

Giving your life to God

By Brian L. Burbach

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Bible Text: John 1

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Merrimack Valley Baptist Church

517 Boston Post Road

Merrimack, NH 03054

Website: www.mvbc.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/poweroftheword

Mr. Stecky tried to organize the structure of tonight's program so that I'm not last because then we realize that many of you would leave so actually we do have two more songs coming up following just a short thing that I'd like to share with you guys. Is anybody here done with Christmas shopping for this year? Anybody done? I know Black Friday is a big day. Nobody is done? Anybody having family come in? Nobody? That's a good thing. You'll have a very Merry Christmas then. There are a lot of things that can get us busy, aren't there? There are Christmas programs, there is this, there's that. You're running around. There are parties to go to. There is a lot that can keep us kind of at a place in which we are in a way trying to – actually I forgot something down here so I'm going to have to go and get that, my remote control. This thing is going to be a big help to me.

But I love that allelu, I love hallelujah, I love that word. It's just so beautiful. It's a Hebrew word that just basically means "praise Yahweh or praise Yah, Yahweh, praise God." Today I want to focus on Immanuel, God with us, but not just with us 2,000 years ago because, really in essence, who needs Jesus? We all do. You know, it's not just those that don't know him personally but it's even those of us that have walked with him for years, we still need Jesus, and the good thing is and the beautiful thing is that he is here and he is here now.

Open in your Bibles to John 1. We're just going to cover just a few simple verses that I think speak absolute volumes about who God is. A lot of people have a question about Jesus. A lot of people think, if you even talk with people who are of the Islamic faith would say that Jesus was a good man. You know, I think everybody here would say, "Man, he did some really good things on earth," but it doesn't, it can't just stop there. Either Jesus was a good man or he was God because who goes around saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me," and is just a good man. He's either a lunatic or he was who he says he is.

Let me just take a minute to walk with you through something. This is something that I don't know if you've ever experienced this song or a verse of a song or some text within a song that you felt, "That is just an excellent way of putting it"? "O Holy Night" was actually written as a French poem years and years ago. It was actually put to music by John Sullivan Dwight in 1855. So what we see when we see "O Holy Night," it was

actually written in four different verses. So it's a really neat little, it's in French, it's in English and the one verse in that that just kind of stops me, to just, "Man, that is pretty profound," is this verse right here: "Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth." You know, we are all looking for worth in this world, aren't we? We feel that we want to find a place where we are needed: we find it in vocation; with our talents. But there is only one thing where our soul can find its worth, its value, because do you know what? One of the toughest things for teenagers today is value. "What makes me valuable? Is it my looks?" For us as we get older, is it our money? Is it what's in our bank account? How big our house is? But the only thing at the seat of who you are, the immaterial you, there is a question of what gives me value, and as you start to unpeel it you're going to realize it is nothing that I can lose, it's in everything I can't lose and that's Jesus, the stable one, the imminent one, the one that is here, the one that is here now.

I love Lewis and he put this so perfectly. Basically I could just read this and walk off the stage and I think you'd get the point. "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him," and this is a quote, "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse." He goes on to say this, "You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend it to be that way." Jesus is real. Jesus is here. He is among us.

Let's take a look here at John 1, and I'm going to read it through in its context and then take a couple of things here.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

You know, the word "logos" is an interesting word as I started to study it. In Psalm 33:6, it is a Hebrew word where the word "logos" or "Word" is used as an agent of creation, by the word the heavens made with basically a simple breath. Everything was made with a word. So tuck that away. Hosea 2 says God's message to his people through the prophets was considered to be the word of God. Psalm 119:11, it also illustrates God's law, I will hide it in my soul, in my heart I'm going to hide God's truth because out of it are the issues of life. In Greek philosophy, the divine essence that holds all things together, God's ideal pattern for creation, the Stoics strongly emphasized the logos, the rational principle which pervades all reality providing meaning, order, to persons and the universe. The

logos creates coherence and unity, provides an orderly pattern for existence and holds everything together.

So let's read that one verse one more time, "In the beginning was the Word." So packed with that definition, imagine you're a first century Christian and you're hearing, "Wait a minute, he is Creator. He is the Sustainer. He holds everything together. He is the truth that has come down to us. He is the message. He's everything."

The beauty of the Gospel. I love the Gospel not because it can be neatly packaged into five verses, I love the fact that the Gospel and God are transcendent over this life and the next. Not only do you get life more abundantly here but you get it in eternity because only through him are all things and only through him our soul feels its worth.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." As far back as man can think, in the beginning the Word existed. The term "Word" is common in the Greek word "logos" which meant "speaking or message or words." It must have been amazing there to hear that for the first time, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." That word is also translated Jesus. Jesus is also God.

Verse 2, "The same was in the beginning with God." The Word has always been in a relationship with God the Father. Christ did not at some point in time come into existence or begin a relationship with the Father. He has been there. There are not two Gods. He has had this unique relationship with God the Father. He is God.

The Word, God, the special relationship that they have is something that is not really easy to explain in regards to the Trinity, but the word "with" there when it says, "The same was in the beginning with God," translates into the word Greek "pros" which here says "in company with." In company with. There is a unity there that Jesus was not just the beginning and he wasn't just there in the beginning, but Jesus is also God. Jesus is also something called the Creator. God is the Creator.

"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." Why is there something rather than nothing? Very good question. This is a great question in philosophy. The Christian answer is God, he is eternal. He is the Creator of all things and the Word was the agent of creation. He is the uncaused cause. All creation was made by the Word in revelation with God the Father and God the Spirit.

The most amazing thing as I look at creation is not that it was made and formed with hands but that it was spoken. And as you start to pan out, you're going to realize, Hubble telescopes and all these other different things that show us the expanse of the universe, you start to see that there is something that is way bigger than our little little little little cul-de-sac here called earth in the expanse of all creation. But yet God has chosen to make this as the place in which we live, we breathe, and we can seek his face. God is the Creator.

Now we're getting into some areas that are, I think we get to the point in which we realize when you get older, I've found this to be true, you start to realize more people are starting to pass away. Not a wonderful thought but needless to say, if you have like a five year reunion or a 50 year class reunion, there are probably going to be less at the 50 year than there would be at the five year reunion. Life is fragile. Life is man's most important asset.

Verse 4 says this, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." To lose life is tragic. It really is. To lose life is tragic but to lose life in this life is tragic, but to lose your life in the next life is more severely tragic. You know, we are all faced with being able to say, "Was Jesus who he said he was? If he is the way, the truth and the life, that means I'm not the way, the truth and the life. So following what I believe to be true isn't going to get me anywhere."

Do you ever feel like, I don't know, I feel like this on this earth, do you ever feel like you are an alien and a stranger? Like a refugee? Like something does not belong? Do you ever feel like it seems like with the pain, with things with mental demons, with issues and all these different things, you feel like, "There's gotta be something more going on here than just this because if we are just existentialists and we're just here to exist and kind of died, this is pretty pathetic." Do you ever feel like there is more? Like when Paul says we are aliens and strangers in a hostile foreign land? As believers we should understand that there is a higher plane, a higher calling that we are called to and that life is God. Jesus not only gives us life through this life but ultimately lets us rest in eternity and in the place where at last we will belong in eternity.

Jesus not only is in the beginning, he is not only God, he is not only the Creator, he is not only life, but he is also the light, "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." Light is commonly used in the Bible as an emblem of God. Darkness is commonly used to denote death, ignorance, sin and separation from God. Technically, darkness isn't anything except the absence of light. You can't go into a room and turn on the dark. You go into a room and you turn on the light. And it's interesting, though, that by nature the idea of light, it shows, it exposes, it sees things for what they really are.

You know, I think we all want truth. I think we do. I don't think anybody is like, "I just want to hear what's false," okay? Especially when it comes to God, we are like, we want truth. We desire truth. We desire God. But do you know what I found? On a relational level we don't always want that truth. We don't always want the truth. We don't want to know what people think about us sometimes. "I would just rather not know and go my way." And a lot of times we can ignore or eschew and even us as parents, many times we don't want to know what the truth is with our children, that they are struggling. What if our child came to us and said, "I don't believe in God"? But do we want to know the truth or are we like, "I don't want to know that. I don't want to know that."

Jesus is the light that exposes. He exposes everything for what it's worth. It's the part of which the cockroaches scatter. I have lived in Florida and I know what that's like. Immanuel, God with us. Light will give clarity and hope to those that seek it.

This God is with us, not only did he come 2,000 years ago as a babe in a manger but he is here, he is here now. Who needs Jesus? We all do. We all need him. The Gospel, the good news is not just the five verses, it is the grandiose plan from creation to eternity. This is the good news that God has made possible to us. Some people say, "Well, it's not fair that people are sent to hell or are in hell." To me the question would be it's not fair that we are able to spend eternity with God. It is this grandiose plan from creation to eternity where Jesus is the central figure and you, me, the pinnacle of his creation, is his treasure that was created in his image for his glory, for his honor.

Now, my question would be: do you know this Jesus? Do you know him for who he is as the Redeemer? We have all missed the mark. There is nothing you can do, there is no karma. If karma is true, we are all in trouble because whatever you throw out negative is going to come back negative. I don't want to rest in that, I'll be honest with you. I want to rest in something called grace that says, "Come as you are to me," to Jesus. "Come to me all ye that labor and are heavy laden. I will give you rest." That's the Jesus of the Gospel. That's the Jesus of the good news. That's the Jesus that says it doesn't matter what you've done, how evil you've been in your mind. It doesn't mean you have to be Hitler, it doesn't matter. Every human being has missed the mark and we have missed the mark because of our sin, our degradation, our depravity, but God has said, "I want to rescue you. I want to take you from that and I want to give you life and I want to give it to you more abundantly."

Let this be the night that you do that. All you've got to say is, "He who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved." If you believe him for who he is and you want to walk with him, let tonight be that night that you do that. Let tonight be that night so that you can actually say this season with all of the busyness, with all of the stuff that's going on, you can say, "My soul has found its worth in Jesus, in Yahweh," and now you can say, "Hallelujah, praise Yah, praise Yahweh."

Let's pray.

God, thank you for your goodness. God, if there is someone here that does not know you, God, I pray tonight would be the night that they say, "God, take my life and use me." God, we understand that you are the life, you are the light, you are the Sustainer, the thing that holds together, the being that holds together all things. And God, I pray that we would recognize that this season with all of the busyness that those of us that are followers of you would recognize that you are the reason that everything is held together and that our view, our minds would be captivated by your glory, by your goodness, and that in our hearts, in our souls, at the depths of our soul, we would be able to say, "Hallelujah, praise God." We love you. Thank you so much for the opportunity that you have given me to be the administrator here at the school with such amazing students and teachers. And God, I pray that as we lift our voices to you, that you would just take them as a sweet savor to your nose as praise to the one that is worthy of it. In Jesus' name. Amen.