

For the last several weeks we have been learning about who God is. We learned that He is Sovereign, Holy, Wise, Faithful and Loving. When this God looked over His earth and saw the turmoil and the sinfulness of man He sent His Son into this world.

He came to this earth for one reason. He came to show the way to heaven and to a right relationship with God. To read about Christ in the book of John is to find Him through the eyes of John. It is called John's gospel and John saw Jesus Christ as the Great Creator God of the universe. His massive vision of Christ has many times opened the eyes of unbelievers to who Jesus is and to the way of salvation.

Our spiritual growth is forever bound to the size of our vision of Christ. Our goal should be to move away from the one dimensional or narrow picture of Christ and begin to see the full and complete picture of the Lord. The Gospel of John is one you come back to over and over and each time you do you will find the Him to be bigger and bigger.

In the Chronicles of Narnia, Aslan (the Christ symbol) has a conversation with Lucy as she gazes into his wise and large face.

"Welcome, child," he said.

"Aslan?" said Lucy, "You're bigger."

"That is because you are older, little one," answered he.

"Not because you are?"

"I am not. but every year you grow, you will find me bigger."

As we trek from now to Easter through portions of the Gospel of John it is my hope and prayer that we find Him bigger than we ever knew before. Jesus Christ is not God-lite. He is not just a good man or a prophet. He was and is the representation of God come to earth. He took on the form of a human being so that He could relate to His creation and try to save us from ourselves.

To understand Jesus Christ you have to understand John 1:1-18. There is probably no better explanation of who Jesus is than these verses.

1. The Greatness of His Position: Lord

¹ In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He existed in the beginning with God. ³ God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. John 1:1-3 NLT

What you will notice in these verses today is that the word "Word" is capitalized. For those of you that may wonder about that it is referring to Jesus Christ. The original language that this was written in was Greek and the word is Logos.

A "word" is that by which we communicate our will; by which we convey our thoughts; or by which we issue commands the medium of communication with others. The Son of

God may be called "the Word," because he is the medium by which God distributes His will and issues His commandments. (Hebrews 1:1-3).

This term was in use before the time of John. It was used in the Aramaic translation of the Old Testament, as exemplified in Isaiah 45:12; "I have made the earth, and created man upon it." In the Aramaic it is, "I, 'by my word,' have made," etc. Isaiah 48:13; "my hand also has laid the foundation of the earth." In the Aramaic, "'By my word' I have founded the earth."

John first words here are also a reference to the opening words of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Here he writes, "In the beginning the Word already existed."

What this does is establish the person of Jesus Christ as being God. He was God and He was with God from the beginning. He is not a substitute for God. He did not come to earth because He was less than God. So here are the things you need to know about Jesus Christ as Lord:

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He was preexistent with God:	In the beginning was the Word
He was in relationship with God:	And the Word was with God
He was and is God:	And the Word was God

He was and is the Creator. If you look at verse 3 you find that in no uncertain terms it is stated for all the read. In Colossians 1:16-17 it says, "*For by him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*" (see also Hebrews 1:2-3)

He made the creator of the macrocosm and the microcosm. He is creator of the vast and visible universe and the invisible vast universe of the atom. We just read that "in Him all things hold together."

Do you know why this is important? It is important because if you believe that Christ is the creator of everything and that He holds together both the seen and unseen than just maybe it will be possible to trust Him with your life.

It was said of Charles Steinmetz, the mechanical genius and friend of Henry Ford, that he could build a motor in his mind, and if it broke down he could fix it in his mind. So when he designed it and actually built it, it ran with precision. One day the assembly line in the Ford plant broke down. None of Ford's men could fix it, so they called in Steinmetz. He tinkered for a few minutes, threw the switch, and it started running again. A few days later Ford received a bill from Steinmetz for \$10,000. Ford wrote back, "Charlie, don't

you think your bill is a little high for just a little tinkering!” Steinmetz sent back a revised bill: “Tinkering—\$10. Knowing where to tinker—\$9,990.”

Only Jesus knows where the tinkering should be done in our lives to keep us in perfect running order. He knows where to make adjustments in our lives. He knows what is best for us and the way that we should live our lives. Do you trust Him with your life? Are you resting in His will and the greatness of His creative ability? He is Lord. He is God and He invites you to be in a daily ongoing relationship with Himself. Simply put, He wants to be the Lord of your life.

2. The Greatness of His Passion: Light

When Christ came into this world He revealed a light that has never been extinguished. That light has been rejected by some and received by others but it has never gone out.

He was the Light revealed

*The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.
⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.*

⁶ God sent a man, John the Baptist, ⁷ to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. ⁸ John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. ⁹ The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

God has always found a way to reveal Himself. This light is not a mere spiritual thing but has a physical attribute to it. Moses went up Mt. Sinai in the midst of thunder, lightning and a bright light. When he asks to see God’s glory God puts him in a cleft of a rock and covers him. As God passes by Moses can only see His back and the afterglow of God’s presence. The effect is so startling and intense that people cannot look on Moses’ face because he has come in contact with God’s glory. (Exodus 33:18, 2 Cor. 3:7)

There are other Old Testament images of God’s glorious light. For Israel it was a cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night that led them on their exodus from Egypt. It was the presence of God that filled the temple built by Solomon. It filled the whole place.

In the New Testament it was Peter, James and John with Jesus on the Mt. of Transfiguration when it was recorded that Jesus face shone like the sun. Of course John is not talking about that kind of light.

He is talking about the life-giving life that seeks out a world enshrined in darkness. It is this light that has driven authentic followers of Christ across the street to their neighbors and around the world to share the good news. As sad as it may be this life-giving Light has been rejected by many.

He was the Light rejected

¹⁰ He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. ¹¹ He came to his own people, and even they rejected him.

A poor family was farming some land during the depression. There was one son in the family and the parents wanted the best for him. They scrimped and saved so they could send him to college. After he has gone for a year or so, his parents, who loved him very much longed to see him again. They sold some things, saved their meager income and went to visit their boy. When they arrived on campus, poorly dressed in their simple and plain farm clothes they spotted their son with some other boys. The father ran to him and called out, "Son, son it's your father." The boy looked at his dad with no sign of recognition. The father repeated his words. "Son, it's your father and mother. We've come to see you." The boy no doubt embarrassed by his parents' poverty turned to the other students and said, "I don't know who this is. He must be crazy."

You and I may hear that story and think there could be nothing more horrible but we just read the ultimate rejection. In verse 11 we read these painful words, "*He came to his own people, and even they rejected Him.*"

Jesus Christ is rejected on a daily basis. The Light of the world is too often ignored in lieu of a fondness for darkness. Maybe it is the fact that really following Jesus Christ is not politically correct. You will not be popular when you truly follow Jesus Christ. You will not get invited to the party scene if you are truly following Jesus Christ.

Do you reject Christ or really accept Him into your life on a daily basis.

He was the Light received

¹² But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³ They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

Can you just spend a moment or two with those verses on the screen or looking at them in your Bible? Do you realize what an amazing statement is found in verse 12?

“. . .to all who believed Him and accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God.”

Being God's children means that we can call God Father. If you do it reverently you may call God Daddy. Is there any sound more meaningful to a father than hearing that sound when he comes through door to waiting young children who actually want to see him and be with him? (side note: those days don't last forever so embrace them while you can)

Before Jesus Christ came the notion of thinking of God as our Father/Daddy was unheard of. In all of the O.T. God is called Father in reference to Israel only fourteen times.

However the Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 4:6, “Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, Abba Father.” That cry is embedded in our hearts.

Next time you can’t sleep cry out to Abba, Father (dearest Father)

Are you lonely?

Are you insecure?

Are you without Christ and God in this world?

He has made it very simple: believe in Him and accept Him.

Let me say this because I have reason to believe that some of you are not getting it. When you believe in Christ and you accept Him into your life you will never be the same. Everything about you will begin to change. Let me take a moment and share some scripture with you. It’s found in Ephesians 4:17-31:

Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused.¹⁸ Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him.¹⁹ They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

²⁰ But that isn’t what you learned about Christ.²¹ Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him,²² throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception.²³ Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

²⁵ So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body.²⁶ And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.”^[d] Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry,²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

²⁸ If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need.²⁹ Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

³⁰ And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own,^[e] guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior.³² Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Galatians 5:19-26

The bottom line is this: If you have received Christ your life will be different. I mean radically totally different.

3. The Greatness of His Purpose: Love

¹⁴ *So the Word became human and made his home among us. (He pitched His tent among us) He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.*

¹⁵ *John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'"*

I want us to conclude our thoughts today by taking in and really absorbing these words.

¹⁶ *From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.*

The more you allow God's love and grace and faithfulness to work in your life the more of His love you will discover. The more you do His will and conform your life to His word the more of His love you will discover.

Some translations say, "we have received grace heaped upon grace."

Former Catholic priest, Martin Luther discovered a wonderful secret that he shared with the world. It was the direct and unceasing grace of God. You didn't have to buy it or earn it by doing certain things as taught by the church in his day. You just had to accept it. Our salvation was by faith alone.

Listen to his words written in the 1500's:

The sun is not dimmed and darkened by shining on so many people or by providing the entire world with its light and splendor. It retains its light intact. It loses nothing; it is immeasurable, perhaps able to illumine ten more worlds. I suppose that a hundred thousand candles can be ignited from one light, and still this light will not lose any of its brilliance... Thus Christ our Lord, to whom we must flee and of whom we must ask all, is an interminable well, the chief source of all grace... Even if the whole world were to draw from this fountain enough grace and truth to transform all people into angels, still it would not lose as much as a drop. This fountain constantly overflows with sheer grace.

Sometimes I think we have a God that is way too small. I believe that we too often sell Him short.

Dorothy Sayers wrote these words: The people responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus never accused Him of being a bore—on the contrary; they thought Him too dynamic to be safe. It has been left to later generations to muffle up that shattering personality and surround Him with a yawning ho-hum atmosphere of tedium. We have efficiently trimmed the claws of the Lion of Judah, certified Him ‘meek and mild,’ and recommended Him as a fitting pet for pale curates and pious old ladies.”

Brennan Manning once shared the story about a repressed nun named Christine who rarely smiled or laughed and never danced. One day in prayer, she had a vision where she was in a ballroom: “I was sitting by myself on a wooden chair, when a man approached me, took my hand, and led me onto the floor. He held me in his arms and led me in the dance. The tempo of the music increased and we whirled faster and faster. The man’s eyes never left my face. His radiant smile covered me with warmth and delight, and a sense of acceptance. Everyone else on the floor stopped dancing. They were staring at us...I glanced at his hands and then I knew. Brilliant wounds of a battle long ago, almost like a signature carved in flesh. The music tapered to a slow, lilting melody and Jesus rocked me back and forth. As the dance ended, he pulled me close to him. Do you know what he whispered?...’Christine, I’m wild about you.”

Jesus Christ is the Word! He is the communication from God come down to this earth to connect with you and me. I wonder today what you need from Him today. I wonder what you need to tell Him today.

I want to invite you to connect with Him today.