

Understanding the Full Nature of Jesus Christ

John 1:1-18

There are so many great questions of our age. “What is the meaning of life?” that’s one of the biggest and most sought after questions. Another one is “where did this world come from? Who created it?” and these are not questions that only *we* have struggled with in the last year or two. Centuries upon centuries of people have asked these big questions and have sought answers from somewhere. It’s these very types of questions that have led to people’s death centuries ago. It’s these very types of questions that have challenged science. It’s these very types of questions that have led to new technologies and organizations that seek to see more, do more, answer more too. It’s simply our human nature to want to know, to want to experience, to find answers to life’s most challenging and needed questions about life. We want to know who we are, where we came from, what we’re supposed to do with this life that we’ve been given. And we want to know our place.

John...seeks to give us all of that right here! “In the beginning *was* the Word, and the word was *with* God, and the Word *was* God.” This is a statement that, to me, seeks to answer all of life’s big questions. From the philosophical to the scientific (*I made that word up – feel free to use it*). From a science perspective this tells us the beginning of it all. It’s something that we, as a youth group, worked through for a couple of weeks. NASA’s Hubble Space Telescope is providing images and data that reveal that the universe isn’t a certain specific size – what scientists are seeing is that the universe is actually expanding. Now that doesn’t necessarily express the existence of God – but what it does mean that if it is expanding now – then it always has. And if it always has then at some point there had to be always less. That is...we can go backwards, we can go in reverse in expansion and know that at some point you can’t decrease any more. At some point there was a single point or moment. And then if we go one step before that single moment...we get nothing. But John says...there was something.

John is writing to a group of people in and around Ephesus. To men and women who believed and those who did not – and his message to both of them is the same: believe the truth of the Gospel. And if you don’t believe...why don’t you? And so John challenges his readers in their faith – in their belief. And what’s really interesting about the book of John, ESPECIALLY how he starts his gospel, is that he doesn’t go into the birth of Christ, he doesn’t go into a historical setting with genealogy as Matthew does or the birth narrative like Luke. John, simply lays out this beautiful theological and philosophical truth and challenge. It’s as if he is saying, “Before you read anything else from me, before I go into great detail of Jesus of Nazareth, the most important thing you need to know and understand (because this will explain everything and everything hinges on this one thing)...it is this: **Jesus is God in the flesh**. And when you understand that, when you see that...everything else falls in place and is fully understood. For John, the Deity of Christ and understanding *that...is everything*.

And so John says that in the beginning...before there was anything before there was even that one thing of the universe...there was the “Word”.

Now if that word, “word” in our Bible wasn’t capitalized or we didn’t have the rest of John 1 and reading that the “Word became flesh” as we do in verse 14...we wouldn’t know what to do with it. To us “word” is simply a word. A spoken or written down piece of vocabulary. But to John...to his readers...it meant so much more.

To the readers in Ephesus, both Greek and non, the term “word” would have simply been understood. One author writes that the Stoics, which was a philosophical group, understood “word” (or *logos* in Greek) to be the “*rational principle by which everything exists, and which is of the essence of the human soul.*” For them, “logos” literally is everything. Not only everything that becomes part of us...but logos as in “god”. And thus if there is a logos or god – then everything that comes from that god are seeds of that god. So in one sense... “word” simply means “god.” But there still is this underlying prevalent understanding that “word” also means speech...which is why we have it in our texts today. But it means more than simply speech, it also means “message”. So we have this double/triple meaning of the word. And remember, John wasn’t only writing to Greeks – his message was also to Jews and he frequently brings up Old Testament understandings in his writings as well– so there is even more of an understanding of “word” that comes to us from *that* context. A context that has “the word” connected with God and his activity in creation (**Gen 1:3; Psalm 33:6**), with revelation (**Jeremiah 1:4; Isa 9:8**) as well as deliverance and hope for his people (**Psalm 107:20; Is 55:11**). So for John...it’s all of this. God, speech, message...

In the beginning...God spoke. In the beginning, God was. In the beginning, before creation...Christ was. What John is doing is laying out the foundation for understanding who Christ is. He’s assuming that you and I and these readers and hearers in Ephesus already know who Christ was...but did they really know? Do they understand that Christ was more than a man? Do they understand his deity too – because that’s the most important. Vastly more important than anything. So in his logical way John gets them to understand the origins of creation and that the Word, which he ties to Christ, was there too. And not only was he there...but all things were made *through* him. That in him, in the Word, in Jesus Christ...is life.

And John wants us to understand that when you take your current understanding of Jesus as a human, as a man...and then you understand that he was and is so much more – that he was and is God (both human and God at the same time) and that he is the spoken word of Creation...so life coming and going FROM him...you begin to truly understand the impact, the importance, and the need *for* Christ. Not only as a Savior – but as the meaning, guide, hope, and light...in *your* life. He is not only the meaning of life ... but the meaning in *YOUR* life.

But there's more here – if that wasn't enough...7 times we get the word “light” in this text. From verse 4 all the way through 9...7 times. “Light of mankind” a “light that shines in the darkness”; testifying to the “light”...and the big one in verse 9, that the Word, Jesus Christ, was the “true light that gives light to everyone”.

Everything we've been speaking about, I've been preaching on, and we've read in our Bibles is about this – right here. It's about this moment when the Word became flesh. When Christ became flesh. When Christ entered a very dark world to dispel darkness and give light – give *life*. Everything else leading up to this where God acted and sent...were, albeit failed attempts, were still done in his love. Those attempts to restore and return and bring light into darkened souls was words and actions of failed humans. Yes they were sent by God but they could only do so much. All of the actions of people, of humans, of even the holiest of holy people you can think of...are failures on their own. It literally takes an act of God for us to do the right things, say the right words, love the right way, serve others before ourselves. It literally takes an act of God for us to TURN to God.

And that act of God...was the Word becoming flesh. The Word entering into the darkness of our world where we hate, love self, serve self, step on others, ignore, hurt, and put down other people, ignore him, ignore others seek “me”...where we serve our own needs before others – all that darkness that we live and swim in...Christ, the light of the world, came to be our beacon of hope and remove forever that darkness. Light – invading the power and work of darkness – overcoming and dispelling it...to BE life and hope to all that believe.

This, to you and me...to those that believe...we call this central message: *the gospel*. It's the truth of who Jesus was, both in humanity and deity, and then understanding it and living into it.

Martin Luther once wrote that “We need to hear the gospel every day; because we forget it every day.” And how true is that.

The gospel is simply understanding that Jesus wasn't merely a man, but he was, and is God. That he was in the beginning when there was nothing and that in and through him life not only sprang up – but life *is*. You...Your life, your work, your goodness, your “meaning”...is all found in him. And that's really hard for people to understand. Because our society says that you are you, you are your own individual and that “life” is whatever you make of it. You can be whomever you want to be, you can do whatever you want to do, your life is at the tip of your fingers...so grasp it! And do something with it!

The problem is that everything we try to grasp, everything we try to do, everything WE want to be is broken, fractured, and not remotely close to being whole. It seems more often than not

when we define “the meaning of life” it is surrounded around me. What *I* want. That’s the darkness of this world. And it seems like when we try to grasp at things that we want...we break them, we break us. We ignore God, we ignore others.

That song, “I did it my way way”...yeah...do it your way and then look at the results. It may look good now – but come back and look later, a few years...broken, burned, complete rubble.

John’s challenge to us is to understand that Christ came to dispel the darkness and rebuild the rubble in our lives. To shine a light into the depths of blackness that had consumed not only the people then...but you and I today.

You, me, we’re all searching for meaning in our lives. We’re all searching for answers to questions that we wrestle with and struggle with. Theological questions, philosophical questions, even the scientific ones (you may not know you’re looking for scientific ones...but you are) – and there is nothing wrong with those questions – but they mean nothing if you don’t know Christ. Because they have no answers except for Christ.

The meaning of life? To me that’s easy. It’s to live for and glorify God in all you say and do – and to be *him* to others. That’s the meaning of life!

Who created the world? God.

How did it happen – that’s a great question that people are still arguing over...but God is before anything was...so really God did. How did he do it? Big Bang? Makes sense to me for God is the “big banger.”

And again, all of these are really important questions...but the pale in comparison to the most important question of all times: **do you know, and believe in Christ?**

That he wasn’t simply a “good person” but that he was holy, pure, and righteous.

That he was both God and human.

That he was, like the Father, before anything ever was or will be.

That he was the hope of all people since the beginning of time.

That he came to live so that you could live – giving up his life for yours.

So that in all the darkness you have in *your* life...you can cling to light...to hope...to the light of the world, Jesus Christ.

If you don’t know him...I want to invite you to come talk to me after church...TODAY. If today doesn’t work, then shoot me a phone call or email or text. It doesn’t matter. Let’s have coffee and work through some things together. Knowing Christ is literally the most important thing you could ever work through. Hands down. And knowing that he died so that you could know him,

and be with him, and find joy and peace in him...it's what it's all about. Fully knowing Christ...is everything.

Let's pray.