

## Sermon Title: Victory in the Divine Word

### Sermon Passage: John 1:1-5

#### Overview+ Introduction:

One of the key texts in understanding the gospel of John and its purpose is John 20:30-31. Sometimes when we read a particular book or text it is sometimes hard to find the overarching purpose or lens in which we read, but John is helpful since he himself gives us his reasoning in writing the way he writes and what he writes. John 20:30-31 says,

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written 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.

His point is clear. He has written his content in such a way that as you read and see the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, you would believe and continue to believe and therefore have eternal life in him. John is interested in showing us the beauty and glory of Jesus in who he is and what he does. **We are to be captivated by the person and work of Jesus Christ himself.** And so, as we see Him in the gospel of John and as we study this book together, there is one application which must happen, believe. Believe who he says he is and believe in what he does.

One of the distinct differences between John and the other books is the “prologue” that we are given. In the first 18 verses of chapter 1 we are given a rich introduction and perhaps a summary of his main points and themes which sets the scene for the book. One of the interesting things about the prologue is the fact that it is full of verbs. I think we are to look forward to the deeds of Christ, especially his work on the cross. Our Christian faith, our salvation depends on the fact that Jesus Christ really came into this earth 2000 years ago, and he really is who he said he was, the Son of God, and that he really did die on the cross, and that he really did rise again after 3 days and was ascended into heaven.

I want to draw your attention firstly to verse 5 of chapter 1. It says, that *“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it”*.

This is a beautiful verse because at its very core, it is talking about the gospel message. It is about what Jesus has done. We know from the rest of the prologue that this light is talking about Jesus. John the Baptist bore witness about the light v7 and this light v 12 would save people, and those who believe in him will be “children of God”. Later in the gospel, Jesus would say in 8:12, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”* And in John 9 in the story of Jesus healing a man born blind he says to him, *“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*. (v5)

This Jesus, this light, shines in the darkness. He stands in great contrast to sin and evil. He has come into our sinful and dark world and He has penetrated into the darkness. He is the “light of the world”. He cuts straight through and the darkness can’t overcome him. He has victory over the darkness. He has triumphed over them. No matter what the darkness tries to do, no matter what Satan tries to do, no matter what all the sins and evils of this world tries to do, they can’t beat Jesus.

The thing is, if you have ever gone camping or gone for a walk in the night, you might've carried a torch. Especially if it is pitch black. The bad thing about a torch is that, sometimes the torch isn't that good or the battery dies.

Unlike a torch, Jesus never runs out of battery nor does he shine dimly. He shines bright and overcomes the darkness.

And so, there are 3 reasons why you can be sure that there is victory in Jesus. There are 3 reasons why you can believe and must believe in Jesus. You can be confident that there is salvation, freedom from sin and death, you can be confident that there is hope and certainty for eternal and true life in Jesus because he is, the *divine word, the divine creator, and the divine life.*

1. **Divine Word (v1-2)**
2. **Divine Creator (v3)**
3. **Divine Life (v4-5)**

### **Divine Word (v1-2)**

John begins his gospel by saying, “<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

You don't need to be a bible scholar to notice that the first verse sounds very similar to Genesis 1. Even many non-Christian's know how Genesis begins. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”(Genesis 1:1). So what John is trying to bring our attention to is a time and place before creation. It is about the beginning of time. And it is something that doesn't really make sense to us as humans. We can't fully understand and comprehend time. For us as humans, we think of time as very linear and short. We use the phrase, “every minute counts” because we recognise that we don't last forever, and our time is limited. But for an eternal being, namely God, time is not viewed the same. What John is trying to point us to at the very beginning of his gospel is the **pre-existence** of the “Word”. This “Word” existed before anything began to exist. He was not a created being and that will become obvious when we look at verse 3. John teaches us that this “Word” **eternally pre-existed**. And that should blow our minds off. He is out of this world and human comprehension.

He not only **eternally pre-existed**, but the second phrase we are given is that “the Word was with God”. (v1b) He **co-existed** with God. He is in fellowship with God. There is perfect harmony. And this idea is emphasised and repeated in verse 2 where it says, “<sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.”. What John is trying to teach us that the Word is distinct from God and is in perfect fellowship with one another. Now before you go and try to create all sorts of theories and ideas of how that works, John inserts a third phrase, “and the Word was God”. Not only does the Word, **eternally pre-exist and co-exist with God**, but he is God himself. He is divine. What John teaches us here, is aspects of the doctrine of the Trinity. We believe that there is only one living and true God. Deuteronomy 6:4, ““Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one”. And in his word, he reveals himself as three distinct persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, although distinct, they are one, they are same in substance (deity) and equal in power and glory. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Perfect in Unity. One God. And that's what we have here. *The Divine Word, eternally pre-existing and co-existing with God.*

Now, in light of Genesis 1:1, we would think that John would say *In the beginning, God\** or in light of the gospel you might expect him to say Jesus or the Son. But instead he substitutes God

with the “Word”. We know the “Word” he is talking about is Jesus because later in John 1:14 it tells us that *“the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth”*.

Why the title? Interesting way of talking about someone. In Genesis 1, the Word of God appears as a means to which God accomplishes his acts of creation. More generally in the Old Testament we see that the Word of God as a reflection of God’s nature and powerful work.

Psalm 33:6 says, *“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.”* This shows us his act in creation.

Psalm 107:20, says *“He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.”* That is his “word” in relationship to healing, deliverance and salvation.

And in Isaiah 55:11, it says *“so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”* It is about the “Word” in relationship to God fulfilling his purposes and bringing judgement.

The Word plays an important role in the Old Testament. When God speaks to his prophets and people, it helps them understand the mind and will of God. (Jeremiah 1:4-5, 9)

In light of this when we look at the New Testament and we look at texts like Hebrews 1:1-2, *“<sup>1</sup>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.”*, we are given a clear picture of who and what Jesus does. The prophets of the Old Testament spoke about Jesus and pointed forward to him. It is all about Jesus. Because he is *“the way, the truth and the life”* (John 14:6). Jesus himself is the one who reflects God perfectly, he is the one who accomplishes God’s purposes perfectly. And he is the one who created all things and he is the reason why all things exist. And we will look at that soon in the second point.

But to clarify his point, John emphasises all these truths in verse 2 saying, this word, *“He was in the beginning with God”*. The Divine Word, Jesus Christ, eternally pre-existed and co-existed with God. And that is why you can have confidence in a world full of darkness. In a world which seems to have no hope. The Divine Word, Jesus Christ, has come and penetrated into the darkness and brings hope.

Secondly, you can have confidence in salvation because the one who has penetrated and who has overcome the darkness is the **Divine Creator**.

### **Divine Creator (v3)**

<sup>3</sup> *All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

Verse 3 brings our attention to the centrality of the Word in all of creation. All things were made through him. He is the creator of all things. He is the agent and source of creation. We read a minute ago Hebrews 1:2, *“through whom also he created the world”*. Colossians 1:16-17 agrees saying, *“16 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. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”*

John is making a similar point to Paul. All things were created through him. He is the agent of creation. And that proves his great power and might. He continues to say that if Jesus doesn’t

exist, if he was not in the process of creation, nothing would be made. Life itself is dependant on the cosmic reality of Jesus Christ. Colossian gives us more information about the centrality of Jesus in creation. The reason why anything exists, is because it is for the glory of Jesus Christ. It is “for him” things are made. And he is the who upholds it and sustains it. One thing to note and to emphasise at this point is that, Jesus was not a created being. Jehovah witness believe that God the Father created Jesus. That’s heresy. From their website they say that, “God created Jesus before creating Adam. In fact, God created Jesus and then used him to make everything else, including the angels.”. But if you think about the logic of John, he does not allow for this interpretation. “<sup>3</sup>All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”. John excludes Jesus as a “created thing”/ “Made thing”. Anything created and made comes from the Word and that means the Word himself can’t be made. And that is consistent with our first point, Jesus the Divine Word. He is eternal and pre-existed and co-existed with God.

Isn’t that amazing? Jesus the Divine Word is the Divine Creator. He is source and agent of all creation and he is the one who holds it in his hands. All of life hinges on him. And he has come to be the light of this world. This divine creator has come down. The all-powerful God, the one who upholds and sustains all things has come down and he suffered and died on the cross to bring you new life. It doesn’t make sense to our human minds because it is inconceivable. Some religions reject the notion of Jesus being God and that he died on the cross. They say how can God die? Jesus, the God-Man, did die on the cross, because of his infinite love and grace. That is something we can’t comprehend. His love is so great that he would even send his one and only son. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

If he is that great and mighty then I think it is obvious why he reigns victorious over darkness. The light of the world is not only the Divine Word but he also the Divine creator. You can confidence in salvation because he is the **Divine Creator**.

It is only appropriate for our final point to be that, you can have confidence in the person and work of Jesus Christ penetrating the darkness because he is the **Divine Life**

### **Divine Life (v4-5)**

We talked a little bit about Jesus being the source of life and the agent of creation. And John makes that very clear in verse 4 by saying “In him was life, and the life was the light of men”. Although John was talking about physical existence and life early on, I think John is thinking here more than just physical life. He is thinking something of great importance. And very often John talks about Life as spiritual life or eternal life. Because what is more important than being alive physically is being alive spiritually. In John’s other writing he says in 1 John 5:11-12 “<sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”. God is gracious and has poured out his common grace by creating this world, by creating you and me and everyone on it and sustaining us day by day. Although we look around and see many healthy people, doing amazing things unless they have Jesus, they don’t really have life. They aren’t really alive. You see John equates true life, true aliveness as being spiritually alive in Jesus Christ. “In him was life...Whoever has the son has life”. And that is for multiple reasons. If you don’t have Jesus, death is a reality and there is nothing more after this life except eternal judgement. “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23) On the other hand, life in Jesus means that there is more to live for in light of eternity. Romans 8 is an amazing and rich chapter of the bible. In the middle of it we are given a description of the future

glory. It talks about how all of creation is subject to futility and is groaning, looking towards the future. And it says that in verse 23, *“we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”* Christians can live a spirit-filled life full of hope, in anticipation for the new heavens and the new and a new body. True living is only found in Jesus Christ.

So, if you have Jesus today, if you believe and know him today, you are truly alive. Even when your body aches, even when you age, you are more alive than you have ever been in Jesus Christ. On the flip side, if you don't know Jesus, if you don't trust him and submit to his Lordship, then although you may be healthy, although may feel like you are in the top of the World, you are dead in your sins. Dead in your trespasses. And the only way to be free from the darkness and deadness, is to look at Jesus who is the “light of men”. This life is our light. Jesus says in John 10:10, *“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly”!* Abundant life in Jesus. More and More! It is abundant because what Jesus offers and promises in his death and resurrection, is a life free from the penalty of sin and death, and into a life which is eternal. He promises full and perfect joy, full and perfect fellowship with the Godhead. It is a life which is full of hope and confidence. It is an infinitely greater “life” than you can imagine. John 10:28, *“I give them eternal life, and they will never perish.”*

As you wait in anticipation for this future glory and hope, you can live out the redeemed life here and now. Colossians 3 tells us that those who have been raised with Christ will think and act differently. They think and live in anticipation for the future glory. You are to seek the things that are above, not on earthly things. You have died to sin and have new life in Jesus Christ. Colossians 3:4 says, *“When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory”.* And that's why you can be confident in the person and work of Christ. When he came on a mission into the darkness, he didn't come on a mission to lose. He came with full confidence knowing that he will win and be triumphant. And he did.

Jesus ultimately does that by dying on the cross and rising from the dead. 1 Corinthians 15:54b-57 says,

*““Death is swallowed up in victory.”*

<sup>55</sup> *“O death, where is your victory?*

*O death, where is your sting?”*

<sup>56</sup> *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Victory!

### **Conclusion:**

Jesus, the Divine Word, the Divine Creator, the Divine Life, shines bright in the darkness. He is not like a small and weak torch that dies when the battery runs out or when the darkness gets really dark. No, Jesus is unstoppable. He is the Light of the World. The Christian Faith, what we believe is grounded on something far greater than any other religion or worldviews. It is grounded on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Have confidence in your faith and believe and continue to believe.