

IN HIM WAS LIFE

John 1:1-5

Key verse 1:4

"In him was life, and that life was the light of men."

Let us thank God for the biblical research of the Servant of God for the spiritual renewal and revival in Europe. Bible research at a time when God's grace is being relativized is a blessed work in which we may participate together, so that young people may be saved from heresy, that God may establish among them the obedience of faith and raise them up as an exceedingly great army for world mission. Last week we heard through S. Peter Ryu the introduction to the Gospel of John. The gospel of John is written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that you may have life in His name by faith. Jesus is the giver of life. Today we study the prologue, the first five verses. These first five verses already answer one of the key questions of John's gospel: Who is Jesus? Jesus is the eternal creator and giver of life. May our life in Jesus be the light for many people.

1. Jesus, the Creator God (1-3)

Let us read verses 1 and 2: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning." John begins his gospel of Jesus Christ with the logically derived statement that Jesus is God. The logic says: If A = B and B = C, then A = C. God was the Word (verse 1). The Word was Jesus (verse 14). So Jesus is God.

Jesus is on the one hand the personal God. For "word" here in the original is *logos* (λόγος), which also means meaning and statement. God speaks. Jesus is God's statement on the fundamental question of origin and meaning. On the other hand, Jesus is the eternal God. Verse 1 says that Jesus was in the beginning. "In the beginning" has no beginning and no end. "In the beginning", when God created heaven and earth, Jesus was already there. Jesus is the eternal God. When John wrote this gospel in Ephesus, he was already an old man. Before that, he had been in exile on the is-

land of Patmos. There God had given him a revelation of the end of time. In his revelation he saw Jesus, "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance." (Rev 1:13-16) In Revelation Jesus describes Himself as the eternal God (Rev 1:8): "I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." This is why John, before beginning his account of the words and deeds of Jesus incarnate, wrote: "Jesus is God". In John 8 Jesus dealt with the Jews, who accused him of exalting himself. When he said that Abraham had rejoiced over the day of Jesus, they asked him, "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" (John 8:57.58) Jesus is the eternal God. He was there for eternity. Let us read verses 1 and 2 again: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. The same was in the beginning with God."

The realization that Jesus is the eternal God changes our lives. How then can a person whose gaze is always directed towards this earth recognize Jesus as the eternal God? This happens through Bible study. The Word of God testifies that Jesus is God. Through the Word of God, even stubborn doubters become worshippers of Jesus. One young man lived as a cultural Christian. Although he called himself after the name of Jesus Christ, the focus of his life was on money and pro-

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fessional success. At a UBF summer Bible conference, he accepted Mark 8:29: "You are the Christ!" He recognized Jesus as God and became a follower of Jesus. His focus in life now is to make disciples of Jesus. Another young man had never given much thought to Jesus and considered him to be a founder of religion like others. Jesus played no role in his life, and his goal in life was to be recognized by the people. Through Bible study, he took Jesus' testimony in John 14:6: "Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus was the way to the Father and the eternal God. His life's goal became to please his God, Jesus Christ and to bear much fruit for him among the students, starting at the University of Koblenz.

Through Bible study, God opens our spiritual eyes to the fact that Jesus is God. Jesus' words are God's words. Jesus' deeds are God's deeds. Jesus' commands are God's commands. Those who have realized that Jesus is God, no longer live for their sinful ego and the transitory things of the world, but for their Lord and God by joyfully doing His will. If we have not yet recognized that Jesus is God, we should check whether we have really dealt with the Word of God. Our Bible study should be so serious and so deep that we meet the eternal God in Jesus. The personal Bible study and the Bible study on campus, through which people recognize Jesus as the eternal God, will bless God and make it a life-changing work.

Let us consider verse 3: „Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.“ This verse says that Jesus is the creator and origin of all things. All things are created through Jesus. Colossians 1:16,17 express it this way: "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." There is nothing that was not created by Jesus. This also means that all things get their meaning through Jesus. Both the life of people and all other things find their meaning in Jesus. Once the disciples saw a man who was born blind. They asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" For them, this man was punished by God. They thought his life was cursed. They talked like that because they didn't know that all things are made through Jesus. Jesus said: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the work of God may be displayed in his life." The blind man was healed by Jesus. He found his meaning of exist-

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ence in glorifying God. Although he was reviled and expelled from the synagogue for this, he worshipped Jesus as his Creator God (John 9:38). Without Jesus, people are endlessly fatalistic, even though they live in the best conditions. In Jesus, however, they know where they come from and where they are going and can glorify God in all circumstances. A young woman had worked long and hard to enter the best university. But when she received her admission, she cried endlessly. Apparently she cried because she was thinking of her discordant family. But in reality she was crying because she didn't know what she was made for. Through Mark 6:37 she met Jesus as her Creator, who created her for His worldwide work of salvation. She went from being a fatalistic woman to a zealous missionary who now lives resolutely as a mother of faith to give spiritual food to young people in Germany and Europe through Bible study, according to the command of Jesus.

Jesus is the creator. We are his work, created for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Eph 2:10). Not only we: The whole creation also groans and fears, waiting for redemption through Jesus Christ. In Jesus' grace and hope our life has an absolute meaning of existence. Let us pray for young people that they will meet their Creator in Jesus and serve Him without fear throughout their lives in holiness and justice before His eyes.

2. Jesus, the light of men (4-5)

Let us read verse 4: "In him was life, and that life was the light of men." In Jesus was the life. Jesus is the origin and the giver of life. Biology says that although there is no uniform definition of life, there is a consensus that life is more than just dead matter. A scientist collected 48 definitions of life. Yet no one has an answer as to where life comes from. Biblically speaking, life comes from God. Life comes from Jesus. Life is what God gave us through Jesus Christ: "In him was life, and that life was the light of men."

When a person says that his life comes from his parents, he ignores God as the origin of all life. He claims that life is just a joke or a whim or a coincidence. Such a man is without true confidence and is like chaff scattered by the wind. When another man says that life evolved from dead matter, he has no answer to the question of who gave life to matter and lives with a constant contradiction and is never satisfied. "In him was life" gives us the answer to the question of the origin of life. Life was in

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Jesus. Jesus is the origin of life, and life was the light of men.

As we know, people have lost the life of God through sin. Since then, they have been in darkness and desperately seeking life. But no matter how hard they try, they cannot find life. They are like cut flowers in a vase that look beautiful for a while, but have no connection to the source and soon wither and are thrown away. But God so loved this world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. Jesus became the giver of life by giving his own life for sinners, dying on the cross and rising from the dead. Whoever believes in Jesus' death and resurrection has life. Jesus says in John 6:53, „Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." To live is to be united with Christ. To live is to obey his commandments through faith under his reign. To live is to follow Jesus. Jesus says in John 8:12, "When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

In faith, whose life is restored. Romans 6:4 says, "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." Our life is not only physical. Our life is being connected to Jesus. Our life belongs to him.

When I was a student, I had everything I needed, but I had no life. I was empty inside without purpose or motivation. Once I was lying on the bed screaming to heaven why I had to torture myself like this. In search of life I flew to Israel and on Christmas Eve I went to the square in front of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, but even there I did not find life. But God heard my cry. In the life community of God's people I saw believing people who had something I did not have. Phil 3,10 gave me the desire to seek life as they and Paul had it. Finally, I received life through Romans 13:14. The life was in accepting Jesus as the Lord. Life came from him and was in him. This life belongs to him. For years I claimed that life belonged to me and wanted to do my own work, but failed. Now Jesus owns my life and he gives me peace and strength and confidence. It is not easy to follow the example of the predecessors in faith. Often Jesus has to chastise me to lead me according to His will. But I can testify that I was dead and desperate under

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ego rule, but that now that Jesus is my Lord, I am blessed and know where I come from and where I am going. My life is in Jesus.

Verse 4 says, "In him was life, and that life was the light of men." The life of Jesus in those who have accepted His right of ownership and dominion and follow His guidance is the light of men. By "people" here we do not only mean ourselves. The life of Jesus in us is the light for all our fellow human beings, our relatives, our fellow students and classmates, our work colleagues and the young people on campus.

This verse describes the hope of God. When God led His people Israel out of slavery in Egypt, He did so with the hope of using them as a kingdom of priests for the whole world. With the same hope, God delivered us from the slavery of sin through Jesus Christ. Apostle Peter expresses this in 1 Peter 2:9.10: „But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.“

Young people need the light of Jesus. Although they are young, they sit in darkness and the shadows of death. One young man became number one in his class. Science became his light. He made plans for a successful career with prestige and money. But in a competition he realized that there were many who were even more capable and clever than him. We should conscientiously fulfill our tasks at school, at university, at work, and in the family with prayer. But science, success, prestige, money cannot be the light of men, because everything is relative. As long as we follow relative things as our light, we remain in darkness and end up depressed. Jesus, who is God himself, is the light of men. Through Jesus, God has delivered us from sin and led us from darkness to His wonderful light. A person who has Jesus, the light of men, becomes a blessing for countless people. Through the life of Jesus in Shepherd Peter Ryu, the light of the people shines to Benjamin and Khanh and to many people of the next generation. Through the life of Jesus in S. Joyce Pazhavarickal, the light of the people shines to countless people sitting in darkness and the shadows of death, in Germany, Europe and as far as India.

Let us consider verse 5: "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it." This verse reminds us that we are in a spiritual

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war. The reaction of people to Jesus, the light of the people, is hostile. John 3:19,20 say: "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed." The darkness has not taken hold of it" means that the light cannot be overcome by the darkness. We sometimes complain about the spiritual darkness of our time. But we must know that the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. Like Jesus, we are to work the works of light while it is day, when night comes, when no one can work (Jn 9:4,5). In the end the light will completely overcome the darkness. Over the past 39 years, we have experienced how the light shone in the darkness of godless humanism through one-to-one Bible study and worked mightily among the students. The study of the five books of Moses let the light of Jesus shine in the hearts of the next generation of co-workers, so that many of them are needed as responsible Bible teachers at the Global Leadership Empowerment Forum and afterwards in their universities. Through the one-to-one Bible study, the light of Jesus shines at all faculties of the Bonn University, the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences, the University of Koblenz and changes the spiritual course of this generation and restores Germany as a pastoral nation and Europe as a continent sending out missionaries. In this year 2020, let us above all form one-to-one Bible study teams and continue the faith heritage of the predecessors in faith, so that God will fulfill their vision for the establishment of twelve Mothers of Faith at each faculty and the mobilization of young people as global spiritual leaders.

John begins his gospel with the statement that Jesus is the eternal Creator God, the giver of life and the light of men. Our life belongs to him. By following him and obeying his calling, we experience true happiness and are used by him as the light of men.