

God reaches out to us through Jesus

(Some thoughts with Dr. Joel Crichlow)

The first fourteen verses of the Gospel of John paint a beautiful picture of how our creator and father, God, reaches out to us. Let us meditate together on these verses as they are recorded in the New International Version (NIV).

In John 1:1-3 we read: *“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.”*

Many are still battling with the issue of the origin of the universe and of life. But even as there are debates and disagreements on how all things began, what should be very easy to agree on is that there was a beginning. Many of us find it overwhelmingly reasonable to believe that God was in that beginning. Here in this text the Apostle John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, places the Word in the beginning with God.

Who is this Word? The answer to this question is provided in verse 14. That Word is Jesus the Son of God. There is significance in referring to Jesus as the Word. From our perspective someone's word to us is a key form of making that person known to us. Indeed, God made wonderful aspects of Himself known to us through Jesus.

Jesus is the expression of God to us. He was from the beginning. He was active in creation. Since Jesus was in the beginning, then it is wise for us to begin every aspect of our lives with Jesus. We should start every day with Him, seek His wisdom in every key decision. Indeed, in all our ways submit to Him and He will make our paths straight (see Proverbs 3: 6).

In John 1: 4-5 we read: *“In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”*

We live in a world of darkness. There is no lack of deceit, lies, dishonesty, cheating, theft, murder, all manner of wickedness. No human effort has been able to conquer that darkness. There are so many times when we face problematic, difficult, fearful and other perplexing situations. These situations are like facing the darkness. We need Jesus who offers us life. A life with His light that overcomes all darkness. But we can refuse to accept Him. It is our choice.

In John 1: 6-8 we read: *“There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.”*

In these verses we see a John mentioned. It was fitting that the entry of Jesus into our world should be announced, heralded. This was the role of this John. His ministry also included baptizing those who were making a commitment to turn from their sin and live a life of righteousness. This aspect of John's ministry was captured in the way in which we refer to John. He is known to us as John the Baptist. Indeed, Jesus allowed John the Baptist to baptize Him to, among other things, set an example for us to follow.

God sets things in motion so that people can hear, receive and believe in Jesus, the "true light". God gave John the Baptist the mission to announce that Jesus was coming. God causes and allows events, identifies and calls people to tell others about Jesus. In many ways and through many people (witnesses) we have testimonies of that "true light". Your reading this article at this time is another way in which God is pointing you to Jesus the "true light".

In John 1: 9-11 we read: *"The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him."*

God our creator could force everyone to recognize and receive His Son, Jesus. But God gave us a will of our own. We have free will. The choice is ours. God desires a genuine relationship with us. No genuine relationship with God or with anyone else can be formed if we do not have free will. The choice to love makes love real. The choice to believe makes belief real. The choice not to believe makes unbelief real. The choice to obey makes obedience real. The choice to disobey makes disobedience real.

In John 1: 12-13 we read: *"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."*

Jesus has come to all. It does not matter who we are. It does not matter what we have done. There is overwhelming benefit in receiving Jesus. There is abundant privilege in believing in Jesus. We are elevated into a special relationship with God. We can now enjoy all the rights and privileges due to the son of Almighty God – our creator, our sustainer, our provider, our light. We are now *"heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ"* (see Romans 8: 17).

In John 1: 14 we read: *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."*

God desires a relationship with us. The Word - Son of God - becoming flesh and dwelling among us demonstrates this. God does not force Himself on us. But He is close to us, just a prayer away. When we accept Jesus into our lives we are granted the right of brotherhood with Jesus the only

begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth. Through His “grace” He gives us unmerited favor. The greatest favor being His suffering the penalty on the cross for our sins and granting us forgiveness. He is not ready to condemn (“... *there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*”, Romans 8: 1), but ready and willing to forgive and set us free from the power and guilt of sin (“*So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed*”, John 8: 36).

Through His “truth” He provides the answers to the key questions of life. We just have to ask Him (“*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you*”, Matthew 7: 7). When we do not know what to do, when we need to make a wise choice or decision we just have to ask Him (“*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all ...*”, James 1: 5). There is no better way under the sun in which to live.