

Message Series: The Word
Message Title: The Coming Word
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Scripture Text: John 1.1-18

I'm excited this morning to continue our series on **The Word**. As you know, each week we're taking a look at the coming of Christ (or the Christmas story) as recorded in each of the four gospels. Last week, we looked at *the Word Promised* from Matthew. Now, this morning, we will look at **the Word Made Flesh**; the account from the Gospel of John.

Our Need of Rescue

We are all hopelessly in trouble unless someone comes to our rescue. A few weeks ago, I watched a video of a coast guard rescue helicopter sent out to the frigid Bering Sea in Alaska. Three helicopters were commissioned to rescue the crew of a fishing vessel that had gone down in a terrible storm. When the helicopter arrived, there were 18 men in the water. One by one the men were plucked from certain death as the cable was lowered with a basket to scoop up each man. The final helicopter arrived but there was not enough room to take them all. Instead of leaving the last man in the water, the rescue swimmer jumps into the raging, icy Bering Sea and trades places with the last remaining man whose ship had gone down in the storm.

Imagine you are about to drown in the raging waters of a deep sea. Would you want someone to throw you a book on swimming instructions, and ask you to swim? Or would you want someone to jump in the water and rescue you? If you are sick, you need a doctor, not a medical book. If you have a legal problem, you need a lawyer, not a law book. This is the picture of the incarnation, when God the Father, sent his Word (the Son) to enter human history and rescue humanity.

GOD HAS COME TO US THAT WE MIGHT COME TO GOD

It's interesting to me that John doesn't even tell us who Jesus is in his gospel until verse 17. Instead, he begins by giving us this title, "the Word," or in Greek, the "logos". John is the only writer in the New Testament who gives Jesus this title. Why does he use it? Why doesn't he just say, in the beginning was Jesus, or Christ or the Son?

We recall from the Old Testament when God spoke at the creation for example, "Let there be ..." and what happened? Things came into existence. Or, we hear the prophets speak and they say, "... and the Word of the Lord came to me," and there was an effect.

By the *Logos* title, then, John wants us to understand that **Jesus is the self-expression of God**. "He was the audible, visible Word who expressed the heart of the inaudible, invisible God. Jesus Christ is God's great Visual Aid."

FOUR TRUTHS ABOUT THIS WORD THAT BECAME FLESH

First, He came to declare to us his divine nature (verses 1-2)

1. The Word is **eternal**. *"In the beginning WAS the Word ..."*

- Reminds us of Genesis (*In the beginning, God ...*).
- ALREADY there. BEFORE the creation = not created.
- Always WAS, which says that he is eternal.

2. Word is **relational**. “...and the Word was *WITH* God...”

- “with” (*pros*) = “face-to-face” with someone or “in the presence of” someone.
- Close relationship with Father God. There were others existing in intimate, personal fellowship with the Word. The Word doesn’t make up the Godhead by himself.
- Makes Christianity unique from all other religions in the world.

3. The Word is **essential**. “... and the Word *WAS* God ...”

- Not “A” god or simply, “god-like” - having the qualities of “deity.” He’s not in the divinity club.
- The word order in the original is emphatic - The Word *WAS* in the very essence of his nature; God.
- If the Word wasn’t God, then he either lied to us, he was a nut-job and only thought he was God, or he was who he claimed to be.

Recently, in Colorado, a man claimed he is God and then killed the devil after beating 70-year-old man, Peter Morales to death. Today, if someone claims to be God, most people think they are mentally unstable. Why? They can’t back up their claims. People who knew Jesus didn’t laugh at the idea of his claims of divinity; it made them angry.

So, John says all this with some authority. I mean, he hung out with Jesus, right? And it’s like he’s saying, “I was there. For three-and-a-half years I heard what the Word said and I saw what the Word did, and still ... I’m learning who he is. But, here’s what I know: ***He’s Eternal ...he’s Relational ... He’s Essentially- God.***” Nothing is outside of his control.

That’s why Hebrews 1:6 says, “...*Anyone who comes to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who truly want to find him.*” **The truth is: If you don’t believe he is God, he can’t help you and he can’t help me.** But he is God. That’s why he came!

But there’s more. And we move from WHO the Word is to WHAT the Word DOES ...

THE WORD CAME TO BRING US LIGHT AND LIFE (vv.3-5)

We need to understand that John always writes on two levels of meaning: the first is *shallow enough for a child to wade, and the second is deep enough for an elephant to swim.*

The Word was the Agent in creation (Genesis: *In the beginning, God created...*).

“All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.” (v.3)

- So the Word is what brought it all about. He was the divine architect and builder.
- Colossians 1.16-17 gives fuller meaning *“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. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” He created the physical and the spiritual.*

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. (v.4)

Now what's he saying here? ...

1. Life is really spiritual life, eternal life. Eternal life is more than getting to heaven, it is a present experience of fellowship with God. John 17.3 tells us exactly: *“And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”*

2. Light is really the light of revelation or truth.

In John 8.12, Jesus says, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

The account of the man born blind recorded in John 9 clearly shows light representing the revelation of truth.

(Light: e.g. man born blind in John 9)

(Life: e.g. of Lazarus, John 11)

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

- The word, “overcome” - difficult because it could mean
 - the darkness didn't understand the light.
 - the darkness didn't put the light out. (the nature of light)
- Darkness is essentially a separation from God due to sin (fruit is death, hatred, violence, jealousy, selfishness, greed, pride, lust)

I am sure many of you can relate to this illustration. Have you ever had a time when it's early, say on a Saturday morning, it's still dark and cold out, and the bed is warm and you're just sleeping really, really well ... And then someone in your family comes in and just flips the light on for no apparent good reason? When I was growing up when my mom used to do that on occasion when it was time for school. I always remember having two thoughts at that moment (which I can't share with you now) - two thoughts, “turn the light off!” and “why is the light still on?” **But it was the light that woke me up.** Looking back at the account of creation in Genesis what do you see, light always precedes life. **You must be exposed to the light before you can benefit from the life.** *John says that Word came to show us that he is God and that he came to bring us the light (truth) and the life (eternal).*

That leads us to a **third truth** about the Word in verses 9 through 13, and that is ...

HE CAME TO EMPOWER US IN DARKNESS (verses.9-13)

3 Responses to the Coming Word...

1. There are some who ignore the Word.

Verse 9 says, *“The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.”*

- In other words, there is general knowledge about God that's available to anyone to anyone and everyone. The Word was already *“in the world”*, through his own creation. This light was already shining through creation. Verse 10: *“He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.”*

- *Romans 1.20 says: "...his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."* So there are those who just didn't notice.

2. There are those who reject the Word.

Verse 11: *"He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him."*

- Christ was born into the world and He came to his own people, "to those who should have known better" (Morris) and they rejected him. He was not welcome there.

3. There are those who receive the Word.

Verses 12-13: *"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."*

- When a person receives the light that he's given and responds to it by God's grace, God himself empowers (exousia). The power that brings you into the family of God, also enables you to live in the kingdom of God.

THE WORD CAME TO SHOW US HIS GLORY

Verse 14, *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us ..."*

What an amazing thought! God so wanted to communicate with us and reveal what he is like that he took on human flesh and became one of us. Fully God yet fully man. Without sin, but experiencing everything we experience.

- The word "dwelt" (v.14) means Christ "**tabernacled**" or '**lived in his tent**'
To John's original readers it immediately brought to mind the tabernacle in the Old Testament where God met with Israel on their way to the Promised Land. Everybody living in tents and God has his own tent too. God's shekinah glory, his visible presence that would descend on the tent and Moses would go in and meet with him.

The tabernacle then, was the great meeting place between God and human beings. **Jesus is the great meeting place between rebels and this God.**

"... and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Glory? There was a time in Exodus 33 when Moses begged God, "Please show me your glory." And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.'" God's glory is all of his goodness.

- His glory, his goodness is full of two wonderful things: "grace and truth." Jesus has come to bring us the truth about God, about us, and about life. He's also full grace. He brings favor to us that we don't deserve. Right in the middle of misery.

- The greatest example of his glory is the cross. Because it was there that his goodness was shown most of all.

Conclusion

Several years ago there was a missionary in Africa who ministered in an area that was very, dry. People in that area had to dig wells to have any water -- but not the typical well where you lower a bucket. Instead they sank deep shafts into the ground. And the water actually seeped into the side walls and condensed on the sides in very little amounts.

And what they did to obtain the water is send people down into the well to wipe the walls and sop up the floor with rags. Then they squeezed the water into buckets. So you had to actually go down into the well. And because these well shafts are very narrow, they put slits into the side, so a man actually walked down into the well to get the water.

One day a man went down into one of those wells. But he only got a little way down, and he fell. He broke his leg at the bottom of the well. Now somebody had to go down and get him. He was a big man, though. And nobody wanted to go get him. Nobody wanted to go down and help him out until the chief came. The chief at that time was the largest and the strongest man in the tribe. And this is what he did – he actually took off his robe and his headdress and he laid them aside, and then he went down... down into the well. He picked up the other man and brought him back up. Now the question is, when he took off his robes and headdress did he stop being the chief? No. ***In the incarnation, that's what Jesus did.***

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