

## THE JESUS WE NEED TO KNOW

### The Word

John 1:1-18

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During this sermon series, we are considering these questions: Who is Jesus? How does culture distort our understanding of him? How exactly does he save us? What does he save us from? As we look at those questions in light of our text, we realize the account of Jesus' beginnings is unique in the Gospel of John. Matthew and Luke begin with Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. John goes back much further. "In the beginning..." Sort of like Genesis: "In the beginning..."

Jesus is called The Word. Think about it. He is what God has to say to us. He is God's ultimate communication with us, about God, about us, about how life is supposed to be lived. In a world filled with millions of words, he is The Word. Facebook currently has 2.45 billion monthly active users as of late 2019. Every second, on average, approximately 6,000 tweets are sent on Twitter. That's 350,000 sent per minute, 500 million per day and around 200 billion per year. Add to that TV, radio, podcasts, YouTube, words, words, words, yak, yak, yak. Here is The Word!

Later in v. 18, John will say that the Son has made the Father known, he literally "exegetes" the Father. That is a preaching term, for unfolding the plain truth of a Bible passage. I love the Apostle Paul's commentary on Jesus the Word from Col 1:15: "We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created" [The Message].

But what happens when that communication is rejected or ignored? See v. 11. He came to his own home (the same word used at the Cross when the Beloved Disciple was told to take Mary in). And his home rejected him. Our rejection is based on pride. That's what we need to be saved from. We cannot be saved by human effort—by our wisdom or by our works. It's not achieving; it is receiving—by faith. It's not a creed; it's a relationship. Read vv. 12-13.

In vv. 14-18 we see that this Word moved into the neighborhood [The Message], made his home among us [CEB]. One time I took two of our grandsons to the movies. As it began, the iconic Columbia Pictures logo came on the screen. The little one whispered, "Is that Jesus?" His older brother replied, "No, dummy. That's a girl; Jesus was a boy!" You got that?!? What a wonder. Jesus has been here. God has been here.

And what he did between his earthly birth and crucifixion matters. We seem to want to skip that. But those years between show us what God is like. Dallas Willard once wrote that if we have Bibles with Jesus' words in red, we should have his deeds in green [*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 352]. After Jesus' death and resurrection, the early church had the task of replacing Judas. A condition was established: This person was to be one who was with them when Jesus went in

and out among them (Acts 1:21). The Word is not an idea, emotion or an organization; it is a person.

Note the twin themes: grace and truth (this is such an important combo, that John repeats it in v. 17). First, grace. Some people think of God as hateful God or uncaring. No. He is full of grace. Just look at Jesus' life. A faith encounter with Jesus erases this notion of a vengeful, hate-filled God. If we idealize power and violence, we will always look for an angry God. No. Full of grace.

And maybe you're one of those people who won't commit to follow Jesus because you're afraid you can't live up to it. Join the crowd! John has an answer for that. We have tasted his grace and God keeps piling it on, grace heaped upon grace, grace replacing grace, piled high, generous, inexhaustible, gift after gift after gift (v. 16).

But then Jesus was no pushover. He is also full of truth. Years ago, I read a sermon in which a pastor said that we are never satisfied with truth until behind that truth we find a person who is true [Alexander Maclaren, *Exposition of Holy Scriptures, Philipians*, p. 42]. Isn't this the marvel of Jesus? There is no distance between what he says and who he is. There is no disappointment. No one who meets Jesus ever stays the same. There simply is no failure in him, no disappointment in him. He is all that God has to say.