

Life in His Name – Part 1
The Greatness of Christ – John 1:1-18
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Feb. 5th, 2022

Intro:

- Your understanding of God directly impacts how you see the world and live your life. From not believing in a God at all to having a false or limited understanding, we live in the “light” of what we know or think to be true.
- As we spend the next four months in the gospel of John, I want your understanding of Christ to be expanded so that you see Him in a deeper and fuller way. By so doing, your love and honor of Him will expand and you will have greater clarity in how you see all things.
- The gospel of John was written by John, the son of Zebedee – “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23). He was one of Jesus’ most beloved and perhaps closest friend. He is the only biblical writer who wrote three different kinds of books; a gospel (John), letters or epistles (1,2,3 John), and an apocalyptic writing (Revelation). Because of His great love of Jesus, John lived to make Him known and was sentenced to death as a criminal on the Island of Patmos.
- In his gospel, John gives eight “signs” pointing to Jesus as the Son of God. John tells us explicitly why he wrote this book:

John 20:30-31 ESV

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

- John recorded some of the signs, but there were many others that were not recorded. This gospel was written so that you may believe. What are we to believe? That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, you may have life, which is in His name (no other). This is why we are calling this series “Life in His Name.” Our hope is that you will deepen your understanding of and devotion to Christ, or come to believe that He indeed is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life in His name.
- The opening prolog to this book is theologically dense and full of foundational and fundamental truth. We could literally spend the next 16 weeks in this passage alone. However, we will be spending just one week. So I have tried to capture the main topics with three points, all pointing to the greatness of Christ. The points are the greatness of the Word, the greatness of His life, and the greatness of His glory.

The greatness of the Word (1-3)

John 1:1-3 NIV

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

- *He is eternally preexistent* – The Word always was and was always. He does not have a beginning, nor does He have an end. He was not created but eternally preexistent. In the beginning, was the Word.
- *He is eternally in relationship* – The Word was with God. God always existed in relationship within the trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Distinct yet the same. One in three and three in one. Always in perfect relationship from eternity past, existing together.
- *He is eternally God* – The Word did not become God (unlike some have speculated), the Word was God eternally. He always was God and always will be God. He was with God and was God from and for eternity.
- *He is eternally Creator* – Through Him, all things were made. He is the “uncaused cause” through which everything that has been made came. The book of Colossians describes it this way:

Col 1:16-18 ESV

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

- By Him, all things were created, not just what we can see but also what we cannot see. Not just tangible things but also thrones, dominions, rulers, and authorities. They were created through Him and also for Him (which includes you and me). Christ is before all, and in Him, all things hold together. Without Him, all things would fall apart.
- Your very existence, the planet itself, all the universes, and all matter holds together in Him. And all of it is for Him. He is at the center of all things, and we are not. Let the implications of this sink into and shape your thoughts, actions, and activities.

The greatness of His life (4-13)

John 1:4-5a NIV

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness,

- *He is the light revealed* – In Him was life. He is the source of all things that live. Life comes from Him because He is life. Things did not evolve to become living. Non-life does not become life, and all living things have life because they came from the source of all life.
- That life was the “light” of all mankind. By Him, that is life, the power of being and knowing has come. Light allows us to know and see all things. Without it, we see nothing, we know nothing, and we are nothing.
- This light shines in the darkness; it stands in contrast to all other things. This light is revealed. It has shone to and in the darkness. Outside of Him, all things are darkness.

John 1:5b-11 NIV

and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

- *He is the light rejected* – The darkness, in contrast and opposition to the light, has not overcome it, because it cannot overcome it. In the battle between light and darkness, light always wins because of the nature of light in comparison to the nature of darkness. Light can never be overcome by darkness because of its nature. Darkness cannot overcome light, because of its nature.
- John (the Baptist) came as a witness to the light (John the writer is leading us to the identity of the Word, the Life, the Light through the witness of John). John the Baptist was not the light but told the world about Him and prepared the world to receive Him and believe in Him.
- He is the true light that gives light to everyone, and He came into the world. The world that He created did not recognize Him as the Creator. He came to those He selected to be His own (the people of God “called out” through Abraham in the Old Testament). He came to them (to the Jew first), and they did not even receive Him. He was rejected by His own. Yet . . .

John 1:12-13 NIV

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

- He is the light received, and there are those who did receive Him. We receive Him by believing in His name, who He is. He gave all who have received, all who have believed, the right to become His children, the children of God. This does not mean that everyone born on the planet is a child of God, even those who have physically descended from Abraham. We are not born of God because of the choice of our parents; we become children of God, born of God, when we receive the Light, which is life when we believe in His name. We are born anew as a child of God when we receive the Son by believing in His name.

Acts 4:12 ESV

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

The greatness of His glory

John 1:14a NIV

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

- *His glory is becoming flesh and living among us* – The Creator became flesh and dwelt, pitched His tent, tabernacled among us. What “God” becomes one of us? What Creator becomes a part of creation? His glory is to leave His glory to us, to give us His glory by glorifying His Father, and to be glorified by the Father among us (See Phil. 2:6-11).

John 1:14b NIV

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- *His glory is being full of grace and truth* – He is glorious because He is full of grace. He is glorious because He is full of truth, for He is both grace and truth. He is grace. He is truth, and in Him, both of these things dwell together. He is the perfect balance of these two things. He is not more one than the other, but they exist in Him in perfect harmony. He is not just grace and not just truth, but he possesses them both, and we cannot make Him one without the other.

John 1:15 NIV

(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”)

- *His glory is being before and above all things* – He has surpassed all things because He is before all things. And because he is before all things, and created all things, all things are His, and He owns and holds all things together for Himself. He is unlike everything and everyone. He surpasses them all. There is no one like Him.

John 1:16 NIV

Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given.

- *His glory is giving us grace heaped upon grace* – God has given us grace just in the fact that we exist. All things have received this grace. He gave grace to His people all throughout the Old Testament. And then, in the coming of the Word made flesh, Jesus heaped upon us more grace on top of the grace already given. This is the grace of becoming a child of God through Him, because we are born anew in Him by He who is grace and truth. There is no one like Him. There is no one who is as great as He is.

John 1:17-18 NIV

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

- *His glory is making the Father known* – We know the law (the result of who God is and how we are to relate to Him) through what God gave to and through Moses. But we know grace and truth are made full and coming through Jesus Christ. Jesus is

Heb 1:3 ESV

the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

- When we see Jesus, we see the Father in the person of Jesus because Jesus is the “exact imprint of His nature.” If you want to know the Father, look at the Son.

Conclusion

- Knowing the greatness of the Word, the greatness of His life, and the greatness of His glory helps protect us from being led astray and helps us to rightly know who He is so that we can worship Him in spirit and in truth and live in accordance with this knowledge.

The structure of the sermon was helped by the book *John: That you may believe* from the *Preaching the Word Commentary Series* by R. Kent Hughes 1999.