

John 1:1-5, 14-18 ESV (pg. 517) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through 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** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...**14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. **15** (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) **16** For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. **17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

- I. We started a series last week examining the roles of prophet, priest and king in the Bible by looking at the role of the prophets in the Old Testament. We saw that their ministries were focused on the proclamation of God's Word as well as intercessory prayers offered for the people of God. We looked at how Christ fulfilled those roles.
 - A. Today we are going to examine Christ as the fulfillment of the prophetic ministry further, and there is no better place to see this reality than here in the preamble to John's gospel. It begins by bestowing upon Christ the title of “**the Word**”. You cannot be much more associated with God's message than to personify it!
 1. “**In the beginning was the Word...**” John uses the same words that open the Bible in Genesis. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”.
 - a) John asserts here that Christ is an uncreated being, since he eternally existed with the Father from the beginning “**...the Word was with God**”.
 - b) He then he adds a clear statement of Christ's full identity when he proclaims, “**and the Word was God**”. He was not just by the side of God in the beginning, he fully was that God, though distinct from the Father.
 - c) His role in creation is affirmed when John says “**He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made**”. He frames right thinking about Jesus.
 2. In using the words “in the beginning”, John is saying more than just a note about Christ's eternal or divine nature. He means the arrival of Jesus in the flesh heralds a new beginning, a resetting of creation, a new order of things.
 - B. He then talks about the uniqueness of the eternal Word who took on humanity. “**In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**”
 1. In later chapters, John would record Jesus using these same words, saying, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life”, and “I am the light of the World”.
 2. Christ's person and work would be life-giving and light producing.
 - a) To reject him, his message, or his works would condemn a person to death forever, and imprison them to the deepest spiritual darkness.
 - b) Yet Jesus himself could not be the victim of death or darkness, as his resurrection from the grave after his crucifixion would convincingly prove.
 - C. But what does John mean by calling Jesus Christ “the Word”? It connotes God's own self-expression (a word is something you say; a tool with which you communicate). We can look to Jesus and know everything God wanted to say.

1. God had been speaking to humanity since the garden of Eden, through creation, miracles, deliverances, law and the prophets for thousands of years, and now all he had been saying is summed up in Jesus Christ.
 2. In him all of God's nature is revealed, all of his will is accomplished, and all of his promises are kept. **Hebrews 1:1 ESV** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
- II. Having established Jesus as the eternally existing, creating God; the summation of all God ever wanted to communicate to humanity; he now lays before us an astonishing truth. **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”**
- A. Previously, God had spoken through men like the prophets, but now the message has literally appeared in our very midst, in the person of Jesus Christ. He looks like we look, and lives where we live, and eats what we eat.
1. God had told Moses on Sinai that no one could see his face and live. But John says that in the miracle of the incarnation that we have seen his glory.
 - a) John was on the Mount of Transfiguration with his brother James and Peter. He saw what happened when Jesus true identity was revealed.
 - b) But people in common moments also saw his glory when he turned water to wine, healed their bodies, walked on the sea and raised the dead.
 2. And though he looked like us, he was clearly different, wiser, more powerful, and altogether better than us. John says he was full of grace and truth.
 - a) That's hard for me. Sometimes I'm full of truth when I'm angry about political issues, or the way someone disappointed me, but I don't display much grace in such moments. Other times, when I'm intimidated I may show grace that is devoid of the truth that sets people free.
 - b) But that was never the case with Jesus! He expressed hard truths to the rich young ruler, while he looked at him and loved him, showing grace.
- B. **John (the Baptist) bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”** John the Baptist is significant, serving as the last Old Testament style prophet in his unique function of announcing the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah. **Luke 16:16a ESV** **“The Law and the Prophets were until John...”**
1. But notice what John's testimony was: “He ranks before me...he was before me.” As a prophet, John is acknowledging Jesus as someone that both precedes him, and is greater than him. Jesus isn't just another prophet.
 2. Religious leaders came to John once and asked him if he was the prophet that Moses said was coming in Deuteronomy 18:15. He said he was not. But he testified freely of the one who was that prophet, saying of Jesus Christ, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!” Taking away sins was something the Law and every prophet failed to do.
 - a) When John's disciples started leaving him to follow Jesus instead, he wasn't shaken or offended. He rejoiced, saying, “mission accomplished!”
 - b) He always deferred to Jesus as the greater Prophet (and more than a prophet!) **John 3:30 ESV** **“He must increase, but I must decrease.”**

- III. That Jesus was full of grace and truth has tremendous implications for you and I. Now we can be redeemed. Those who were dead in their sins can be made new and alive in Christ! **For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**
- A. Jesus is full of grace. It is unlimited. There is no one who has sinned their way past God's ability to forgive them. His love is steadfast, eternal, unchanging. But he also is full of truth. He never caters to our weakness, or compromises God's will in any way. He makes us new, and changes us into his own image.
1. John says here that it is from both his fullness of grace and truth that you and I have all received an abundance of grace. There was grace in him to call to the weary, weak and broken while always upholding and fulfilling the holy Law of God perfectly, on our behalf. This is something we could not do.
 2. John reminds us the Law came through Moses. Though it was holy, and showed us what God was really like, it's standard was much too high for us to keep. **Romans 3:20 ESV** *For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*
- B. The law's purpose was to show us how sinful we were so that we would cry out to be rescued from sin and death by God. It's purpose was never to save us!
1. **Galatians 3:10 ESV** *For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."*
 2. But through Jesus came grace and truth. The Old Covenant said obey and be blessed. We blew it! The New Covenant that Jesus established was put in place when he obeyed for us. Now he writes his laws on our hearts so that we can serve him out of love and not fear of punishment.
- C. So we see Christ as a better Prophet than all the Old Testament prophets because he encapsulates everything they were pointing to and everything they promised by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was what God was saying.
- IV. **No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.** How has Jesus made God known? First of all (as we have said) by showing up. Jesus is God, so when he dwelt among us, he made God known to us by his presence. Religious people often failed to grasp this. Jesus told a group of Pharisees that wanted to stone him **John 10:30 ESV** *"I and the Father are one."*
- A. But the most significant way he made the Father known to us this was through his intercession. Jesus (like Abraham and Moses) was someone who intervened in the lives of people through teaching, miracles, and even prayers. **Luke 22:31 ESV** *"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, 32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."*
- B. But what was the cross but an intervention? Like Abraham did when he prayed for the righteous in Sodom, Christ negotiated with God for the salvation of his people. The conditions were his life for ours. He would pay out debt.
1. It's on the cross where we see God's love beautifully expressed. It was there that God showed his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. This love was God's prophetic announcement through Christ!

2. **1 John 4:10 ESV** In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
 - a) A propitiation is the satisfying of a just wrath, appeasing an offended party. It is a sacrifice that makes things right again.
 - b) Because of Jesus' intercession for us, God is no longer angry with us. In fact, he is as pleased with us as he is with Jesus if we are in Christ.
 3. But the Bible tells us that Christ is still interceding for us. **Hebrews 7:25 ESV** Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.
 - a) I used to think this meant that Jesus was in Heaven praying for me that I would not sin and have generally good days.
 - b) Now I understand that Jesus' life at the right hand of God is his unfailing testimony that I am in right standing with God. In other words, as long as Jesus is still alive, I will be justified before God's holiness!
- V. Let me give you one more example from the day of the resurrection: **Luke 24:13 ESV** That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, **14** and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. **15** While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. **16** But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. **17** And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. **18** Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" **19** And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, **20** and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. **21** But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. **22** Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, **23** and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. **24** Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." **25** And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" **27** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.
- A. The 2 disciples understood that Jesus was a prophet. They knew there was something special about him. What they didn't understand was that he was **The Prophet** that Moses foretold. They knew Jesus, but were too spiritually blind to see that everything about his life was summing up the other prophet's words.
 1. This caused them great disappointment. What they thought should happen, didn't. What they thought should be, wasn't. This will always be the case if we fail to understand who Jesus really is, and what he has done.

- a) Jesus did not commend them for this! He said they were foolish and slow to believe what those previous prophets had said about him. This was Jesus being full of truth, which is really important for a prophet!
 - b) But then he began to share from Moses and the other prophets so they could clearly see that it really was all about him. This was Jesus being full of grace, which identifies him as the one who is mighty to save.
 - 2. Jesus did with them what prophets do. He interceded and intervened by coming into their conversation. He wouldn't leave them in despair. Then he shared with them the Word of God, and in knowing the truth they were freed.
 - B. The story proceeds to tell us that these men, still not recognizing the risen Lord, invited him to join them for dinner. And as Jesus broke the bread and gave the blessing (illustrating what he had just done on the cross), their eyes were opened and Jesus vanished from their sight. And their minds were blown!
 - 1. **Luke 24:32 ESV** They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"
 - 2. Jesus is not a prophet, he is The Prophet who embodies the Word of God perfectly, proclaiming it in his sinless life, his amazing works, his tender love, and in the abundant grace poured out on the cross. He is living today, making intercession to God for you by the wounds in his hands, feet and side.
- VI. **Benediction: Colossians 3:16 ESV** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **17** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.