, he's all-powerful and can do what he wants. We say it all the time, "God's in charge." Through this whole time of being shut out and locked down, we've acknowledged that it's our God who's in charge; that it's our God who reigns over history and he's moving history in the direction that he wants it to go. We've acknowledged. We've even acknowledged the fact that our sovereign God who is moving history on the course that he would have it to go, this great God is the shepherd of our soul; that he cares for us; that he exercises and, in fact, tender loving care for your soul and for my soul; and that there's no plague, there's no problem, there's no adversity, difficulty, there is no vicissitude of life that can interrupt God's care for you. God's care for you and I is constant, and as we believe in him, as we've trusted him, as follow him,

as we [unintelligible] from Jesus for our sins, we know that whether we live, and if we live we do what, we live for him, or whether we die, we go to be with him. It's a win/win for us.

I want you to notice that it's the Word that John introduces us to this morning. The Word. So God's wanting to say something. What is he wanting to say? You and I can be privy to what God is saying and we can not only be privy to, we can receive it and we can live [unintelligible], and there is no other life like the life that acknowledges Jesus [unintelligible].

So, "In the beginning was the Word," [unintelligible]. Amen. "In the beginning was the Word," so back before time began there was the Word, and then he says, "and the Word was with God." The Word was with God meaning that this Word, this Logos, was with God, meaning he is there with God in a relationship with God. The best way to understand that relationship would be Father, Son. And before the world's were created, before they were spoken into existence, the Father and the Son were in a face-to-face fellowship or relationship with one another. I told you a while ago John's gonna take us beyond Bethlehem and he is introducing us to the Word and we know [unintelligible] as John formally introduces us to the Word. The Word is Jesus. So he's telling us about Jesus and he's saying it didn't all just start in Bethlehem. It didn't all just happen then, you can go back to the beginning of time and there you will find the living breathing Word. "And the Word was with God." He's a distinct person and he is divine, okay?

It says, "and the Word was with God, and the Word," what does he say there? "And the Word was," what? "God." So right here, one sentence and I admire John's economy of words. Would that the preacher would have an economy of words, amen? We're trying. But John is saying not only was the Word with God, but the Word was God. He's divine and he's distinct, a distinct person. So there's the Father and the Son [unintelligible]. You know, you think, "Well, this is kinda, it seems kinda abstract, it seems kinda nebulous, it seems kind of ambiguous and philosophical." It's anything but. John is dealing with concrete terms and ideas here. The Word wasn't just something floating out in space, the Word is a person. The Word is Jesus and the Word was in fellowship with God and this Word was fully deity, fully divine. That's this Word.

Then in verse 2, "He was in the beginning with God." Say that again, "He was in the beginning with God." So all the way back before the worlds were created, this Word was in the beginning with God, and why would he repeat himself in verse 2? He's already told us that in the beginning he was with God. In the beginning the Word, the Logos, Jesus, enjoyed the same fellowship with the Father. There was joy, unmatched joy, unparalleled joy. There was peace like nobody had known peace. I mean, can you imagine God the Father, God the Son and the fellowship, the relationship that they shared. Now I understand, maybe we're thinking, "John, what's the point?" Here's the point and it's a pretty important point, and that is if you really, if you desire to fully appreciate the Word became flesh, you and I must internalize "In the beginning was the Word," because it was out of that fellowship with the Father that the Son came to be born of a virgin and to live like a man, and the more we internalize this, that John is telling us here in the first five

verses of his gospel, we'll appreciate the fact that Jesus came to earth, that he left his home in glory, that he left the fellowship of the Father, that he left all that to come to earth.

So we move on. What else about Jesus? He says, "All things came into being through Him." Through who? Through the Word. Through Jesus. Did you get that?

"All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." The emphasis is really stronger in the original, not one thing came into being that has come into being. In other words, Jesus Christ, the Word, the Logos, created all things one by one. That's quite a pronouncement but that's the Word. You and I owe our existence to Jesus. The fact that he preserves us, the fact that he sustains us, we owe all of that to Jesus. You are not here by random chance. It's not because of some accident that you are here. It is because Jesus has determined that you should be here and in your being here, he wants you to hear, he wants you to hear his communication, God's communication to you.

[unintelligible] in the way of the Word so for your outline and those of you at home may have an outline, you may have brought one with you, you should have gotten one through email. The first point is Jesus is the Logos. He is the Word. Jesus is the Word. He is the communication of the Father, or from the Father to man. And then, secondly, Jesus is the life. Jesus is the life.

So verse 4, "In Him was life." Not through him. Not around him. Not over him. Not under him. But in him. In Jesus was life.

"In Him was life," but what kind of life? Are we talking butterfly life? Are we talking archangel life? Well, there's a couple different kinds of life. He's talking about spiritual life here. Fifty-four times in John's gospel in his first letter he uses the term "zoe, life." It's high life. He doesn't use the word "bios," he uses the word "zoe." He uses the word for a high life, a high and holy life, and so in him, in Jesus was life.

Life. Now many people on the planet are enjoying the biology of life, right? We're alive. They're alive except for one thing: they're dead in their trespasses and sins. So they're a living being biologically speaking, but spiritually speaking they're dead in their trespasses and sins. They do not know the life that is in the Word, the life that God wants to communicate to those of us who are dead in sin, the life that he wants to communicate to us now. In him was life. That's definitive. No question about it. You know, John's not asking a lot of questions here, he's stating truth. In him was life. And do you know what? For you and I, you want to experience life, you want spiritual life? You want a life that most men and women and boys and girls don't experience? You will find that life nowhere, nowhere in this world, you will only find that life, that zoe, that high and that holy life in Jesus. It's only in Jesus. You can look for it other places but you will only find this kind of life in Jesus.

"In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men." So it's a spiritual life that Jesus has and is the source of. He is the life and the life, what? Was the Light of men. So that's what happens when life manifests. Life manifests as light. That's what happened when Jesus came into the world, right? I mean, how about those, how about the time over there in John 9, we're getting a little ahead, John 9 will be far enough down the road, though, we won't worry about that, remember when John healed or Jesus healed a man born blind? Yeah, it's the same chapter, what does Jesus say? "I am the Light of the world." Light manifests, life manifests as light. Life came to earth and [unintelligible] saw light. John said in verse 14, "And the Word," the Word he's been talking about in verses 1 through 5 of chapter 1, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we saw His glory." We saw his light. Life manifests as light.

Have you seen the Light? Do you know the Light? Have you received the Light? Have you received the life? Because the life is only found in one place, that life is only found in Jesus and if you and I dare to pursue any other avenue and try to experience life, we will always be left disappointed. Regular bios life will disappoint you. Spiritual life is what you need because it's the foundation of all life. The spiritual life is the foundation and the physical.

So Jesus manifests, when he manifests, he brings his life and it manifests as light, and then this last verse, verse 5. The Light does what? "The Light shines." The Light. Oh, the Light can't help but shine. "The Light shines," I love the language here. Not the Light shined but it's the Light shines. The Light did shine but as all of us know, the Light continues to shine. The Light continues to shine. The Light still shines. The Light did shine but the Light continues to shine.

The Light shines, just does, that's what light does, and where does it shine? It shines "in the darkness." Well, where's the darkness? Well, the darkness is all around us: the world, the flesh, the devil. All of that represents the darkness. Man's fallen nature is darkness. Man's depravity, man's sin, all of that is darkness. What's God trying to communicate with man? What was his purpose in sending Jesus? For what reason did Jesus leave the perfect fellowship and bond with the Father to come to earth? He came to shine. He came to manifest his life that men would see Light and would respond to his Light, his truth, would receive his light and his truth and walk in it. That's why he came.

So he shines in the darkness. Well, you mean to tell me there wasn't any light when he got here? Nope, it was all dark because he is the only source of life and the light only manifests when he shows up. So the Light shines. From the time he got to earth, the Light was shining and I want you to look at this last part. It shines in the darkness. It shines in the midst of man's sin. It shines in the midst, this darkness it isn't some kind of ambiguous darkness, it ain't a darkness you can make up, this is a darkness that is real, it is palpable, it can be felt, it is seen. We have example after example of man's waywardness, man's darkness, man's sin, his blindness, his deadness. All that equates to the darkness that was here when the Light came and started shining.

"And the darkness," did what? Well, try as it might, "the darkness did not comprehend it." So many in the darkness didn't understand the Light. Well, that's part of it, but the darkness didn't overcome the Light. Is that what darkness would try to do? Would the darkness try to [unintelligible] the Light? Would the darkness try to put out the fire? Would the darkness conceal the Light? No, the Light shines in the darkness, the Light drives the darkness out. The darkness did not comprehend it. The darkness did not overcome it. The darkness did not [unintelligible]. The darkness did not grasp it. Try as it might, the darkness could not control, could not apprehend the elusive Light.

Today as we conclude, I want to say long live the Light, and I ask you today, do you know this Jesus? Do you know this Jesus from eternity past as John presents him? Do you know this Jesus from Bethlehem, the Jesus that was born of a baby, born of a virgin as a baby and lived among men? Do you know this Jesus? If you don't know this Jesus, put your faith, put your trust, put your hope, put the weight of your entire existence on Jesus. He will never disappoint you. We give him praise today.

Father in heaven, do a work in our hearts. Sometimes we cool toward You, sometimes our spiritual life gets downright cold. I pray, Lord, today that You would use the Word, that You would use this message concerning Jesus to warm us up to You, to the reality of Your presence, to what You came to reveal not only about us but about Yourself, that although we're sinners, You came to reach out to us, You came to shine on us, You came to save us. Let it be. May it be so. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.