

John 1:1-5, 14 (June 10)

The Glory of Jesus, God Incarnate

Key verse: John 1:14

“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.”

The term glory is generally used when something is incomparable, beautiful, and great. For example, in Germany, some people think it is glorious to drive on the German autobahn highways without a speed limit.

Personally, I think it is glorious to see many redeemed children of God here from all over the world at this conference after a long CoViD break ...

But what does glory mean in the context of the gospel?

Glory here means the presence of the holy God on earth.

This glory consists in the fact that this eternal God, who holds life in his hands, has come down to dwell among us human beings.

We find the glory of God fully in one person: Jesus Christ, the one and only Son from the Father.

In Jesus, the glory of God became man.

Whoever believes in him will see the glory of God.

We have come together here to encounter the glory of God: Jesus Christ.

Of him, Apostle John testifies: “We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Would you like to see Jesus' glory?

Let us see the glory of Jesus, God incarnate!

I. Jesus Is God (1-3)

Look at verses 1-3: “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.”

The author John speaks about the ‘Word’, which is in Greek ‘Logos’.

In the philosophy of that time, Logos was the all-pervading divine world reason.

But it was impersonal.

To this Logos, John now assigns a person: Jesus Christ.

Thereby he announced to the world of that time that in Jesus one would find the true meaning of their lives.

Look at verse 1 again: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Jesus was already there in the beginning.

He came from eternity, dwelt among us for a time, and is now back in His eternity.

Jesus is God. Apostle John emphasizes it again and again: “the Word was God.” (1:1)

“No-one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.” (1:18)

Apostle Thomas followed Jesus.

But he didn't really believe that Jesus is God.

But when he touched the nail wounds of the risen Christ, he recognized the glory of Jesus and said: "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).
Thomas recognized that Jesus is God, his God.

Many people recognize Jesus as merely a great teacher or a great personality.
But the Bible says something completely different about Jesus.
Colossians 1:16 says: "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."

To know God properly, we must know Jesus properly.
Why is this so?
Because Jesus and God are one.
Apostle John proclaims the truth that Jesus is God.
Jesus is the eternal God.
His home is eternity.
His power is the power to create.
He says in verse 3: "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."

Jesus is eternal Creator-God.
All things were made through Jesus.
Without him, nothing was made that has been made.
We can see how beautiful Jesus is, when we notice the splendor and majesty of creation: the green grass, the wonderful flowers, the different kinds of animals.
In Chicago this year for the first time I saw a Cardinal.
Wow, such a beautiful red bird I've never seen in Germany.

We realize this fact that Jesus is the Creator when we study the life of Jesus in the Gospels.
Who could change water into wine?
Who could walk on water?
Who could restore sight to a man born blind by the saliva of his mouth?
Who could raise the dead to life?
We don't need any more proof: Jesus is the eternal Creator-God.

Our world is not a product of chance.
You and I are a special edition made by God through Jesus.
We are children of God, precious sons and daughters of God.
We are created by Him to live for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
That is the meaning of our life.
One day a young woman came to our worship service, after finding us through Instagram.
She looked pale and exhausted.
She came every week to hear God's word.
She recognized that God speaks to her.
Now she looks much better.
Her eyes are shining.
Her face became brighter.
She found that God made her very good.
She found her true meaning of life by knowing Jesus, the Creator-God.

John 1 gives us the clear direction that Jesus is our God.
Everyone of us has been created through him and for him.
Do you believe that?

II. In Jesus Is Life (4-5)

Look at verses 4-5: "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."

In Jesus is life.

But what is life actually?

There is physical life.

We preserve this kind of life by keeping fit and eating healthy foods.

There is also mental life.

We had a lot of mental problems during the CoViD period: loneliness, fear of contagion, and disagreement about countermeasures.

Finally, there is spiritual life.

The Greek word for life here is `zoe`.

The name Zoe is still given to many daughters today, like Zoe Keller or Zoe McEathron in our ministry.

This is an expression of hope that the children receive eternal life from Jesus.

Zoe is God's life in us.

When we were separated from God in Paradise through the Fall, we lost the life of God.

We no longer had eternal life.

So, we had to eat our bread in this cursed world by the sweat of our brow, only to die again after an exhausting life.

For dust we are, and to dust we must return.

What a tragedy!

But now we have hope, because "In him was life."

Although we lost the zoe-life, it still exists.

Jesus has it.

Jesus left heaven to visit us here in the shadow of death, and He brought eternal life with Him.

God gave us Jesus so that we might have eternal life again through Him.

Jesus has the life we long for so much.

We can see that Jesus is the owner of life in the story of Lazarus.

Jesus was not sad to hear that his friend Lazarus died.

Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life.

The one who believes in me will live."

Then Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

Through this, the people could see the glory of God.

Jesus is the owner of life.

In Him is the eternal indestructible life of God.

If we believe in Him, we will be able to see the glory of God with our own eyes.

Do you want to possess this life?

Then come to Jesus!

Look at verses 4-5 again: "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."

Here, the world we live in is described as darkness.

Indeed, without the presence of God, the world is dark.

For example, a man who believes that death is the end, is a man full of darkness.

He lives without hope.

He wants to enjoy life as much as possible, because for him life is short.

His darkness might be expressed with drinking too much alcohol, or taking drugs, or living in sexual immorality.

Many young people struggle in darkness about who they are or what they are here for in this world.

Is there any hope in this darkness?

Yes, at the end of the tunnel we see a light.

The light shines in the darkness.

It is getting brighter and brighter.

Although the dark forces are fighting it with all their might, they are not able to stop this light.

The light is too strong.

No pleasure addiction, no crisis of identity can overcome it.

The glory of Jesus is a glory full of life and light.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Amen!

Let us take a closer look at this light.

III. The Word Became Flesh (14)

The praise of God's glory now comes to its climax in verse 14: "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."

Up to this point, Apostle John recognized that Jesus was the eternal Creator-God and in Him was life.

But now he saw with his own eyes that God became flesh.

Actually, we want to reach higher and higher.

We want to own more, claim our rights more, and enjoy more recognition.

We like to read biographies like that of Jeff Bezos, who was born in simple circumstances and, with the founding of Amazon, virtually rose from dishwasher to billionaire.

Apostle John could not find this tendency in God.

When he thought deeply about God, he found a very different character in Him.

God did not care about His fame, power, and majesty.

That was not His concern.

No, it was just the other way around.

The One who created heaven and earth, and in whom the fullness of life is hidden, left His kingdom and became a common man in the form of Jesus of Nazareth.

This fact is truly amazing.

God is so holy.

In his presence our lips are burnt as by a burning coal.

This God descended the ladder of heaven and humbled Himself to the level of fallen man.

Apostle Paul proclaimed Jesus' humble love saying, "Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!" (Php 2:5-8)

Apostle John declared "the word became flesh."

We call this, 'God incarnate'.

What does it mean?

To be with us, God took on human form and dwelt among us.

Flesh here refers to human beings who live under the curse of sin.

God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful man.

Is there any greater humiliation?

Can you imagine a greater love for us?

Once I went swimming in the Atlantic ocean with my wife.

I saw that she was fighting against the waves.

Then I didn't see her anymore.

Immediately I also swam into the deadly waves.

I lost control and was swallowed by the water.

By God's grace, there was a whirlpool that pulled me into calm waters.

That's where I found my wife again.

Why did I risk my life?

It was because I love my wife.

I had love but no power to save her.

You know what I want to say?

Jesus left his heavenly palace to dwell among us as a man, even though we are all proud, rebellious sinners.

Why should he do that?

There is only one answer: Jesus is full of love toward us.

He loves each of us more than we can imagine.

Because of this love, Jesus gave up his precious divine life and became one of us.

I had only love, but no power to save my wife.

But Jesus has love and mighty power to save us.

Praise our Lord Jesus Christ!

God incarnate lived in what is now Israel.

I was overcome with emotion when I visited the Church of the Beatitudes.

From there, the Son of God also looked down on the Sea of Galilee and delivered the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus frequently visited the city of Jerusalem.

There we can touch the big stones of the temple which Jesus touched.

There was a fascinating glory emanating from Jesus.

Considering that Jesus is the Word of God made flesh, every step He took on earth and every word He spoke on earth is as precious as an emerald and as pure as the rays of the sun.

The glory of Jesus is quite different from the glory of the world.
We take pictures to post and make others interested in us.
From Jesus we find no pictures; just a symbol of his suffering: the cross.
If we could do miracles, we would establish a franchise company for earning a lot of money.
From Jesus we know that he lived a poor life, even though he was the owner of the world.
Jesus' glory was not to become famous or rich.
Jesus' glory was to become human to serve and save sinners.

Apostle John was moved by this humble God.
In the past he was so ambitious that he wanted to sit beside Jesus' glorious throne.
But Jesus wrapped a towel around his waist and washed his feet.
John always wanted to lie at Jesus' breast.
He even saw Jesus dying on the cross.
There Jesus prayed for forgiveness for his enemies.
The Apostles saw Jesus' glory very clearly.
When we look up to Jesus, we see oceans of grace and truth, like the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.
In Jesus we find the truth that we must be condemned because of our sins.
But in Jesus we also find the grace that he saved us by taking our sins on the cross.

In 2017 I was overcome by a great weariness and indifference to the redemptive work of God.
I didn't agree with some tendencies of my church.
The word of God didn't touch my heart deeply anymore.
I fell back into a petty self-centered life with my job, family, friends, and hobbies.
I had another glory growing in my heart, a worldly glory.
During this time, Jesus showed me the drama of the lost world through Revelation Bible study and that He soon will come back.
While hiking in the beautiful Alps, Jesus renewed my heart for God's work.
Out of nowhere I had to cry tears: there are so many young people who need vision in their lives.
In this time of revival, Jesus called me to responsibly take care of His church in Cologne UBF.
He helped me give up some of my hobbies and other activities.
It's a great pleasure to serve God's glory.
I could see so many hidden disciples of Jesus who pray wholeheartedly, prepare the environment, and take care of God's flock.
I could see a young man who found the love of Jesus again, got married with a woman of faith, and served God with his gifts.
Jesus became a man and visited me in the crucial stages of my life.
I belong to Him.
His glory defines my life. Hallelujah!

Jesus is the eternal Creator-God.
In Jesus is life.
Through Jesus, the glory of God became flesh and dwelt among us.
Let us see Jesus' glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. Amen!