

**1<sup>st</sup> John 1: 1-4; “The Life Was Manifested”, Message # 1 in a series entitled -  
“Behold What Manner of Love”, A Communion Sermon Delivered by  
Pastor Paul Rendall on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016, at his home.**

Everything which is related to this life and creation and people has a beginning. The only one who does not have a beginning is God. He has no beginning, He has no ending. He always has been; He is, and He always will be. He is the self-existent One. From eternity to eternity He is God. But what is truly wonderful is what it says here; “That which was from the beginning”. What beginning is the Apostle talking about? Is it the beginning of God’s purposes in eternity past, or is it the beginning of Jesus’ coming into this fallen world of sin? Or is it some other beginning which we will have to try to discover? Well, we are told in verse 1, that Jesus Christ our Lord, when He came into the world, is here called by John – “The Word of Life”. And, in verse 2 we find these amazing words: “The Life was manifested...” In other words, a beginning was made. It was the beginning of the manifestation of eternal life in the dimension of time and space. But we can confidently say that this first verse in 1<sup>st</sup> John is speaking of the manifestation of the pre-incarnate Son of God. It is speaking of the incarnation of the Son of God, but not of that only. It is speaking of things that are spiritually manifested to us as believers in our Christian experience of fellowship with Him.

John is speaking of the real and tangible fellowship that every believer may have with the Father and the Son. He is speaking of the fullness of joy that we may have; this joy coming to our hearts, when we believe in this testimony of the Apostle John. The manifestation of these spiritual realities is something that can be known and experienced by every believer in a very real sense in their heart. And so, as we come to remember our Lord Jesus Christ this afternoon, let us strengthen ourselves by a contemplation of His glorious Incarnation; the truth that He manifested Himself at a certain point in human history in order to undertake our redemption through His sufferings. And God the Father would confirm this in His resurrection. 1<sup>st</sup> of all – We want to remember the fact that the Eternal Word became manifest in flesh and blood humanity to become for us, our Redeemer. And 2<sup>nd</sup> – Let us remember that Jesus Christ is the only tangible manifestation of that eternal life which was with the Father. And 3<sup>rd</sup> – Let us remember that the fellowship that we have with the Father and the Son is established by Christ’s life and it is meant to bring us fullness of joy.

**1<sup>st</sup> – Let us remember together the fact that the Eternal Word became manifest in flesh and blood humanity to become for us, our Redeemer.**

That which was from the beginning, here, does encompass the Beginning of Christ’s being begotten in eternity past. It further includes His being begotten in the Incarnation, but here most specifically points to the beginning of Christ’s public ministry. These Apostles did not hear, see, look upon, and handle Christ from Eternity Past or from the Beginning of time, or even from the beginning of His earthly life. It was rather that they experienced what He was really like, during that three and a half year’s period of time in which they walked with Him. These Apostles of our Lord were called to follow Him and to be near to Him, and to understand by being with Him, that He was an altogether unique and different sort of man. He was a man who was perceived by them as Divine; but nevertheless, they also perceived Him to be very much a man like themselves, in some very important ways. He had great and amazing strengths; He had a perceptive and intelligent mind, coupled with great humility. He was a man who could minister all day, and sometimes pray all night, and yet He could sleep in the midst of a storm. He could then awaken from that sleep and calm the storm with a word. He was a man who had all the power and wisdom of a Divine nature, and yet He also had all of limitations of human nature.

I believe that it was something that His disciples thought about often. They gradually came to understand through that which they heard from Him, that as He was God's Essential Word, the Word of Life, that He fully represented the Father in His deity; and that He also fully represented them, in a sinless way, in His humanity. He was fully God, and became also fully Man, so that He might become their Redeemer and ours. This was grace appearing to a dark and fallen world of sinners. Listen to Titus chapter 2, verses 11-14 – "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." The grace of God had brought them salvation, because He had appeared. The Life was manifested, and the disciples saw Him and bore witness to Him, and they have declared to us, that our Lord Jesus Christ had come to this earth to become our Redeemer.

What was His intention? To do the Father's will in every particular, and then as a sinless sacrifice, He would redeem us. He would buy us back out of our slavery to sin. He would redeem us from every lawless deed, and He would purify for Himself His own special people who are zealous for good works. What great condescension! What great love and compassion! Let me ask you, to ask yourself now, whether your iniquities have forgiven, and whether the remaining corruption of your flesh is being subdued and mortified; whether you are forsaking your sins since you have now found a ransom for your soul in the Lord Jesus Christ? Let me ask you whether you are looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of your great God and Savior? For when He returns your redemption shall be completed, and your eternity of glorious fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall begin and be established forever. His life was manifested for this.

Then it also says in John 1: 1, that they had "seen Him with their eyes"; the Word of Life. Turn with me to Matthew 14: 23 – "And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray." "Now when evening came, He was alone there." "But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary." "Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea." "And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, 'It is a ghost!'" "And they cried out for fear." "But immediately Jesus spoke to them saying, 'Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.'" They thought of him as a ghost. But He assured them that He was no phantom. He was not simply a ghostly spirit to be seen. He was a man of flesh and blood like themselves; only He had a divine nature as well as the human nature. They received Him into the boat with them, it says in that place. Let me ask you whether you think of the Lord Jesus in this way?

Let's apply this to ourselves. Sometimes stormy times may come in your life; events and experiences which bring to your heart certain fears. And you know that you believe in the Lord Jesus; you know that you believe in the sovereignty of God. And yet, you actually become afraid of what the Lord Jesus is doing when He is coming to you "walking on the water" in this way. He is coming to reveal Himself to you in a greater way; His glory and power and His ability to be with you in the most difficult situations of your life. And He is able to say to you in the most uncertain of times: "Be of good cheer!" He is able to say unto your soul, "It is I". You can even ask Him, like Peter did, if you might "come out and walk on the water" with Him. That is; that you might ask Him to help you to do those things which you now think are really beyond your ability to do. But with His help they could become real. I am thinking about your learning to walk in the Spirit and learning to do the kind of good works that Christ did, to help other people. You may have never engaged in good works like this before, but now by the strength of Christ, you can begin to minister to others. The things impossible with man, are possible with God!

It also says that their hands handled Him. This seems to be a direct reference to Luke 24: 36-43. "Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.'" "But they were terrified and frightened and supposed they had seen a spirit." "And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled?'" "And why do doubts arise in your hearts?" "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself." Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." Jesus, the Word of Life, is indeed tangible flesh and blood, even in His resurrected state. Someday, as a believer in Jesus, you shall have the privilege to be able to touch Him and know that this Divine Person really did give His life for you. Someday seems far away now, but it is nearer than you think. You can touch Him spiritually now and find grace and mercy and peace and blessing, each and every day. Will you not seek Him now, in order to find Him near in every hour?

**Now, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Let us remember that Jesus Christ is the only tangible manifestation of that eternal life which was with the Father.**

Verse 2 says, "And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us...." There was only one life given by God to forever change the lives of millions and billions of people. This was God's Master Plan. Eternal life would be found only in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it would never be found in any other person. He always existed from eternity past in the bosom of the Father, but was made manifest in the fullness of time. No other person would be given to manifest the life of God to men. Turn over with me to 1<sup>st</sup> John Chapter 3 and verse 5. "And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin." Our first forefather Adam sinned in the beginning and therefore, in him, all people became sinners and all would experience death. But in the Lord Jesus Christ was manifested the One and the only One who could undo all the damage that the first person had done, and He would bring with Him infinite and eternal blessings besides. These words tell us two very important things. They tell us that the Lord Jesus, as the Son of God, existed before He was manifested. And they tell us the purpose of His being manifested: to take away our sins.

The life was "manifested" refers to the Father sending forth His Son, to be born in His Incarnation, and that it was His great purpose that every aspect of the gift of eternal life would be connected with His Son. He would be sent in order to manifest the righteousness and the glory of God. He would be manifested to take away our sins. This truth is seen and understood in the phrase which is written of Him that He is "the Only-Begotten of the Father". You can see this truth was a favorite with the apostle John. Listen to how he writes in his gospel, in Chapter 1, verse 14. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And also verse 18 of Chapter 1. "No one has seen God at any time." "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." We see here that in the sending and giving His "Only-Begotten Son", God was, as it were, taking His heart out of His own bosom and showing it to us and saying: "See, here is what I am like." "Here is the One Person in all the World who can fully represent My heart of compassion to sinful men." "For God so loved the World that He gave His only-begotten Son...."

Now, think with me also of what it says in John 3: 18. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because He has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." God has deliberately made the gospel simple in this regard; that you need look no further than the One sinless Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to find salvation and eternal life. Oh, how the nations of the world have complicated things by making up religions which are false and then expecting people to worship a false god of man's conception; when all this while, the Life has been manifested in the One and only Savior of the World, the Savior of sinners! Let us rejoice that God's way to eternal life is one way, and the Person who will bring you there is One. But think also of what assurance this verse gives to

each and every one of His people. “He who believes is not condemned.” I am going to ask you to come down to the front now, but while you are coming, I would have you think upon this question: How precious is this truth to you, that the Life was manifested? This truth is very precious to one who is seeking to be saved from their sins. It is very precious to the one who has found forgiveness for their sins, and the meaning of life. It is very precious to the one who has found God and Christ to be living and true.

**3<sup>rd</sup> – Let us remember that the fellowship that we have with the Father and the Son has been established by Christ’s life and it is meant to bring us fullness of joy.**

The fellowship that we have with the Father and the Son is a very real spiritual interaction which takes place between us based upon the manifestation of the Life of the Son. The Son was manifested in His righteous life in His Incarnation. He grew up as a Man and was pleasing to God and to His earthly parents. He lived a life of perfect steadfastness in keeping the commandments of God, and at the end of it, He sealed His life’s work with His death on the cross for our sakes. “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20: 28) In John chapter 10 and verse 10, Jesus says: “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” “I am the good shepherd.” “The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.” In verse 15 of that same chapter He says: “As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.” And verse 17 – “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.” “No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.” “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” “This command I have received from My Father.”

Dear Christian, please meditate in these few moments that we have together around the table, upon the life of the Lord Jesus being the basis of your fellowship with the Father and the Son. He had to give His life for you so that you would have this spiritual life in yourself, and that all of your sins might be taken away, and that He might give His Holy Spirit to be with you forever. If this is not enough to rejoice over, let us remember that Christ also would take up His life again in order to give you new life. Now that He has ascended on high, He ever lives to make intercession for you. His life continues to be the basis for all of the fellowship that you have with the Father and the Son; for His Holy Spirit is in you, and with you, forever. Your fellowship with the Father and the Son is called by our Lord Jesus “abiding in Him”. This fellowship, your abiding in Him, is designed to bring you joy. Listen to John chapter 15 and verses 7-11. “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.” “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” The Lord Jesus Himself would have you to rejoice even now, that His life is in your life, and that it shall be the basis of all of your holy fellowship with Him and with the Father, leading you on to the eternal joy of being with Him.