

Sermon Notes for Feb. 1, 2009

The Purpose Of Christ Covenant Church “We Exist To Know Jesus Christ” John 1:1-14

There was a preacher who, while visiting some of his "flock," **knocked on the door of a church member but got no answer**. He was somewhat bothered because he could hear footsteps and knew the lady of the house must be there. So he went around to her garden door and knocked again. When she didn't answer this time he left his card with a note that read: "**Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him.**" **Revelation 3:20** As the Pastor drove away, all kinds of reasons of why no one would come to the door were running through his head. He couldn't understand why no one responded to his knocks. He thought that surely, he must have offended someone in the family, and they would never be back at church. To his surprise, the family was present the next Sunday. As the members were leaving the church, the woman who had refused to answer the door handed the preacher a note that had on it: "**I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.**" **Genesis 3:30**

Introduction

A. OUR PURPOSE As A Church.

1. It is my firm belief that every organization needs a Purpose Statement.
 - a. whether it be a hospital
 - b. or a football team
 - c. or a church
 - d. organizations need to know why they exist
 - e. and people involved in that organization need to know why that organization exists
2. We as a church have constantly worked at not only having a Purpose Statement but also to make that Purpose Statement very visible to our members and guests.
 - a. for several years our Purpose Statement was **“Equipping for Maturity and Ministry”**
 - b. then we changed it to:
 - **Embracing the Seeker**
 - **Equipping the Saint**
 - **Engaging the Culture**
 - c. however, about 2 years ago I read the book **Simple Church**
 1. this book confronted me not only of the need to have a Purpose Statement but to “simplify” that Purpose Statement so that everyone could understand it
 2. but, I learned something else from this book: **all of our ministries; nursery, children, youth and adults SHOULD HAVE THAT SAME PURPOSE!**
 3. over the past two years our elders and staff have diligently worked to create a clear, concise, and easily understood Purpose Statement

4. our new Purpose Statement is “simply this:”
 - “**We exist to know, love and serve Jesus Christ.**”
 - a. hopefully, both the body of Christ Covenant as well as those who visit Christ Covenant will understand what our goal is as a church
 - b. please know that the staff is currently working to make sure that:
 1. each ministry has the same purpose of knowing, loving and serving Jesus Christ
 2. and that EACH ministry will have a plan to help those they minister to how to know, love and serve Jesus Christ.

B. We Will Look At The FIRST ASPECT OF OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT – We Exist To KNOW Jesus Christ.

1. Please realize that the word “know” could be greatly expanded.
 - a. however, in our Purpose Statement, we want to look at the word know in this way: What does it mean to “**come to know**” Jesus Christ.
 - b. In essence, we want to be a church that “**helps people come to know who Jesus Christ is**”
 1. perhaps there is a person who does not believe in Jesus as a historical figure
 2. perhaps a person believes that Jesus is one of “many ways” to God
 3. perhaps, a person is simply needing someone to explain how they can come to know Jesus personally
2. Now, as we consider knowing Jesus Christ, we need to ask ourselves –
 - a. Why would I **want** to know Jesus Christ?
 - b. What makes Jesus **unique**?
 - c. and also, if I want to know Jesus Christ, **how** can I come to know Him?
3. Today, we will look at a great text that will tell us who Jesus Christ is and why we need to know Him.; John 1:1-14.
 - a. not only will we look at the need for people to know Jesus Christ
 - b. but we will also see the steps that need to be taken to come to know Jesus Christ
 - c. in doing that, we first need to look at **WHO** is the one we desire to know
 1. in John 1, the Apostle John calls Jesus “**The Word**”
 2. you can imagine that John must be making a huge point as he calls Jesus not “a” word, but “**THE**” **Word**
 3. so, let us look at how John describes Jesus

I. The PREEMINENCE Of The Word.

A. The ESSENCE Of The Word.

Vs. 1 – “In the beginning was the **Word**...” the **logos** (Greek)

1. The **Word** (logos) as seen by the **Hebrew**.
 - a. to the Hebrew, or the Jew, words were very **special**
 1. In the Greek, the word for “word” was **logos**. (The Jews spoke Greek, as they were occupied by Greek-speaking Rome.)
 2. the **Hebrew language** has only **10,000 words**, while the **Greek language** has **200,000 words**

3. because of so few words to use, the Hebrew used words carefully, sparingly and meaningfully.
4. the importance of speaking “**the blessing**” was given to the oldest Hebrew son – so these were very, very important words
- b. to the Hebrew, words were very **powerful**
 1. the Hebrew linked **action and even “power” to words**
 - a. words were not “simply spoken”
 - b. to the Hebrew, words had an intended message and effect on the hearer
 - c. look at these Old Testament examples:
 1. **Genesis 1:3** – “And God **SAID** . . . let there be light and there **was** light.”
 2. **Psalms 33:6** – “By the **WORD of the LORD** were the heavens **made**, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.”
 3. **Isaiah 55:11** – “So is my **WORD** that goes out from my mouth: **It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.**”
 2. if God “**spoke**,” then things happened – that was the “**power**” of God’s Word
2. The Word (logos) as seen by the **Greek**.
 - a. the **genius of the Apostle John** was that not only did he speak to the Jews, his audience was as well, the Greeks
 1. How would John make a clear statement to the Greeks about who Jesus was?
 2. How would he deal with the lack of understanding that the Greeks had of the coming Messiah?
 - b. notice the understanding of THE WORD by the Greeks
 1. John used the Greek word **logos** in John 1.
 2. **to the Greek, the word “logos” was a MONUMENTAL word**
 - a. to the Greeks, “the logos” represented the “**soul of the universe**”
 - b. **it was the rational principle from which everything came, a creative, stabilizing force of the universe**
 - c. the Greeks saw the logos as “**common universal law,**” that which was “**the truth**”
 - c. notice the understanding to the Greek philosophers of the logos
 1. in **560 B.C.**, Greek philosopher **Heraclitus** put forth the idea that everything in life was in a **state of flux**; changing each and every day
 - a. **however**, in spite of constant change in the universe, life was **NOT** in complete chaos – why?
 - b. Heraclitus reasoned that all of life, even in its change, was ordered and **controlled by the logos**, “the reason of God”

- c. **to Heraclitus, the logos became nothing less than the mind of God controlling this world and all men**
 - 2. the Greek **Stoics** agreed with Heraclitus
 - a. the Stoics asked, what created order in the universe? What kept the stars on their course? What made the tides ebb and flow?
 - b. their answer was that all things were controlled by the **“logos” of God**
- 3. The Word (logos) as seen by **BOTH** the Hebrew **AND** the Greek:
 - a. how **brilliant** John was in speaking so specifically to **both worlds!**
 - 1. to the **Hebrew** he said:
 - a. since Hebrew words are so special and scarce
 - b. since Hebrew words have power and “concreteness”
 - c. **here is your ULTIMATE WORD – JESUS!**
 - 2. to the **Greek** he said:
 - a. here is the **“personal explanation”** for the center of the universe – the logos
 - b. **James Boice** – ‘Therefore, it was with a **stroke of divine genius** that John seized upon this word, one that was a meaningful to the **Greeks** as it was to the **Jewish** people, and said by means of it, **“Listen, you Greeks, the very thing that has most occupied your philosophical** thought and about which you have all been writing for centuries – the Logos of God, this word, this controlling power of the universe and of man’s mind – **this has come to earth as a man and we have seen him.”**
 - b. **John knew EXACTLY what he was doing in using the word logos with both the Hebrew and the Greek**

B. The EXISTENCE Of The Word.

Vs. 1 – “In the **beginning** was the **Word** and the **Word** was with **God** and the **Word** was **God**.”

- 1. John continues his theology lesson about the Word by saying that this Word, Jesus, was with God **IN THE BEGINNING!**
 - a. continuing the thought for the Greek that Jesus had **ALWAYS EXISTED**
 - b. clearly teaching that the logos, the Word, was **PREEXISTANT!**
 - c. **IN FACT**, John says it **THREE TIMES** in verses one and two:
 - 1. **Vs. 1** - “**In the beginning** was the Word”
 - a. the Jew would clearly understand this text taken from Genesis 1:1 – “In the beginning, God . . .”
 - b. they couldn’t miss it
 - 2. **Vs. 1** - “And the Word was **with** God”
 - 3. **Vs. 2** – “He was **with God in the beginning**”
- 2. The Greek tense for the verb “was” used in these verses was also helpful in understanding what was actually being said.
 - a. John used the verb “**was**” in the **imperfect tense**;
Vs. 1 – “In the beginning **was** the Word.”

b. this means:

1. **“was continuing”**
2. thus the verse should say: (Kent Hughes) **“In the beginning was continuing the Word, and the Word was continuing with God, and the Word was continually God.”**
3. **Kent Hughes** says that another way of looking at it would be to say: **“Jesus always was wasing”**

C. The EQUALITY Of The Word.

Vs. 1 - “And the Word was God.”

1. However, of all of the statements that John would make, the last statement in verse 1 was the **MOST DRAMATIC AND MOST OVERHWELMING.**
2. For what John was saying is this:
 - a. not only is Jesus the “logos” of God
 1. the power and direction of all creation and all of life; the one who holds it together
 2. the one who has always been because He was and is with God
 - b. it is much, much more than that – the logos, the Word, **JESUS, IS GOD HIMSELF!**
 - c. John’s use of Greek grammar in verse 1 clearly teaches that Jesus is God. He makes two points in the Greek to emphasize this
 1. **one:** in the Greek text, the words actually read like this:

God (Theos) was (en) the (ho) Word (logos),

 - a. the word **“logos”** has the **article “the”** and thus becomes **the subject of the sentence**
 - b. the word **“God”** does **NOT have an article** so it becomes the **predicate**
 - c. thus, because of the construction in the Greek; we learn:
 1. **all the emphasis falls as the subject – logos – the Word – Jesus**
 2. the Greek should say: **THE WORD (JESUS) WAS GOD!**
 2. **two:** when the **subject and direct object** are connected with a being verb (to be),
 - a. the direct object becomes **the predicate nominative – OR THE SAME THING AS THE SUBJECT**
 - b. the verse should read, **“THE WORD WAS GOD” - THEY ARE THE SAME!**

D. The EXTENT Of The Word.

Vs. 3 - “Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.”

1. John **“puts the finishing touches”** on explaining who Jesus is by saying that not only is He the logos, and preexistent God. **HE CREATED ALL THINGS.**
2. to the Greek, this would explain why there was order in the universe – **BECAUSE JESUS, THE WORD, CREATED THE UNIVERSE!**

II. The POVERTY Of The Word.

A. The HUMANITY Of Jesus.

1. His **flesh**.

Vs. 14 – “The Word **became flesh.**”

a. **HOWEVER . . .** after seeing all that the logos, Jesus, is and has done,
IT IS AMAZING WHAT JOHN SAYS IN VERSE 14!

1. that logos, the center of creation and sustainer of the universe, **BECAME A PERSON, A HUMAN!**
2. you can't misinterpret what John is saying here because he uses the Greek word **sarx** – **flesh**
 - a. this word speaks of the literal, physical body of a man
 - b. the substance of the living body, which covers the bones and is permeated with blood

b. **WHAT EXTREMES** Jesus went though

1. as the Word, He created all things and held them together
2. and yet, He came to this earth in the form of a baby

2. His **life**.

Vs. 14a – “The Word became flesh and **lived for awhile among us.**”

a. to make his point to the Jews, John uses a term that they would understand

b. John says that Jesus “**lived for awhile**” among us

1. this Greek word for **lived for awhile** is **skenoo** – from a word meaning to **dwell or to “tabernacle”**
 - a. John uses this word to connect it with the Tabernacle in the Old Testament
 - b. **the Tabernacle had two functions:**
 1. it was the center of worship for the Jewish people
 2. the Tabernacle went wherever they went
 - c. John is **CLEARLY** desiring to make Jesus **THE TABERNACLE** who dwelt in the flesh on this earth.
2. but also, please notice that the Greek word **skenoo** is taken from the Greek word **shakon**
 - a. from where the Hebrews got the term “**shekinah**”
 - b. in other words, Jesus was not only the Tabernacle of God, He was the **SHEKINAH GLORY** of God!

B. The HONOR Of Jesus.

1. Do you fully realize what John is saying?

a. do you realize **WHO** came down to this earth?

b. The **ABSOLUTE WORD** of God

1. if “a word” communicates a thing
2. **THEN . . . “THE WORD” COMMUNICATES EVERY THING!**

2. Now, if we knew that the Word were coming, **HOW DO YOU THINK THAT WE WOULD WELCOME HIM!**

III. The POSITION Of The Word.

A. The IMPACT Of Jesus Christ.

1. You would **think** that for the Hebrew and the Greek, to realize that THE WORD had come to this earth would have changed their lives
 - a. to the **Jews**, they would have realized that THE STATEMENT of God, the Messiah, God in the flesh, had been sent to this earth
 - b. and that the **Greeks** would have realized that the power and unity of the universe, the logos, had come to this earth
2. However, PLEASE look at **verses 10 and 11!**

Vs. 10 – “He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, **the world did not recognize Him.**”

 - a. look very closely at the verse
 1. **NIV** – “the world did not **recognize** Him”
 2. **KJV** – “the world **knew** Him not”
 3. **NASV** – “the world did not **know** Him”
 - b. the Greek word here is **ginosko**
 1. definition
 - a. **to know; to understand**
 - b. **to perceive, to become acquainted with**
 - c. **to know intimately**
 2. application
 - a. when John says that the world did not “recognize” Jesus Christ, he doesn’t mean that they did not “identify” Him or not “put a name with a face”
 - b. John did not say that the world did not “know about” Jesus
 - c. no, JOHN meant to say that the world did not know Jesus **PERSONALLY**
 1. they did not “know” Jesus as their savior
 2. they did not “know” Jesus as their Lord
 3. they did not “know” Jesus as their friend
 - d. this word “know” is a very, very “personal” word
 1. it’s not as if the world had to only “recognize” Jesus and call Him the Messiah
 2. no, to know is a very intimate term
 - a. they did not “know” Jesus personally
 - b. as if you meet a person as a friend
 - e. Why did the world not “know” Him?
 1. How would a person “come to know” Jesus?
 2. What would they need to do?

B. The INVITATION Of Jesus Christ.

1. There is a **PROCESS** in knowing Jesus Christ, and it is seen in verse 12.
 - a. the **FIRST STEP** in knowing Jesus Christ is to **receive** Him

Vs. 11-12 – “He came to that which was his own, but his own **did not receive him**. Yet to all who **received** him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

1. Greek definition
 - a. **to take with the hand**
 - b. **to claim; to choose**
 - c. **to lay hold of; to catch**
 - d. **to receive what is offered**
 - e. **to take into one's own possession**
2. application
 - a. "to know Jesus Christ," we must "receive" or "accept" or "take Him" into our lives
 - b. it is as if you are inviting Jesus Christ into your very life, to your very being
 - c. and by NOT receiving Jesus Christ into your life is to reject Him
 - d. so . . . if you have **NEVER** accepted or received Jesus Christ into your life, **YOU ARE NOT A CHRISTIAN!**
 1. Do you know if you have ever accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior?
 2. to another one at church – "we have never officially met"
- b. the **SECOND STEP** in knowing Jesus Christ is to "**believe**" in Him

Vs. 12a – "to all who **believed** in Him"

 1. Greek definition
 - a. **to commit to; to credit**
 - b. **to have confidence in; to trust**
 2. application
 - a. **DO YOU REALIZE WHAT THE WORD BELIEVE DOES NOT MEAN?**
 1. believe in the Greek, DOES NOT mean "mental assent"
 - a. as if any person who "believes" in Jesus is a Christian
 - b. my story as a non-believer – I "believed" in Jesus
 - c. my brother Trip – "I believe in Jesus!"
 - d. Booklet – "What Does It Mean to Believe?" (the first sermon that I ever preached)
 2. the danger of "only believing"
 - a. **James 2:19** – "You **believe** that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder."
 - b. I "believe" in Abraham Lincoln but I do not "know" Abraham Lincoln

b. DO YOU REALIZE WHAT THE WORD BELIEVE DOES MEAN?

1. the word believe actually means “to trust”
 - a. when the Old Testament was translated from the Hebrew, the word for belief was generally translated “trust”
 1. **Psalm 37:3** – “**Trust** in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.”
 2. **Proverbs 3:5** – “**Trust** in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”
 - a. to make a refuge
 - b. to flee for protection
 - c. to hope in
 - b. **HOWEVER**, when the New Testament was translated from the Greek, the translators chose to use the word “believe” instead of “trust”
 2. so, to truly know Jesus would require a person:
 - a. to recognize that Jesus Christ IS EXACTLY WHO HE SAYS HE IS, AND THAT HE CAN SAVE YOU FROM YOUR SINS
 - b. and that I will “**place my trust**” in Him to save me from my sins
2. There is a **PRODUCT** in knowing Jesus Christ.
- Vs. 12** – “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, He **gave the right to become children of God.**”
- a. **DID YOU HEAR THIS VERSE?** The verse says that those who “receive and believe” in Jesus Christ have “**the right**” to become children of God
 1. Greek definition
 - a. **authority**
 - b. **right**
 - c. **power**
 2. application
 - a. what John is saying here is that once a person has accepted and believed in Jesus, that person is “officially made” a child of God
 - b. it is as if believers in Jesus Christ are “conferred” or “officially designated” to be a child of God
 - c. Jesus Christ, because of His death on the cross and intercession before the Father, has the “authority” to make you His child

d. THIS POSITION IS NOT “AUTOMATIC!”

1. it is **only** conferred on those who have”
received”
and “believed” in Jesus Christ
2. it is a “right” or privilege,” an “honor” given to
you by God

b. so, let me ask you

1. Have you ever “received” Jesus Christ as your Savior?
2. Have you “placed your trust” in Him to forgive you of your
sins?
3. Have you become a “child” of God?

Conclusion:

1. **THIS IS OUR PURPOSE AS A CHURCH!**

- a. to introduce people of all ages to the Lord Jesus Christ
- b. to help people who have questions, who have doubts, who have barriers, to
COME TO KNOW JESUS CHRIST as their Savior and Lord

2. So . . . do you **KNOW** Him?

- a. I did not ask if you “believed” that Jesus existed; that He was an historical
figure
- b. I asked if you “know” Him; have you received Him as your Savior?

3. Years ago, a very wealthy man shared a **passion for art collecting** with his devoted young son. Together they traveled the world, adding only the finest art treasures to their collection. They soon collected priceless works by Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet and many others. The widowed father looked on with satisfaction as his only son became an experienced art collector. The son’s trained eye and sharp business mind caused his father great pride, as they dealt with art collectors around the world.

In **1914** as winter approached, the nation was soon engulfed in war and the young man was called up to serve his country. After a few short months, his father received the telegram that he had been dreading. **His beloved son had been killed in action.**

The old man faced the upcoming Christmas holidays with anguish and sadness. The joy of the Christmas season that he and his son had so looked forward to was gone.

On Christmas morning, there was a knock at the door. As the old man opened the door, he was greeted by a young soldier with a large package in his hand on leave from the Western front. He introduced himself to the man by saying, **"I knew your son. I was the one he was rescuing when he died. May I come in for a few moments? I have something to show you."**

And as the two began to talk, the soldier told the old man how his son often talked about his father and his love of art. "I'm an artist," the soldier said, "and I would like to give you this." As the old man unwrapped the package, he saw that it was a portrait of his son. Though the world would never consider it the work of a genius, the painting showed the face of the old man’s son in detail. Overcome with emotion, the father hung the portrait of his son over the fireplace, moving aside millions of dollars worth of art to make space for it. The old man then sat in his chair and spent Christmas gazing at the gift he had been given.

The painting of his son soon became his most prized possession, far eclipsing any of the pieces of art that museums around the world were clamoring for.

Ten years later, the old man died and the art world waited with anticipation for the upcoming auction. According to the old man's Will, all the art works had to be auctioned on Christmas Day - the day on which he had received his greatest gift – the portrait of his son.

The day soon arrived and art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on some of the world's most spectacular paintings. The auction however began with a painting that was not on anyone's list. **It was the painting of the father's son by the young soldier.**

The auctioneer asked for an opening bid, but the room was silent.

"Who will open the bidding with \$200?" No one spoke.

Finally someone said, **"Who cares about that painting. It's just a picture of his son. Let's move on to the good stuff."**

The auctioneer responded, **"No, we have to sell this one first. Now, who will bid for the son?"**

Finally, a neighbor of the old man offered \$100. "That's all I have. **I knew the boy, so I'd like to have it.**"

The auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice...gone." The gavel fell. Cheers filled the room and someone exclaimed, "Now we can bid on the real treasures!"

The auctioneer looked at the room filled with people and then announced that the auction was over. Everyone was stunned.

Someone spoke up and said, "What do you mean, it's over? We didn't come here for a painting of the old man's son. There are millions of dollars worth of art still in here! What's going on?"

The auctioneer replied, "It's very simple. According to the old man's will, **whoever takes the Son gets it all.**"

