

The Word:

Listening to What Jesus Says About God

Good afternoon! Welcome to Fil-Am Church. I'm so glad you joined us today. We're starting a new series for the new year called "Who is Jesus?". Our theme this year is "Jesus" and so why not start with getting to know Jesus more. As I mentioned last week, I chose this theme for this year because I just want us to make Jesus the focus of our church and our lives starting this year. Now, of course, he has always been the focus but if you're like me sometimes the worries of life can be a distraction and we can get our eyes off Jesus and so we need to re-adjust our focus. Since this is 2020 we need to have 2020 vision especially as it relates to our true vision which is Jesus Christ.

God wants us to know his only Son Jesus. So, who is Jesus? If you're not a Christian or let's say you're just investigating the claims of Christianity, this series is for you. In this series, we're going to talk about the various names and titles of Jesus in the Bible. Each name or title of Jesus is significant. They have special meaning and they are meaningful to you. His name has huge implications in how you face life and how you deal with life. If you're a Christian, and even if you've been a Christian for a while this series will strengthen your faith. It will make you fall in love with Jesus once again, I hope. It will help you to become re-acquainted with the most wonderful person in the whole wide world, in fact, in the whole universe.

Who is Jesus? Now, if you go out on the street, in the mall, for example, and ask people who Jesus is, I'm sure you'll get different kinds of responses. In fact, I just saw a video on YouTube where this Christian guy stopped some people to ask "Who is Jesus" and some answered, "He's just a man like us", "He's the David

Copperfield of his time”, “He’s a good man”, and all sorts of answers that were off the mark. Well, there were one or two who said, “Jesus is my Lord and Savior”.

You see, we live in a post-Christian world. People adore Taylor Swift and LeBron James more than Jesus. It’s time to buck this trend and let people know who really deserves adoration. Amen? Jesus said, which is our theme verse for this year, and let’s read together, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” If we talk about Jesus, unashamedly, unapologetically, to others, Jesus will honor that. Jesus wants us to tell others the message of the cross. The reason he died on the cross is to save people. As we talk to others, we wouldn’t expect them to embrace our message right away. But a seed is planted and we let God grow that seed.

In this series, we’re going to look at some of the titles or designations that are applied to Jesus in the Bible. Today, The Word, next week, the Light of the World, then the Bread of Life and so on and so forth. This will take us up to the end of February. Do you know how many titles Jesus has? I don’t know. There are just so many. One web site lists them as more than 150. Well, if we try to extend this series with all those titles, that would take us probably more than three years.

So now, let’s start by looking at the question:

I. Why is Jesus The Word?

John 1:1-4 says, and let’s read together, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.”

In the original Greek the word that we translate as “Word” is the Greek word “Logos”. It’s where we get our word “logic”. The meaning of Logos is hard to define. It means Word... but it also means the mind of God, the plan of God, the purpose of God, the reasoning of God, the logic of God, and the Revelation of

God. Basically everything that makes God who He is. And the reason we use the phrase “The Word” is because words communicate something... they reveal something... they show us something. If I came up to this pulpit and didn’t say a word... but instead just smiled like a moron, no one would be getting anything out of that, and you would all leave immediately. Words are important. So the reason why John gives the title “The Word” to Jesus is because He reveals God’s plan and God’s purpose, and He reveals to us God Himself.

Now how can Jesus do that? Because, like John says, The Word was not only with God... the Word IS GOD! Jesus Christ is God. He is equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He’s not a created being. He is in fact, the Creator as verse 3 says. Notice, it doesn’t say, “In the beginning the Word was created, or formed...” Nope... it says, “In the beginning WAS the Word.” Jesus wasn’t made at the beginning. He was at the very beginning... and of course when it says “the beginning” it’s talking about the beginning of time. Before Jesus made time, there was just eternity... we call it eternity past in order to help us wrap our minds around it. But in reality eternity is neither past nor future... it’s always present. That’s why the Lord calls Himself The Great I AM. So the Father, and Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are eternally existent... they existed before time began.

Now John uses this wording for a specific purpose. He’s wanting his readers to link this back to the Book of Genesis, which starts out very similar. **Gen. 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”** Well John’s saying, “You remember Genesis? Remember when it says God created everything? Well I’m about to introduce you to that God who did that. His Name is Jesus!”

In Colossians 1:16 look at how Paul says it. **“For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.”**

So;, John's going to go on and explain that this same God who created the world, and created the universe, and created EVERYTHING... is the same God who became a man and died for our sins. He set His glory aside and stepped out of heaven and out of eternity, and put on flesh. God became a man and dwelt among us. And that's a big point in John's Gospel...that Jesus really and truly is God. He's not just a prophet like Islam claims. He's not some created minor deity like the Jehovah's Witnesses claim. He's not one of many gods like the Mormons claim. He is God and He was with God in the beginning.

Now when John says that Jesus was with God... that's a relational term. Jesus existed with God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit in the beginning, before time began. They shared eternity together. Again, the Greek here implies that Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit were side by side here, or even face to face. Which again is showing us that the Logos here... the Word... that Jesus isn't a projection of God, or an attribute of God... but that He actually is God, along with God the Father, and the Holy Spirit.

This is why, when we go back to Genesis 1:26 we see the Father say, "Let US make man in OUR image, and after our likeness."

So again, this is why Jesus is given the title of "The Word" or "The Logos"... because He is the only one who is capable of revealing (communicating) God to us... because He was with God, and because He IS God. I hope that is clear to each of us. That is what the Bible says.

Now, we go to the second part of this message which is another question:

II. What does The Word tell me about God?

Jesus, being The Word, reveals or tells us something about God. There are so many things about God that we need to learn, we need to know. But I want to share with you just three of them which we can distill from these verses from John.

First of all,

A. God has a purpose for my life.

How do I know that? Because he is the Creator. And someone who creates must have a purpose in mind for the thing that he creates. Like Thomas Edison. He created the light bulb so people can see in the dark. Like Henry Ford. He created the car so that people can travel with ease. Like Steve Jobs. He created the iPad so children have something to do and they don't bother you while you're on the iPhone.

My point is, God created you because he has a purpose for you. You are unique. God created you with special talents and abilities in order to do something through you. You're not an accident. Accidents happen by chance. But God made you with a purpose in mind. God wanted you to exist in this world and make a difference that's why you're here.

In fact, you being here in this church at this very moment tells me that God wants you to be here. Because he wants you to know through this message that he loves you and he cares for you. His love for you is everlasting.

Sometimes, we may wonder what is the purpose of it all. Friend, he has not forgotten you. Whatever your struggle is, perhaps, you're feeling inadequate, perhaps, you're losing your confidence. People have been harsh with you or telling you things that hurt. Or maybe, you're facing a lot of challenges, at work, at home, your health. Friend, God will not abandon you. He created you in order to have a loving relationship with you. And God would like to honor that.

God says, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." (Isaiah 43:1-3)

Whenever I read that verse, it assures me of God's unfailing personal love. He knows me by name! I think many of you know the experience of Anabel about three years ago. His younger brother in the Philippines died in a motorcycle accident. She and Nanay Monet were devastated, of course. They went home to the Philippines then they came back. The following days and weeks were difficult for Anabel. To help her assuage the pain, I invited her to come with me to attend a Microsoft event in New York. So, we went. In the car on our way to NY and in the subway in NY she was quiet most of the time. Which was fine with me. I needed a break too, if you know what I mean.

In New York, Bel tried her best to put on a brave front although obviously she was going through a difficult time. It was a two-day event and after the last lecture on the second day, we proceeded to the booth of one of the exhibitors who was holding a raffle. The winner gets to bring home a video drone. I dropped my entry earlier praying I'd win it and encouraged Bel to drop hers, too. She wasn't interested in it though which I learned later.

A big crowd gathered in front of the booth. And I positioned myself right at the front to make sure that I would hear clearly as they announced the name of the winner. Bel, meanwhile, preferred to just stay in the back. With bated breath, I watched as one of the guys manning the booth put his hand inside the box and pulled out a piece of paper. He called out the name of the winner and it wasn't either of our names. I was disappointed, of course. Everybody looked around but no one came to claim the prize. The guy called again and still no one came. There is hope, I told myself. Realizing the "winner" had left the Center already, the guy picked another entry, called out the name but no one responded again. For the third time, the announcer picked another one, the name was called and still no one responded. This went on for quite a few more times. Now, the guy, after the initial announcement, had actually been picking business cards which was an acceptable

raffle entry. I was always disappointed when I saw him holding a card because we filled out a paper entry and there was no way we would win it. At that point, he must have picked seven already but no one came to the front to pick up the prize. Before he picked the eighth, someone shouted, “Try another paper entry again!” So, he did. And when he called the name of the winner, which was “Anabel”, Bel said later, “It was as if God called my name”. In my excitement, I shouted, “That’s me!” I looked back and saw that Bel was in a state of surprise and I rushed to her, quickly grabbed her and finally, her face broke into a big smile as we dashed to the front and picked up the video drone.

It was surreal. Unbelievable. The Lord Jesus had intended it for Bel all along. He wanted her to know that he is aware of what she was going through, that he knows her name. Personally. Lovingly. That thoughtful gesture from the Lord certainly touched Bel’s heart and lifted her spirit.

Later in the afternoon on the subway, on our way to Jollibee in Queens to celebrate, Bel shared with me what she wrote on her notepad earlier. She said that she was asking God questions about her brother’s sudden, unexpected death. She wasn’t even sure of her brother’s salvation although she knew when they were young he was even the one who brought his siblings to church. Afterwards, she posted this on Facebook, “I was asking God in my notepad during the last session ... about my brother's death etc. I told Him give me a sign that he's in His hands... then I just joined Rolly if he'd win that drone. Few people's business cards were picked out, but not present at that moment. Then my name was announced. It's only material thing. But for me it's God's personal way of confirming his love and all my questions to Him. He didn't forget me.”

The Bible says that God will never leave you nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5). You are the apple of his eye (Zechariah 2:8). Take heart if you’re going through something difficult yourself. God is the strength of your heart and he will

always be faithful to you. You are famous in your Father's eyes, to rephrase a line in Francesca Battistelli's popular song "He Knows My Name".

God is the Creator and he has a purpose for your life. Now, God is not only the Creator. He is also the Re-Creator and, therefore, he can make things new.

B. God makes things new.

One thing that's true is that God never makes a mistake. He even takes the mistakes you make and weaves them into His plan for His purpose. Nothing comes into your life by accident. Everything fits into His plan.

Rom. 8:28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

God has a purpose behind my problems. That helps me to be free from thoughts of worries, negativity, anxieties. He has a purpose behind every problem that I face. Notice what the verse does not say. It does not say that all things are good. There's a lot of bad in the world.

It does not say that everything will have a happy ending on this side of eternity. But It does say that all things work out though it may be hard for me to understand.

And notice, Paul says, "... and we know..." we don't hope, we don't wish, we don't desire, we don't think, we don't imagine. We know. We have absolute confidence.

What do we know? That all things work together for good for those who love God. All things. What does all things include? Does that include losing your job? Does that include an illness? Does that include a divorce? Does that include a miscarriage? Does that include a death? All things work together!

And notice it doesn't say, all things by themselves are good. It says they work together, they're inter-related. Individually there are many bad things that come into our lives. But they work together. We must look at the whole picture.

If you've ever cross-stitched, or seen a completed cross stitch project before it is framed, usually the back side is a **complete mess like that one**. But you turn it over and you see a **beautiful picture**. We may only see the back of the cross stitch, but God sees the entire beautiful picture that is creating in us, through us and in what looks like a big mess is His beautiful plan. It's the perspective that you're looking at that makes the difference. All things work together for good because he can make things new.

Question: Can God bring good out of evil? Can God take even the sins that I've done in my life -- even the wrong things, bad, dumb, stupid decisions -- and somehow fit them into His plan? Yes!

Example: Matthew 1. The genealogy of Jesus. From Abraham all the way to Mary. Outside of Mary, there are only four women mentioned in Matthew 1. In Jewish history, you see, they did the genealogy, the family tree, by the man. But there are four women mentioned in the lineage of Jesus. They are Tamar, who was seduced by her father-in-law and bore a child; Rahab, who was a prostitute; Ruth, was a Moabitess foreigner who married a Jew; and Bathsheba, and we all know her story. The point is, God even takes the mistakes we make and weaves them into His giant, grand design and brings good out of them.

Isn't that incredible? Isn't it good news to know that you don't have to be perfect the rest of your life to be in God's plan? Isn't it great to know that even though you make mistakes, that God will fit it in? And there's no question that because of a mistake in your past you'll have to settle for God's second best the rest of your life? The phrase "second best" just isn't in God's word.

Finally, God is the life-giver and, therefore,

C. He wants to give me real life.

There's an American idiom that says, "Get a life!" We all know what it means, right? When someone, for example, is just bumming around, we tell that

person, “Get a life!” I like one t-shirt that put a twist on it. It said, “Get a life. Eternal”. And underneath was John 3:16. Apparently that was produced by a church.

Many in this world are breathing, living, have life, and yet are actually dead. Because if you’re living but don’t know Jesus, you’ll expire sooner or later. All of us have an expiration date. That was marked on us already when we were born.

No one can deny that life on earth is short. When you look at a tombstone, you’ll normally see the name of the deceased and underneath the name are the year of birth and the year of death. A hyphen separates those years. That short hyphen represents the time we spend on earth.

How do you lengthen that hyphen? In fact, how can you make that hyphen stretch to eternity? By believing in God’s promise in John 3:16. It says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Friend, this life you have now is not the best life you have despite what one preacher said in his book. Your best life is in heaven which can start now if you believe in Jesus as the Son of God who God sent to the world to die for your sins. If you've never opened up your life to Christ I encourage you to do so today. **1** John 5:11-12 “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. The one who has the Son has this eternal life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have this eternal life.” You have everything to gain. Don't wait. Some of you have been thinking about making your decision for months, for years. Don't put it off any longer. The Bible says “Today is the day of salvation”.

Jesus loves you so much. He is The Word who reveals God to you. Are you listening to him? May you open your ears and your heart to him today.