

Rejecting or Receiving the Word

Text: John 1:1-18 See Mary Coloe's God Dwells with Us

1 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.

A. The Word in Creation and Coming into History

3 Through him all things were made;
 without him nothing was made that has been made.

4 In him was life,
 and that life was the light of all mankind.

5 The light shines in the darkness,
 and the darkness has not overcome it.

B. John the Baptist as a Witness Testifying

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.

C. The Experience of and Response to the Word

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.

12 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.

A'. The Word's Presence and Revelation in History

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

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

B'. John the Baptist as a Witness Testifying

15 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.'"

C'. The Experience and Response to the Word

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

17 For the law was given through Moses;
 grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

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.

It is Finished: The Gospel of John & Jn. 19:30: God's Work is being finished in the life of Jesus (John 1:19-19:30) and we now live in the inaugurated New Creation of the Risen Jesus.

Introduction

The Bible is inspired literature; designed for a lifetime of meditation, reflection, & study.

- God's revelation came to a sharp point in the flow of human history, in the life of a baby who would be exposed to all of the suffering of this world.

Starting a Story: Each writer chooses how to begin their story.

- Mark begins with the baptism of Jesus.
- Matthew begins with a genealogy & the promises God made to David and Abraham.
- Luke focuses on the Spirit's role in the conception of Jesus.

Explore the Text (Tim Mackie & Darrell Johnson influenced these ideas)

The Wonder of the Incarnation

In the Beginning was the Word (1:1-2)

- John's gospel begins as the 1st book of the Bible begins: with God's creative word.
 - **John's Prologue is a theological invitation into the world of John's gospel.**
 - He introduces key themes that the reader can meditate on and pray about for a lifetime in a growing understanding of the glory revealed in Jesus.
- In Gen. 1, God speaks reality into existence; see also Is. 55:10-11; 40: 6-8 Ps. 33
- The creative and revealing Word is a person who addresses each one of us.
- Made in God's Image, we are designed to respond to God's word spoken to us.

He was God from the Beginning; He became Flesh & Dwelt among us (Tabernacled). (1:14)

- **In the incarnation, he became what he was not:** The Word became flesh.
- **He tabernacled among us.** The glory—the one & only Son full of grace & truth.
- If I desire the life God designed for me, I must hear the Word, see by the Light, live according to Truth, and walk in the Way that is Jesus.

The Son Who Knows the Father Intimately, Makes the Father Known (1:18)

- "I am the way, the truth, and the light. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. Jn 14:6-7b

An Astonishing Possibility (1:3-5; 9-13)

The Divine Life (Zoe) was in the World (1:3-5; 9-13)

- **Jesus separates the light from the darkness (see Gn. 1)**
 - John tells us that the life of the Word is light shining in the darkness.
 - This light reveals the darkness of life apart from God.
- **The darkness of our age was born & developed during the Enlightenment!**
 - We see ourselves as the measure of all things, as basically good, and not needing God's revelation for our lives.

- Reasoning from ourselves as the starting point, we create definitions of right and wrong.
- We build our new towers of Babel to glorify ourselves as self-creators.
- **The darkness has not overcome the Light: The Light reveals our darkness.**

A Stunning Implication of Incarnation: Receive Jesus and become God's Children!!

- **Not just theological theory!**
 - At the heart of the prologue is an invitation to experience the reality of begotten life in Christ.
 - In John's gospel, Jesus is God's unique Son; we become God's children through Jesus.
- **He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.**
 - We think of our "selves" as our own!
- **Receiving Jesus into my life forms a new life within me.**
 - **Begetting is different than making something.**
 - To beget is to bring into existence something of a similar nature.
 - **The Logos of God begets Children of God.**
 - **Born of God. Born from above.**
 - Made new through the power of the Spirit—a new creation in Christ.
 - Not the kind of "birth" we typically think of.
 - See John 3 and Nicodemus struggling to understand this new meaning.

"To Those Who Received Him" (1:12-13)

- **Not like receiving a Christmas gift that makes no lasting difference.**
 - Some of those gifts that we "receive" have our initial interest and fascination, but soon we become bored.
 - Other gifts we "receive" with a smile, but we think about exchanging them (if no one's feelings would be injured).
- **The verb John uses is related to the middle eastern concept of hospitality.** To receive on into one's home as a personal friend. Willing to make necessary adjustments. Welcoming into your home as an honored guest and desiring do what needs to be done to meet their needs.
 - Mt. 1:24, "Joseph took Mary home as his wife." He received her (same verb)
- **I have a friend who received a Christmas gift more in line with the concept of receiving that John is using here.**
 - My friend and his wife were with their son and his wife. Their son gave them a box. When they opened it, they found a tiny pair of shoes. Underneath the shoes was a photo, an ultrasound image of a baby that was on the way to be born in this world as a loved child and grandchild.
 - Now that was a Christmas gift to be received with life changing joy.

Conclusion: Daily Welcoming Jesus into Our Lives

- **When we receive Jesus, we accept him, not on our terms but on the basis of the personal reality of his being.**
- Jesus told his disciples what it meant to receive him, to really believe in his name: we deny ourselves, take up the cross, and follow him.
 - Too often we substitute something inferior for this.
 - At my mother-in-law's house and making the mistake of turning the TV down to hear someone who had come to visit. **The rebuke:** You must ask permission.
 - Many of us treat Jesus as a "guest" who must ask our permission to change anything in our lives.
 - You will never be satisfied with that version of Christianity.
 - You will blame your boredom on a preacher who we are weary of, a program you wish were different, a style of worship you prefer, or on some other feature of a religious institution.

Daily Inviting Jesus to Be with Me

The Opening Door (based on Dallas Willard)

Enter Lord Christ,
 I have joy in your coming.
 You have given me life,
 And I welcome your coming.
 I turn now to face you,
 I lift up my eyes;
 Be blessing my face Lord Jesus,
 Be blessing my eyes.
 May all my eyes look on,
 Be blessed and be bright;
 My neighbors and my loved ones,
 Be blessed in your sight.
 You have given me life,
 And I welcome your coming.
 Be with me Lord,
 I have joy, I have joy
 In my life with you.

We Receive Jesus in Faith (influenced by Darrell Johnson)

As members of your family,
 We welcome you home Lord Jesus.
 We are yours.
 We were made by you.
 We were made for you.
 We are incomplete without you.
 You made us a new creation.
 You invited us into your Father's family.

Come and make yourself at home with us:
Every room, every closet,
every space of our lives is open to you.
Rearrange the furniture of our life together
in whatever way you want.
May we be your dwelling place on earth as in heaven.