

To teach that –Jesus (“The Word”) is God, so if we know Jesus, we know God.
So that – there might be **glory for Jesus** and **peace for those listening** that in knowing Jesus they know God and have life.
Repeated Phrase - What I love about Jesus is...if we know Him, we know God

1. Intro – What is life for?

I recently asked a man in his sixties “What’s your goal in life? What’s life for?” He answered, “To achieve as much as I can.”

As far as he knew, he was a long way off dying. So at that stage of his life, the goal was to achieve as much as he could.

But once people know they’re dying, goals often change to regrets.

From goals to regrets. A palliative nurse in Australia recently summed up her conversations with people in their last weeks of life. One of the most common regrets, she says, goes something like this.

“I spent too much time trying to *achieve* something and not enough getting to know the people most important to me.”

That’s a big shift in attitude isn’t it?

From... “My goal in life is to achieve”...

To... “I didn’t get to know the people who were most important.”

Friends, regrets can give us a clue to one of life’s great mysteries.

And that’s this question... “What is life for?”

“What is life for?”

So many people feel they’ve missed the point. And that’s often because they didn’t get to know the people who were most important.

For so many people, the point of life is to get to know those are most important, that’s what life is for.

The point of life *is* to get to know someone. THE one who *is* most important. Getting to know Him is the point of life and knowing Him is only way to true life.

That person is Jesus, so let’s hear what the Bible says about him.

John 1:1-18

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. 3 All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. 4 In him was life,[a] and that life was the light of men. 5 That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome[b] it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him.[c] 8 He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. 9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.[d]

10 He was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be[e] children of God, to those who believe in his name, 13 who were born, not of natural descent,[f] or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man,[g] but of God.

14 The Word became flesh and dwelt[h] among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son[i] from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified concerning him and exclaimed, “This was the one of whom I said, ‘The one coming after me ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.’”) 16 Indeed, we have all received grace upon[j] grace from his fullness, 17 for the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 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.

This is the word of the Lord thanks be to God

PRAY

Friends, our reading from John today isn't easy. So, I'm going to draw out just two things. One, that "Jesus is God", and two, "So what difference does that make to your life?" "Jesus is God" "So what difference does that make to your life?"

2. In the beginning was the Word...

It's 2000 years ago and John is in his late teens. He and his brother work in their Dad's seafood business. One day a man from out-of-town lands them both in a new kind of apprenticeship. They spend three years under his training, then he sends them out.

Half a century later, John sits down to try and capture in words the significance of those three short years. Everything that man had done and said during that time had driven him to an inevitable conclusion. The man Jesus, who he'd seen teach, heal, drive away evil spirits, suffer and die...then rise from the dead, that man was God himself in the flesh. What John realises about Jesus is.... He knew Him so he knew God!

So the goal of John's book is to show us the man Jesus is truly and fully God and why that's a matter of life and death for you. Now, that's a pretty big construction project, so he simply builds up brick by brick.

His first brick is the simple line ...

v1 In the beginning...was the Word,

But this first brick doesn't actually mention Jesus. Why? *Because* he's only given *that* name when he arrives as a human baby. But John's book about Jesus starts at a time called the beginning. In in *this* beginning, we hear about something called "the Word". And the beginning John's talking about is beginning of the universe itself. We know because he uses the first words of the creation account in Genesis.

Genesis 1:1 - "In the beginning...God created the heavens and the earth."

So John's saying "*In the beginning...*(when God created the heavens and the earth) *was the Word*". Or you could say the Word *was* there. In the original language its written as the Word "was...and had been in a continuing and ongoing way". So, it means that when God created all things "the Word" was there already.

So, that's the first brick.

In the beginning was the Word...

3. ...and the Word was with God,

Ok, now I'm thinking a few questions might pop up here.

"If God created *all* things how can there be something *else* there before he created everything? Where did this "Word" come from?

Remember, John starts by quoting *Genesis*, so he's already given us a hint.

In *Genesis*, at the very beginning, what does God do? He creates doesn't he. And how does God create everything? He *speaks*: 'Then God said "Let there be light." He speaks His *word* and things happen. He creates *by* his word. He creates *through* his word. His word is his *means* of creating. He wants to create a world, and he does it by his word. God's word *shows* what's on his mind. When God speaks, he shows his heart. God's word *reveals* his intentions doesn't it. It uncovers his desires. With his word God goes public. God's word is the way God expresses himself in his world. God's word is how he makes himself *known*.

The Bible keeps reminding us: God continues to relate to his creation through his *word*.

Listen to Psalm 33

*The heavens were made by the word of the Lord,
and all the stars, by the breath of his mouth.*

and Psalm 107

*He sent his word and healed them;
he rescued them from their traps.*

and Isaiah 55

*11 so my word that comes from my mouth
will not return to me empty,
but it will accomplish what I please
and will prosper in what I send it to do."*

Can you see how God's word is something which *expresses* what's in God's heart? By his Word God makes himself known. His word is described as being sent *out* from *within* himself *into* the world. It's with him and he sends it out. But it's not something separate to him is it? It's *his* word. To the writers of the Old Testament God's *word* is God himself...*expressed*. God's word is how he makes himself known.

So back in our passage John tells us "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God*" He's not saying something entirely out of left field here, is he? It's not a *new* idea. God's word has *always* been with Him. It's *always* been his way of making himself known.

So John can say "*1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was **with** God,*" So there's our second brick.

And the Word was with God.

And I hope how you can see how that makes sense. If the Word was there in the beginning, before the creation, then the Word must have been *with* God.

Here in John, God is showing us something new that His people hadn't known before. John is about to really rock the boat.

4. He was with God in the beginning.

v2 **He** was with God in the beginning.

He was with God. "The Word" is actually a *person*. A real living person. He's not a Star Wars kind of force, or an idea like Karma, or a personification of God's *words*. No, God's word is an actual, real person who has related to the world since the beginning.

And of course, we find out just a few verses down, that person is Jesus.

So, here's another brick, and isn't it a doosey: the Word is a person

He was with God in the beginning.

The Word who was there in the beginning with God...is himself a person.

Our third brick: the Word was and is a person.

5. ...and the Word was God.

But look, I've only laid three bricks down and I've already got one out of place. We need to back up a little. Did you notice we've missed something very important in John's sentence here. Let's try it again.

*1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word **was** God.*

This word was not only *with* God, but the word *was* God. He was *with* God, so the Word and God are distinct somehow, but the word *was* God, so they're closely identified with each other.

Confusing, huh?

How can someone be *with* God and also *be* God.

This is God speaking through John, so we believe it. But let's take a moment to try and understand *how* he can say it, in fact why John *must* say it.

Here's the first reason John can say the Word was both *with* God and *was* God. John's just said "*In the beginning was the Word*" and that's before anything was created. And before anything was created there was only God, right?

We could say that *God* is *one* kind of thing that exists. He's the creator.

And we could say there's *another* kind of thing that exists: the things he created.

So everything is either *one* kind or the *other*.

You are either the *creator* or you're *created*.

So if you exist *before* anything is created, you must be the creator.

We can peek ahead at the next verse just to make sure.

v3 **All** things were created through him (the Word), and apart from him **not one thing** was created that has been created.

So if the Word existed *with* God *before* the creation, the Word must somehow *be* God. But how does that work?

Here's another reason John can say the Word was both "with God and was God."

John is very careful how he writes this sentence. There's a way he's put it in his own language that's a bit hidden in English. The way he writes "God" when he says the

“Word was *with* God”, is slightly different to the way he writes “God” when says “the Word was God”. And the way he’s organised it means you can’t just swap the terms around. John says “the Word was God” but that *doesn’t* also mean “God was the Word”. You can’t swap them around.

What John means *here* is this. The Word *was* God, but God is more than *just* the Word. He’s definitely saying the “Word was God”. But he’s also saying that the Word is not the **only** one who is God.

I’ll say it again. John is careful to say that the Word *is* God. But he is also saying that the Word is not the **only** one who is God.

The Word *is* God but he’s not the **only** one who is God.

This is the clear teaching of Jesus in John’s book. Jesus, “the Word” is not the *only* one who is God. We go on to discover that God is Father, Son (that’s Jesus, “the Word”) and Holy Spirit. One God, three persons. What we call the the Trinity.

Here’s one way Jesus puts it from John 14.

...Philip said to Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus replied, “Philip, I have been with you all this time, and still you do not know Me? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

Did you hear that? “Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father.” The Father and the Son (that Word) are distinct yet if you have seen one you have seen the other. They are distinct and yet equal. It’s another way of saying “*“and the Word was with God (distinct), and the Word was God (equal).”*

So, that’s our fourth and last brick laid down.

“and the Word was God.”

John then lay more and more bricks to build up a picture of Jesus. He unfolds the three years he and the other apostles spent living day-to-day with a man who *looked* like every other man.

And yet, in this one sentence, John claims that this same man is no less than God himself.

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.

6. So what?

a) If you know Jesus you know God.

But what's the *point* of all this?

It's helpful when someone tells you they're about to make their point isn't it? "Here is the reason I'm *telling* you all this."

John will spend a lot of time and effort trying to convince us God became a human in the man Jesus. But even if it's true, so what? What difference does it make?

Jesus is God. But what's your point John?

Well, I think he's got two.

Let's take them one at a time.

His first and Point 5a on the outline....

"If Jesus is God then....if you know Jesus you know God."

And now let's skip right to the end of our passage.

v18 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.

Quite simply...the way God has shown himself to the world is in the man Jesus.

In the man Jesus we can look God in the face. Thousands did. John himself joked with God. He ate with God. His was close friends with God. John rested his head on God chest. He smelled God's sweat. He knew the thoughts of God.

How do you know the thoughts of God? Do you remember? God expresses himself by His Word? But John tells us the Word became flesh.

So what Jesus says about something, God says.

What Jesus feels about something, God feels.

What I love about Jesus is...if we know Him, we know God.

b) If you know Jesus you have life

That's a pretty big deal isn't it? We can know God. But John still wants to convince you why that's matter of life and death.

He still imagines someone saying, "We can know God can we John. So?"

"Reader" he answers, "we're talking about life and death. Your life depends on it:

He says, I've written my book "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

Friends, your creator is saying to you, "If you understand who Jesus is you can have life. Life to the full here, life to the full into eternity.

Listen again to how Jesus puts it.

Jesus knows he's about to die the next day and he's praying: God the Son to God the Father. He says.

"This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent —Jesus Christ.

The only way to have life is to know God. And the only way to know God is to know Jesus.

What I love about Jesus is...He is God: if we know Him, we know God. And if we know God, we have life.

If we know Jesus we have life.

And friends tomorrow morning that's going to matter.

Are you a mum who's job means that every achievement seems to be undone by the end of the day? But do you know Jesus? He's not looking for your achievements. He wants you to get to know him even more deeply. That's where you'll find life.

Perhaps you're just starting out into adulthood. Life looks promising. Maybe careers are opening up. Or the bank has approved that loan. So many around you will tell you where to find life. Hard work. Bumper crops. Your name attached to something significant. Whatever it might be. Our culture will tell you that, but they'd be wrong. But please don't miss the point. If like you'll find life somewhere other than Jesus...your life will be wasted. But if your life *is* about knowing Jesus that's true success.

Or perhaps you could list your life achievements on a post-it note. But you know Jesus, you have not missed out on life. You've found it. And you cannot lose it.

Maybe you drag yourself off to the job you can't even remember why you accepted, take courage. If you know Jesus, he says to you "My dear one, you have *already* found the purpose of life here and into eternity."

Perhaps you're reaching the end of your life and your relationships are in a shambles. Your friends, your family- estranged. You might even be saying "I spent too much time achieving and not enough time getting to know the people who were most important", even *you* can take heart. It's not too late even now to get to know the one who can give your life deep and joyful meaning.

There are so many ways you may have missed out in this life.
Make sure you don't miss out on the life to come.

There may be many ways this life has been a success for you.
Make sure your success doesn't blind you to what life is really for.

Friends, what I love about Jesus is...that he is God. In Jesus I can know God and have life.