



Series: The Gospel of John: For God So Loved...

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Speaker: Josh Jones, Community Life Pastor

Text: John 1:1-5

Title: Jesus is God and Gives Life, Light, and Victory

Intro:

Good morning, Mercy Northeast! I am so excited to be here worshipping with you all this morning. Really, over this past month I've been able to spend more time worshipping over here with you guys, and my family and I love worshipping with you. We love the passion that comes from your worship, your hospitality, we love that we get to be a part of repurposing this school building on Sunday mornings to be a place of worship. This building is being used to build into the lives of students academically, and on Sunday mornings we get to

worship here, and we get to pray for the souls of those who would walk in here Monday through Friday. How cool is that?

I have a question for us to start our time with this morning. How do you know someone? Like really know someone? What does it take? What does it look like to stay meaningfully engaged in their life so that they can be known by you, and you can be known by them? Well, I remember a day my senior year, when one of my buddies was trying to tell me about this really cool thing that was on the internet, he said it was like a yearbook online. And you know what my first thought was? That sounds dumb... who really just sits and looks through yearbooks, why would you want to open up your computer just look at people's pictures. Well, it turns out, it was spring of 2004 and he was telling me about Facebook. For those of you who happen to be 30 or younger. You might not know what I'm talking about when I say Facebook. It's kind of this archaic program that came out in 2004 and its a way your parents and grandparents keep up with people. Share pictures, photos and all kinds of stuff. I'm kidding... but seriously, it's a cool way to keep up with people and most people on Facebook accumulate more "Friends" than they could ever possibly keep up with in a meaningful way. And these relationships/"Friendships" tend to limp along through our social media connection but are more often than not never a context where true relationships are developed. Even though on occasion, Facebook might hit us up with a really



cool “Friendiversary” slideshow (you know what I’m talking about, where they gather a bunch of images of you and another person, play some sappy music, and remind us of the date we clicked a button to solidify our digital friendship for all eternity. Facebook, by itself is not a sufficient platform to grow and mature a friendship. It requires more than what Facebook can provide.

It’s silly right, but most of us know what I’m talking about. We know a lot of people, a lot of people know us, but how many of those people do you truly know and how many of them truly know you? That’s different, isn't it?

Now, my relationship with my wife, is different from my Facebook relationships. I know my wife. I know her story, I know the things she likes, the things she doesn’t. She knows me, we have conversations where we share our hearts with one another, our hopes and dreams, our fears and concerns. We support one another, encourage one another, we know what’s going on in each other’s lives. We have a countless # of shared experiences with one another, we’ve endured hard times together. We know one another. There is relationship

Jesus in one of the gospels asks a similar question. He’s walking with his disciples, and he asks them who do people say that I am. They rattled off a few things...well some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, others say one of the

prophets. Jesus a follow-up question for them, just to make it a little more personal. He said, “But who do you say that I am”?

So much hangs in the balance with this question. Who do you say that Jesus is? Do you know him? Is he like one of the thousands of friendships you have on Facebook? Technically you know one another, annually there is a friendiversary where you reminisce on a few shared memories, but there is no real relationship.

This morning, as we continue our John series, I think this is a good question for us to think about. Who do you say that Jesus is? Do you know him? It’s intensely personal and it supposed to be, but as we jump into this series in John together, we are going to find that God is a personal God, and he has made himself known to us through Jesus. In fact, this is the very reason John wrote this letter.

(In other words, John is telling us that he wrote this letter very strategically, he says, “these things” have been written because I’m trying to prove

something to you)

So, in this series in the gospel of John that we are calling ***For God So Loved... our aim is to help us move from knowing***



about Jesus (intellectually, abstractly) to knowing him intimately. "For God so Loved the World". It's one of the most extraordinary statements known to humanity. God so loves the world, and his love for

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. **31 But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. -- John 20:30-31 (CSB)**

the world culminated in the death and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ. **Therefore, whoever "believes" in Jesus will be saved from their sins and have eternal life with God.** Because... **God did not come into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through the transforming power of the Gospel** (John 3:16-17). Right here is the heart of the Father on display. His goal is not to come in and condemn, but to rescue.

As we work through John's gospel this semester we are going to have to wrestle with the concept of "belief". John was writing to an audience, many of whom had witnessed the miracle of Jesus death and resurrection but failed to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. They had knowledge, but no belief. What about you? Do you have belief? What would you say if Jesus asked you like he asked his disciples "Who do you

say that I am"? Welcome to the gospel of John....If you don't know how you would answer this question, I'm so glad you're here, and I believe that as we read through this gospel together, you are going to encounter Jesus, and it will be an encounter that will require you to make a decision, to believe that he is who the scriptures claim him to be or that he isn't. .

Outline: We're going to break this short passage into two parts. The first 3 verses John is going to help us see unmistakably that Jesus is God, and vs. 4 and 5 we are going to see that from him comes life, light, and victory.

Essentially, we are going to talk about who Jesus is, and what he does. Let's look again at verses 1-3

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. 3 All things were created through him, and apart

from him not one thing was created that has been created.
John 1:1-3 (CSB)

Let's just pause and acknowledge how incredible the beginning of this letter is. Can't you hear someone like Chris Hemsworth (The guy who plays Thor in the Marvel movies) reading these first few verses? It just has this rich and mystical sound as you read it. Each phrase is literally packed with



biblical and theological truths that need to be embedded in our hearts and minds.

1) John 1:1-3 “Jesus is God”

2) John 1:4-5 “Jesus gives Life, Light, and Victory”

In just these first few verses, John takes us to the beginning of everything. Before the world existed, John tells us, there was something. Before the world existed; we learn that God was there, and the WORD was there with him. The Word... We translate from the Greek, Logos to be Word... Logos was a well-known philosophical idea in John’s day. The Greeks could look at humanity and know that there was something that made them different from the rest of the created world, there was something more to him than just body. Man had personality, emotion, beauty. Man could act and do...Your word was the means by which you communicated yourself to others. “Logos” captured all of this... Jesus is the Logos of God... he makes the invisible God visible to us

No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father’s side —he has revealed him. -- John 1:18 (CSB)

Isn’t that fascinating? Right here in the beginning of John’s letter... he gets right to it letting us know that Jesus is God.

I. Jesus is God (John 1:1-3) - Theology in the Air (High above)
One of the first things we observe right in verse one

1. **The Word was there in the beginning...** In other words, Jesus has **Always Existed** and was **Never Created**. This is really important for us to understand. Some of you may be familiar with the concept of the trinity, it’s one of the more challenging things for us to wrap our minds around, but the scriptures clearly teach us that there is one God. We, Mercy Church, believe that there is only one God in heaven. But we believe that this one God is made up of three persons - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They all three exist together in perfect unity, and they are three distinct persons, each having a different role that they play. So, just as God the Father is God, So Jesus is God, and so the Holy Spirit is God.

Jesus isn’t an expression of God. He is God, and he always has been. He was present with the father even before Genesis 1:1... Did you catch that? John doesn’t just take us back to the start of creation, he takes us back to the beginning of time, and Jesus was there. This could only be true of the creator.

2. All Things were made Through Him





Jesus is the builder...He was present at the beginning with God and he's responsible for the creation of everything that was made. Listen to what John said in verse 3.

Vs. 3 - **All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.**

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians wrote...

Right here we see that everything flows from the Father and Through Jesus. Also, in Colossians chapter ONE, we see that everything finds its beginning in Jesus.

-Again, all things are made through him, and Paul adds something else that is so good for our souls right here. He says, by him... all things hold together. How many of you this morning need to be reminded and encouraged by the reality that Jesus not only made all things, but he is the one holding them together?

He made your life, and he is holding your life together. He made your children, and he is holding their lives together. Jesus as the giver of life is also the one we turn to and trust as the sustainer of life.

Okay, so just in these first 3 verses we have seen that Word (Who is Jesus)

1. Has always existed and was Never created
2. He is God
3. He is the creator and sustainer of life.

Ok, so that was part ONE. Jesus is God... now let's look at what he came to do. Man... this is so good. He came to do what only he could do as the divine son of God. He came to restore creation back to its creator. He was the one who was going to restore Israel, He is the one who is able to bring all people back into a right relationship with God. He came, to give us **Life, Light, and Victory**. Let's look back at verses 4 and 5 together.

yet for us there is one God, the Father. All things are from him, and we exist for him. And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ. All things are through him, and we exist through him. -- 1 Corinthians 8:6 (CSB)

16 For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and by him all things hold together. -- Colossians 1:16-17 (CSB)

II. Jesus gives Life, Light, and Victory



Life - in him was life, in both a physical and a spiritual sense. Physically, he is the source of everything that is living. He is the author of life, the giver of life, the sustainer of life. If Jesus had not made us, if he had not made me and you, then we would not be here. He is the source of our life physically.

He is also the source of our Spiritual and Eternal life.

John 3:16 - **For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have *eternal life*.** -- John 3:16 (CSB)

In John chapter 11 we enter into a story about a man named Lazarus, a friend of Jesus who was sick and dying. As Jesus makes his way to the town where Lazarus is, he knows that Lazarus has already died. He approaches Martha and he tells her "Your brother will rise again. And She thinks well... yeah, I believe that he will be resurrected in the last day... Jesus meant today. He tells her in verse 25

John 11:25 - **Jesus said to her (Martha - Lazarus' sister), "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. 26 Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"** -- John 11:25-42 (CSB)

Before he had done anything, before he called Lazarus out of the grave, he asks her... do you believe, do you trust me? Do

you trust that I have authority to give physical life, that I have authority and power to give eternal life?

If you have been around church for a minute, you have probably heard that Jesus came to give us new life, at least I hope you have heard this. But did you also know that he is not just the source of life for salvation, he is not simply our access pass into eternity, but He is our source for every moment of our life? Like Paul said to the philosophers in Athens, it is in Jesus that we live and move and have our being.

Some of you are here this morning, and you don't know Jesus, and maybe you are trying to figure out how following Jesus would make a difference. You might even be sitting there thinking you are unconvinced that you need Jesus. It is not my job to convince you. But I want you to consider this.

4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 That light shines in the darkness, And yet the darkness did not overcome it. -- John 1:4-5 (CSB)

1) If Jesus is the creator of life, and the giver of life, then it would make sense that for us to taste and know a life that is satisfying it would have to come from him.

I think you could think of it like two wells.

There is a Jesus well and a worldly well. In the Jesus well you



can imagine what you would find there... Jesus. And in the “Worldly” well is everything else. There are good things in this well, like... Friendship, a good job, a spouse, family, money, good food, amazing experiences, little creature comforts, entertainment. There are also things in this well that are destructive to us, addictive substances, things that glitter and shine, power, control. We dip into this well to try and quench the thirst of our desire. This well is calling to us, trying to sell us on its quality, and we fall prey to it all the time. Here’s the problem with this well. When we come to this well, lower our bucket down to drink what it has to offer, it always sends us away with only the illusion of satisfaction. It’s like eating shrimp and grits. One of my favorite things about moving to the Carolinas was my introduction to shrimp and grits. It tastes so good, and I walk away from the table feeling so satisfied, but I know that 30 minutes later, I’m going to be hungry again. The well of the world is actually worse than shrimp and grits because its not just that it doesn’t satisfy, it’s that it actually leads to our destruction.

However, if we draw life from the Jesus well, if we turn to Jesus as our source, it’s a different story. In John Ch. 4 Jesus is talking to a Samaritan Woman, and he tells her that he has water to offer her that will completely satisfy. He told her... anyone who drinks from the water that he gives will never thirst again. Then later in chapter 6 after Jesus feeds the 5,000, he refers to himself as “the bread of life” and says no

one who comes to me will ever be hungry. He is the only one able to satisfy the longings of our hearts. Sometimes those longings are satisfied through material and physical things, but we can never mistake them as the source of life. That is Jesus.

The invitation for us is to come and satisfy our desires with the one **well** that can truly give us life.

It’s funny, even those who have trusted Christ and, in a sense, turned to the right well to receive eternal life can find ourselves turning to the wrong well to find sustainment for our daily life. We turn to Jesus to receive salvation, but we turn to career, entertainment, relationship, possessions to give us meaning and to find our purpose and identity. When we do this, we will always find ourselves dissatisfied, looking for something that will satisfy. And for some reason we struggle to realize that Jesus is there all along wanting to give us the peace, comfort, and satisfaction we are looking for. It seems so simple, and yet we often make it so difficult on ourselves.

(STORY??)

Jesus came to give life; he gives it physically as our creator and he is the source of our spiritual and eternal life.



John writes tells us that Jesus came to give life and light... He says that the life he gives in verse 4 is the light of man.

How do you see at night? You need light right. When we try to bump around in the darkness, we sometimes learn some painful lessons. Several years ago, when I was a youth minister, I remember taking a group of students away on a fall retreat. We were staying at a campground near Greenville, and I decided that it would be a ton of fun for us to play Capture the Flag at night with no lights. Add a little stealth action to the game to mix it up a bit. Well needless to say the game ended earlier than hoped because two kids at two different times literally clotheslined themselves on clotheslines while running through the camp. One girl was literally about to win the game for her team when she caught the clothesline right in the mouth and found herself layed out on her back staring at the stars. What a picture of us stumbling our way through the dark but when Jesus comes and gives light... we see.

Your word is a lamp for my feet
and a light on my path -- Psalms 119:105 (CSB)

Paul Tripp commented on this verse and said “this means God’s word is not just given to rearrange the way you think, but also to be the thing that guides the way you life. The Word of Guide reveals, illuminates

John is telling us that the living WORD of God illuminates, reveals to us who God is, he enables us by his grace to see our need for salvation, and he is the light by which we are able to process and make sense of the things we see and experience in our world. Without the Word of God and the Spirit of God, we would be left to wonder blindly.

Now there is also a sense in which John uses light to describe righteousness, the righteousness of God, and he uses dark to describe evil. So, in verse 5 John writes

5 That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it. -- John 1:4-5 (CSB)

The “did not” is a past tense verb referring to a specific event at a specific time. At the Cross, Satan hoped hed won, but what he didn’t realize is that God was actually in control and what seemed like the darkest moment in the history of creation was actually the most victorious moment in all of history. Death and sin were defeated at the death

and resurrection of Jesus. Darkness DID NOT overcome the light... And guess what, It still can’t, and it won’t. Jesus brought us forgiveness and victory through his death and resurrection. The light of Christ has come into the world and the darkness has not and will not overcome it.



This doesn't mean, NO Hardship, Suffering or pain in this life, but it doesn't mean that it doesn't get the final say. I think sometimes we can be deceived into thinking God is sitting in heaven not doing anything. No, He's done it. He achieved victory over sin and death, and he's told us he is coming back to make it final and that one day all sin and brokenness will be done away with, and everything will be made new. This is a certain hope for the believer.

So, what do we do with this? How should we respond? Well, it depends on how we answer our first question... Who do you say that Jesus is? Do you believe that He is the Son of God who brings life and light into our world?

For some of you, your NEXT step is to turn to Jesus. To come to him to find life and light. For others, maybe you've received new life in Jesus, but you've been spending too much time drawing from the wrong well and you need to return to Jesus

who alone is able to satisfy the longings of your heart and bring comfort to your soul.

As we do this, here's what happens. Our lives become transformed by the gospel, The life that comes from Jesus begins to take root in our lives and then it begins to work its way outward into our living. As this happens, we will find that we become mirrors reflecting this very life and light that God has given us in the midst of the darkness of our world... We get to in a sense sort of pull back the curtain and give people a little taste of heaven and eternity as we seek to live redemptively in the world God has placed us in.

I want to invite our band to come up and I'm going to pray for us. If you want to talk with someone. You have questions about Jesus and how you can be restored back to a right relationship with God, we want to talk with you. This is a safe place for you to come with your questions, this is a safe place for you to wrestle with the WORD of God.