

# Sermon Outline

## “LIFE IN HIS NAME”: THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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### THE WORD OUR CREATOR (JOHN 1:2-3)

#### I. Introduction

Why must the world trust and obey Jesus? Because Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and the eternal Word of God who was with God from the beginning, who is himself fully God in nature, substance, and essence.

#### II. The Word Was in the Beginning with God (John 1:2)

- A. Verse 2 presents us with a restatement of verse 1: “He [the Word] was in the beginning with God.”
- B. There are two possible reasons why John restates this truth.
  - 1. John wants us to take very seriously the divine origins of the Lord Jesus.
    - a. The Lord Jesus Christ was not just any teacher of the Law, or prophet, or pious miracle worker. He was the One who was with God from the very beginning.
    - b. The reason Jesus is able to be a prophet, teacher, and pious man was precisely that he was the first and original Word of God.
    - c. If he was the first and original Word of God, what he says can be trusted as coming from God himself.
    - d. Jesus is an accurate representation of God’s mind, will, and heart toward his beloved people.
  - 2. John wants to focus our attention on God the Word, the second person of the Trinity.  
—That may be why John sets the Word apart for special attention; why he doesn’t say, “In the beginning was God,” but rather, “In the beginning was the Word...”
- C. Verse 2 reaffirms the Word’s pre-incarnation existence as way of drawing our focus on the Word.

### III. All Things Were Made Through the Word (John 1:3)

- A. Verse 3 affirms what we've already mentioned, that the Word was the agent by whom God created the universe. But it makes that point using two very emphatic or forceful statements.
- B. First: "All things were made through him..."
- C. Second: "and without him was not any thing made that was made."
  - 1. Apart from the God-Word, the things that were created in Genesis 1 would not have come into existence.
  - 2. The whole creation is the creation of the eternal Word.

### IV. That One Exception

- A. While we are on this topic of creation, that the "All things" does *not* include that which is evil.
- B. It is very important to point out that evil was not one of the original creations of the Word. Instead, evil is a distortion of the original creation.
  - James 1:13: "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one."
  - James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."
- C. While God did ordain whatever comes to pass, God did not actively create evil, because God himself has no evil within him:
  - Westminster Confession III:1: "God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: *yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.*"
- D. What was the origin of evil? How are we to understand what evil is?
  - 1. Evil is a distortion of the original creation.
  - 2. Evil is what happens when some segments of creation opt for independence from God.

- a. When we live independently of God, when we use creation in such a way that is detached from God's plans, evil is born.—Evil is separation from God who is the very Source of life and meaning.
- b. Evil becomes more horrific the further we separate ourselves from God's Law.

## V. John 1:3 from Other Angles

- A. If we want to understand more fully what God is saying in one text, we should also consider other passages where similar truths are taught.
- B. In the case of the Word's role as Creator, we see that this teaching is not at all unique to the Gospel of John. It is in at least three other passages in the New Testament.
- C. Ephesians 1:3-6:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love<sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

- D. Colossians 1:15-18:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

- E. Hebrews 1:1-3:

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,

whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. <sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

## VI. Life in the Word-Based Universe

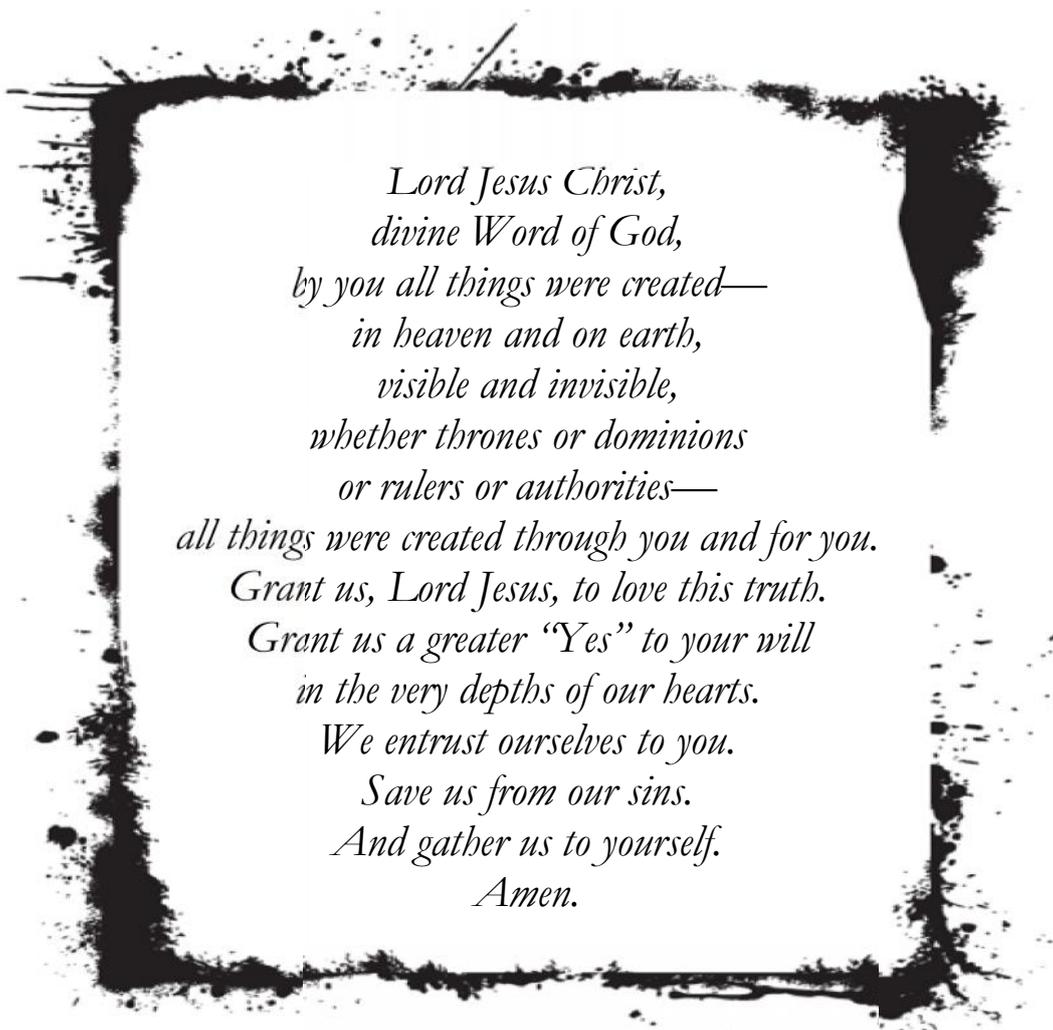
Since the eternal God-Word created and sustains the universe (with special affection toward his own beloved people)...

- A. Our very first response should be *thankfulness*.
1. Thankfulness is a cardinal biblical virtue.
  2. It is also a very difficult virtue to cultivate, because, as sin-tainted human beings, we want very much to be at the center of our own stories.
    - a. We are naturally predisposed to think mainly of ourselves.
    - b. While we can certainly understand the idea of disciplining ourselves to be more godly, striving for godliness as an expression of *thankfulness* may feel very alien to us.
    - c. Thankfulness requires us to truly admit that we are not what we fancy ourselves to be—and that we have benefited from help.
  3. To grow in thankfulness, we continue practicing thanksgiving.—By disciplining ourselves to thank God often (and this discipline is itself a gift from God), we remind ourselves that God alone is our life, that whatever signs of earthly and spiritual life we have in us are due to his kindness to us.
  4. One of the natural results of being thankful is that we actually become happier people.
- B. We should *live consciously of him*.
1. God calls us to live knowing that he is with us and in us; and that we are in him.
  2. To resist the tide of secularism in our lives, we need to live against this flow by living in the constant awareness of God.
    - a. We need to live with God and in God every day.

- b. We need to relate to others out of God, out of a sense that God loves us and wants us to revere him as our heavenly Father.
  3. The simplest way to start doing this is really by praying, calling out to God frequently.
    - a. Scripture:
      - Romans 12:12: “Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”
      - Ephesians 6:18: “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication...”
      - 1 Thessalonians 5:17: “pray without ceasing”
    - b. Key parts in prayer:
      - a. Praise God for who he is.
      - b. Thank God for what he has done for us through our Lord Jesus.
      - c. Confess our sins to God and ask God to forgive us.
      - d. Ask God to give us the will to obey him in all things.
      - e. Tell God about your day, as a child would talk to his or her parent.
  4. While prayer is not the only thing God has called us to do, prayer is so often where obedience begins.
    - Second Thessalonians 1:11: “To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power,”
  5. Together with the Scriptures and the administration of the sacraments (baptism and the Lord’s Table), prayer is one of the central means by which God transforms individuals, communities, and societies.
- C. We can (and must!) *enthroned the divine Word in our minds, our hearts, and our lives—and stop being the center of our own lives.*
  1. The heart of God’s plans has always been the eternal Word of God, who is the life and salvation.
  2. We need to live with *a sense of openness and submission to the Word.*
  3. We can trust that *the Word will finish what God has started.*  
—The Word is not just our Creator. He is also our Re-Creator.

## VII. Return to the Word

Let us come to the divine Word of God, Jesus Christ. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him. Without him, nothing was made. In him, all things hold together. The Word is the Source of life. He is the Center of all of God's plans for the human race. Let us turn away from all that is dark and evil. And let us return to the divine Word.



*Lord Jesus Christ,  
divine Word of God,  
by you 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 you and for you.  
Grant us, Lord Jesus, to love this truth.  
Grant us a greater “Yes” to your will  
in the very depths of our hearts.  
We entrust ourselves to you.  
Save us from our sins.  
And gather us to yourself.  
Amen.*

God's Word is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. God's Word is our creation as well as re-creation. God's Word is our salvation. And God's Word has taken on human flesh. He is Jesus Christ the Son of God, our Savior.