

Documented Deity

(John 1:14-18)

(preached 5/6/18; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

Introduction

There is a fear that repetition breeds familiarity and familiarity breeds contempt...

What I mean by this in simple terms is this...

If you see somebody winning over and over at something, you will like them at first but eventually begin to pull against them...

Take for example, a politician or a sports team...

The more elections and games that those people win, the more people grow familiar and the more people even begin to pull against them..

Another example is even in our parenting...

When our children get their license, we tell them every time that they jump in the car to be careful...

But our fear and often reality is that our kids get so used to hearing us say those words that they begin to ignore them or even despise them..

In the same way, the fear of the preacher is that preaching the same truths of Scripture will actually begin to make people numb to those truths...

This would certainly apply to the opening of John's gospel as we have been overwhelmed by John's description of Christ..

John has called Jesus the Word, which simply identifies Jesus as the force that created the world and holds the world together...

John has called Jesus the Life, which identifies Christ as the giver of physical life and also spiritual life...

John has called Jesus the Light, which identifies Christ as the fullness of God's plan to save guilt sinners...

And all of these description work together to help the reader of John's gospel to understand the great reality that Jesus is in fact God...

Now, for some in the world today, that is an incredible truth that they have never heard, never considered and never embraced...

But for us in the south, these truths about Christ are familiar to us from a young age...

From the time that we can go to church, we are taught that Jesus is God.

We are taught that Jesus is the Creator.

We are taught that Jesus is the Light of the world..

We are taught that Jesus gives eternal life..

And all of those things are good and appropriate and helpful and a blessing to be taught, but my fear is that the repetition of those incredible truths about Jesus Christ has numbed our hearts to them...

And why is that my fear?

First, the preaching of those truths doesn't seem to set our hearts afire...

I hear comments like, "Well, that is elementary teaching. I already knew those things."

People fall asleep in pews while these glorious truths about Christ are taught..

People who say they love Christ and are devoted to Christ can't keep their eyes open while the glories of Christ are taught..

And the second reason why I fear that the repetition of these truths about Christ has numbed our hearts is the fact that very few people can explain these truths about Christ to anyone else...

For instance, the Jehovah Witness or the Mormon rings your doorbell, and you don't go to the door for fear of not knowing what to say...

Do you know what the Mormon and the Jehovah Witness needs to know?

They need to know that Jesus Christ is God..

And though you claim that you believe that, you can't take your Bible and explain to someone who needs to hear it..

And you know why you can't do that?

You heard the truth about the fact that Christ is God, you believed it, but you eventually grew so tired of hearing it that you tuned out when it was taught...

And though you know and embrace that truth, you have no idea how to defend that truth in the Bible..

So when the false teacher shows up in your life and simple needs to be shown from the Scriptures that Jesus is God, instead of taking the opportunity to do that, you never go to the door...

In that regard, you need to be in tune with the facts of John 1...

In that regard, you need to wake yourself from the slumber of being too familiar with Christ to filling your life with more factual information about Christ..

If John 1 is elementary school for the Christian, it is a sad reality that some people never make it past 2nd grade...

Now is the time to be preparing yourself for the knock at the door...

Now is the time to be equipping yourself for people who attack the Christian faith...

Now is the time to know the true Christ...

Look, there are plenty of people in false religions who speak of Jesus...

Sadly, they have the wrong Jesus...

And the wrong Jesus is just as bad as having no Jesus...

So, let's continue to fill our minds and prepare our defense for the hope that lie within us..

Let's continue to arm ourselves for the attacks of the enemy on the person of Jesus Christ..

Or maybe today is simply a day for you to come to know the true Christ of the Bible...

And turn from your sin and put your trust in right Jesus, which is the Jesus that John is describing for us in his gospel...

Today, we learn more about the nature of Christ in John 1:14-18...

And the point of this 5 verses is to once again convince John's readers that Jesus is in fact God...

And so John is going to point out 4 more proofs of the deity of Christ in verses 14-18...

And the first proof of Jesus' deity in these 5 verses is found in verse 14..

I. The Glory of Christ Reveals His Deity (14)

14 And the Word became flesh, and [k]dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of [l]the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In case you ever want to find the shortest Christmas story in the Bible, it is found in John 1:14..

Matthew took 40 verses and Luke took nearly 80 verses to describe the birth of Jesus, but John sums up the Christmas story in the first 5 words of verse 14..

And the Word became flesh.

Now John has already written about the Word, which is simply the Logos in Greek..

And this Logos was simply what the Greek philosophers of the day described as the unseen force in the world.

To their unbelieving minds, some mysterious force has created the world and has worked in the world and was still working in the world keeping it all together...

And so in the very first verse of John's gospel, he wants the world to know that he knows the identity of the force, that Logos, that Word at work in the world..

That Word, according to verse 1, was God...

But now in verse 14, John takes it a step further by saying that God is not some distant God but rather a God who had visited His creation...

And he did that by taking on flesh and dwelling in His creation for a while..

Now for the philosophical minds of John's day this was incredible...

The force in the world had actually taken on a human body and dwelt in His creation??

Yet, that that is what John was claiming, and to prove that the Word had come in the person of Jesus Christ, John begins to lay out his case...

And the first proof of this is that John and the other disciples and other people had witnessed the glory of Jesus Christ as He dwelt among them...

Now what is this idea of glory?

The first picture to pop in your mind may be of bright light shining brilliantly..

And that is definitely as aspect of the glory of God...

God has an outward glory due to his holiness and righteousness...

Isaiah fell on his face at the sight of God...

The same for Ezekiel, Abraham, David, and so many other in the Bible who saw the glory of God...

Jesus also revealed that aspect of his glory on a mountain where he took Peter, James, and John...

And he pulled back his flesh to reveal the glory that he possessed due to the fact that he was God...

However, this is not the only aspect of God's glory that John had witnessed in Christ...

As we mentioned last week, Jesus didn't walk around with a glowing brilliance, so John is not just referring to that event here...

So, the second evidence of Christ's glory is simple seen in his ministry on earth..

John was with Jesus as he healed the sick, raised the dead, taught the Scriptures with authority, gave sight to blind, fed the 1000s with 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread....

And though Jesus wasn't glowing with brilliant light while he did those things, all of those things certainly revealed the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ..

You see, God's glory is not just a physically blinding light, it is also seen in the combination of all of His attributes at work..

God's glory is revealed in his justice, his compassion, his power, his knowledge, his wrath, his mercy, his grace...

The glory of God is best defined as simply the sum of all of his attributes being revealed to man..

John saw God's glory in the person, the work, the charter, the miracles of Jesus Christ...

Jesus is God because Jesus revealed God's glory both outwardly and inwardly as took on flesh and dwelt among His creation..

The glory seen by John, the other disciples, and the followers of Christ proves proves that Jesus is God..

Verse 15 offer additional proof of the deity of Jesus Christ...

We will call this...

II. The Testimony about Christ Reveals His Deity (15)

In verse 15, John the Apostle leaves his testimony about Christ for a minute and offers the testimony of John the Baptist about Christ...

15 John *testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me [m]has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"

Now, we will talk more about this next week in verses 19-28, but John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus is quite important..

Now, we may be tempted to look at John the Baptist thinking who would care about his testimony?

He ate grasshoppers, wore a camel hair shirt and lived in the middle of nowhere...

But for the Jews, John the Baptist was seen as a prophet of God...

The Jews saw his strangeness as a sign of his ministry since Elijah and Elisha and other OT prophets were also very different from the general population..

For the Jews, John the Baptist was their Billy Graham..

His words meant something since God had not sent a prophet to them in over 400 years...

And John the Apostle knows this, so he offers the words of John the Baptist as proof of Jesus' deity...

You see, God's requirement is that no testimony would be accepted unless it came from 2-3 witnesses..

So, John the Apostle as witness #1 turns to John the Baptist witness #2, and what was the testimony of John the Baptist?

Verse 15...

Jesus who born in a physical sense after John the Baptist...

If you remember, Elizabeth, who was John the Baptist's mother, was 6 months pregnant when Mary got pregnant with Christ..

So, Jesus was born 6 months after John the Baptist, but John says here that Jesus existed before him..

And the clear testimony of John the Baptist is that Jesus was before him because Jesus is eternal..

Jesus wasn't created...

He wasn't born like every other person in history.

He didn't come into existence..

He is before John and before you and before me and before Adam and Eve because Jesus is eternal.

John the Baptist testified to this fact.

John the Apostle testified to this fact.

Bud the preacher testifies to this fact.

And so does anyone who is truly saved in the world.

To be a believer, you must believe and affirm and testify to the eternal nature of Jesus Christ.

And that is what John the Baptist does here, and his testimony is the second way we see the deity of Christ in John 1:14-18..

A third way to defend the deity of Christ is found in verse 16-17..

III. The Characteristics of Christ Reveal His Deity (16-17)

16 For of His fullness [n]we have all received, and [o]grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth [p]were realized through Jesus Christ.

As we think over the OT, our minds turn to the law of God...

Moses and the 10 commandments...

The various other of the NT relating to food, to morality to disputes with your neighbor...

And those laws of God were good an right and just, they were impossible to keep perfectly..

In fact, the law only revealed how sinful Israel was...

Try as they might to obey the law of God, they failed time and time again..

And because of their continual disobedience, they experienced the curses of God, the consequences of sin...

Now that being said, God did not wipe Israel off the map..

They would repent and survive only to later fall back into their sin...

Yet, God would always be eager to forgive, to restore, to return Israel to a place of blessings when they obeyed..

In sense, the grace of God was also very present in the OT..

We talked about that in terms of Adam and Eve who were spared by God after their disobedience of eating from the tree...

So the truth of the law and the grace of God were present in the OT, but the fullness of the truth and the fullness of grace didn't appear until the life, death, and resurrection of Christ...

Jesus spoke the truth of God.

He affirmed the law of God.

He obeyed the law of God..

Jesus lived the truth because he was the truth.

However, Jesus also displayed the grace of God.

Jesus affirmed and practiced the grace of God..

In a very real sense, Jesus is the grace of God in human flesh...

Think of Christ in this way...

He didn't come to wipe out the truth of the law...

He can keep the truth of the law but also to graciously extend his obedience to the law to anyone who believes in him...

Most people who accomplish an incredible feat reserve all the fame of that accomplishment for themselves...

Jesus is so full of grace that he accomplished the impossible of keeping the law, and instead of receiving the glory of that accomplishment, he shares that glory with all who believe in him...

That is what it means to be full of grace and truth...

This is Christ...

He demands your obedience to the truth, but he supplies the way for you to be obedient...

Think about the mom who is sitting in her house ready to go to church, and one of her kids runs in with a dirty face and dirty clothes..

The truth in that mom cause her to correct her son by saying, “You know we have church tonight. You shouldn’t be outside getting dirty.”

But all the while that she shares that truth wit her son, what is she doing?

She is washing his face with a rag and helping him change clothes...

Truth compels her to speak but grace compels her to help..

This is the fullness of the gospel..

God is holy and you are lost in sin. That is truth.

God has sent His Son to obey the law and die for your sin. That is grace.

And both of those were fully and completely seen in the life of Jesus Christ..

And please note the phrase, grace upon grace in verse 16...

This is reality of Jesus Christ...

His grace flows freely in this age of the gospel...

The grace upon grace of Christ is seen in a flowing river...

You look at the water flowing by...

You then shut your eyes for a few seconds and then open them again...

The river looks the same but the water isn't the same water...

This is the grace of Christ flowing into the world...

As long as I have been alive which is a little over 44 years, the grace of Christ has flowed into this world...

If you want to be saved, repent and believe the gospel and you will know the grace of God...

And though that grace of God has flowed since the garden of Eden, it reached full speed in the life of Christ and it flows freely even today...

And the truth is that you can know the grace of God today..

The truth and the grace of Christ are proof that Christ is God...

A final bit of evidence of the deity of Christ is seen in verse 18..

WE will call this..

IV. The Explanation of Christ Reveals His Deity (18)

Verse 18..

18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

Now, verse 18 may create a little confusion if you have read the Bible for we know that there are verses in the Bible where people did see God..

Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, Jacob, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and many others in the OT are spoken of as having seen the Lord...

But what we must understand is that no man has the fullness of God at any time...

God always shielded his full glory from sinful man or it would have incinerated that person on the spot...

John's point is clear.

God in his fullness has not been seen because His fullness is an invisible Spirit that can't be seen by sinful man even though there were times in the OT where God revealed himself to people.

However, John is also clear that Jesus is the explanation of God in the flesh...

In other words, if you wonder what God in his fullness is like, you have seen the fullness of God in the person of Jesus Christ..

Jesus has explained the invisible God to us is a visible way...

Verse 18 says that Jesus is in the bosom of the Father..

Some translations say he is by the Father's side..

The Greek word for bosom kolpos, which refers to the chest area...

But the word is also used in Greek to refer to refer to a pocket in a garment...

If you think about it, the pocket is part of the jacket, but it is also distinct from the jacket...

Christ is in God, but Christ is also distinct within the Godhead...

Christ is by the Father's side but he is also One with the Father as well...

This is the uniqueness of the God of the Bible..

One God with three distinct persons but all in the same God...

So the reality is that when you see one of the persons of the Godhead, you understand God...

Jesus shows us the true nature of God since He is truly God..

To see Christ is to see God.

In John 14, Jesus is preparing the disciples for his coming death...

He washed the disciples feet in John 13 and he began telling them that he was going somewhere that they couldn't go...

Meaning that he was going to the cross, going to the grave and eventually going back to heaven to be with the Father for good..

But the disciples couldn't quite understand, so Thomas asks how the disciples can go with...

And Jesus replies in John 14:6-7 with this well-known verse..

6 Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. 7 If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.”

In other words, Jesus is telling Thomas that He is the way to the Father...

And in fact, Jesus is the picture of the Father, but guess what?

Some of the disciples there still didn't get it..

Verse 8...

8 Philip *said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus *said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?

Christ affirmed his deity by being an exact picture of God during his ministry on earth...

To see Christ is to see God..

This is why your Bible reading is so important...

I hear people say all the time....

“I wish God would just reveal Himself to me...”

“I wish God would just give me a sign of who He is..”

“I wish God would just speak to me..”

Well, guess what?

He has revealed Himself to you as you read about Christ in the Bible..

He has given a sign of who He is as you learn about Him in the life of Christ..

He has spoken to you in the words of Christ...

If you want to know what God is really like, God is found in the person of Jesus Christ given to us in the Bible..

To ignore the Bible is to ignore who God is.

To reject the Bible is to reject who God is..

To refuse to read the Bible is to refuse to see who God is..

You don't need a sign, a whisper in your ear, or a bright light at the end of the tunnel, you simply need the Word of God to reveal the identity of God...

Stop looking for God in all the wrong places and start looking for God in the life, ministry, and words of Jesus Christ...

Conclusion

In case you didn't already notice, John the Apostle is consumed with Christ...

John is overwhelmed with the fullness of who Christ was and is..

For John, Christ is the Word.

Christ is the life.

Christ is the light.

And ultimately, Christ is God...

And that reality completely overwhelmed John so much that he didn't start his gospel in the normal way..

Matthew starts with the family tree of Jesus...

Mark starts with the ministry of Jesus..

Luke starts with the birth of Jesus...

But John starts with the person of Jesus...

And why is John so captivated by the identity of Christ?

Well, John simply could not get over the fact that the God of the universe had come to Him and called Him and saved him and had fellowshiped with Him..

Imagine your own life if you had walked and talked with Christ..

The experience would be so overwhelming that you couldn't tell enough people about it...

I was 13 when I made my only trip to Augusta National to watch a practice round for the Masters...

And I camped out at one spot on the course because my golfing hero was going to walk by there...

His name was Greg Norman and he did walk by me.

I didn't get a look from him, much less an autograph but for the next month, all my golfing buddies knew that I was this close to Greg Norman...

I would rattle off all his statistics and then tell them that he walked within inches of me..

Little ol Bud from little ol Whitmire SC..

Well, John's experience was much greater...

He was called by Christ, he was disciplined by Christ, he walked with Christ, he was an eyewitness to all that Christ did...

And so for the first 18 verses of his gospel, John is simply identifying Christ to the world..

Christ is the word, Christ is the life, Christ is the light, Christ show the glory of God, Christ was affirmed by the prophet of God, Christ had the perfect characteristics of God, and that is all because Christ is the perfect explanation of God in human flesh...

And all of that overwhelmed little ol John from little Galilee...

But the reality of what has given to us in these 18 verses is this...

Little ol you from little ol nowhere can take John's testimony about Christ, believe it, and then take it to the world yourself..

And when the false teacher knocks on your door and takes you to John's gospel saying that Jesus isn't God...

You now have tons of evidence to prove that he was God.

And if you aren't saved in here this morning, you now have tons of evidence to point you to the only One who can save you...

And that is Jesus Christ, God in the flesh...

John was convinced of that many years ago, and anyone who ever desires to be saved must be convinced of that as well..

Let us pray.