

Life Group Discussion Guide

The Arrival: Looking at Jesus, Seeing God
Week 1: True Life • John 1:1–5

We all want life—meaningful, healthy, enduring life. Life full of love. And we go after that life in all kinds of things. *But do they deliver?*

This longing is exactly why Christians celebrate Christmas. Because **the arrival of Jesus is the arrival of life**—true, eternal life. Nothing can offer us the life Jesus does. And this week, we discovered why.

1. Jesus Offers the Life of God

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1

John begins his gospel by going all the way back to the beginning of time. In fact, he goes before the beginning of time. He writes, “In the beginning was the Word,” meaning, when the beginning of time took place, the Word was already there. And not only did the Word exist before time, “the Word was with God.”

“If you close your eyes and try to think about a time when there was nothing—no universe, not even time or space—can you picture it? What then was there? The answer is God. But what John 1:1 tells us is that there was someone with God, and that someone was the Word.”

- Take a few minutes to marvel at the eternity of God the Father and God the Son. How does it humble you to know that God existed long before time and space? How does it encourage you?

But John doesn’t stop there, as his next claim is even more mind-bending: “and the Word was God.” In essence, we are being told two things: the Word and God ARE the same and are NOT the same. What should we make of this dilemma?

Here, John is beginning to tease out what Christians have confessed from the earliest times, that God is one but also three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. We do not read of the Spirit in this first verse (He comes in later on), but we do read of the Father and the Son, here by the names God and the Word. The Word and God are one, but the Word and God are different persons.

- How would you explain the Trinity in your own words?
- What does God’s Trinitarian existence reveal about His nature? His character?
- The Trinity is one of the great mysteries of God that we can’t quite wrap our human minds around. What else about God is beyond our limited comprehension? How does the otherness of God encourage your faith in Him?

The second verse of John's gospel appears to reiterate what he's already established: "He was with God in the beginning." But Pastor Jon pointed out something we don't want to miss.

"Notably, this verse does NOT repeat the last clause of verse 1: 'and the Word was God.' The reason for this is that the story John tells is one of the Word coming to earth while God, the Father, remains very much in heaven. As much as the Gospel, the story of Christmas, is about the divinity of Jesus (Jesus is God), it is also about the mission of Jesus as sent from the Father. Verse 2 prepares the way for this momentous development when it says, 'He was with God.' The Word becomes a He, a human, a person!"

- If this was the first time you ever heard that God became human and came to earth as a person, what would your reaction be?

For those who've grown up hearing the Christmas story, may we never lose our wonder at the self-existing, life-creating God coming to us in humble flesh.

"The life before time came to give you life eternal. This is why Jesus offers the life that nothing else can offer you—not your education, not your parents, not your lover, not your money, not your beauty, not your hard work, not your family. Jesus offers the life of God. It's a life literally 'out of this world.'"

- What have you been tempted to seek life in apart from Jesus? What has been the outcome?
- Describe in your own words the free gift of God available to us in Christ Jesus.
- How is the life Jesus offers different from all others?

2. Jesus Offers the Life that Conquers Darkness

In verse 3, John moves from life before time to the creation of all things: "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." To put it another way, God created the universe through Jesus. Why is this significant?

"First, consider the stature of Jesus. We're not talking about a prophet, or a great teacher, or a visionary leader. We're talking about the owner of all things because He's the maker of all things. But also, He's the sustainer of all things. Elsewhere in Scripture, Paul's letter to the Colossians says, 'in him all things hold together.' Consider this. Jesus made all things AND He holds them all together. At will, He could collapse the universe. Have you pondered the power of the One we worship?"

- In your own words, what is the significance of John's statement that all things were made through Jesus?
- Ponder the reality that Jesus not only made all things, but holds them all together. What does this reveal about who Jesus is? About what He's like?

- Understanding that all things were made through Jesus, reflect on the great irony of the Gospel—that His own creation did not recognize Him or receive Him. What does this reveal about the state of human hearts?

John follows with another claim about Jesus: “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.”

There’s no doubt that our world is engulfed in darkness. Whether you define that darkness politically, economically, religiously, racially, there is broad agreement that our world is dark. But how do we fight the darkness?

Maybe we align ourselves with those we think have the solution, like a political party or activist leader. Perhaps we pursue intellectualism as the answer to humanity’s ills. Or maybe we believe romantic love will cure us. But the biblical answer to overcoming darkness is the light that darkness cannot overcome. The light that has arrived with Jesus Christ.

“The Gospel gives us exposure to the light, and it’s our response to that light that can unlock for us a new way of being. If we don’t have Jesus, darkness wins. If we have Him, darkness cannot overpower us. If we have Him, we have life.”

- Have you attempted to overcome the darkness of our world by your own efforts? Talk about it.
- How does the Gospel offer you a new hope?
- Consider this quote from Pastor Jon’s message: *“Jesus went to the cross and allowed himself to be engulfed by death, so that we might live forever. Only in Him do we discover true life—the life of God, the life that conquers darkness and death.”* If you’re still living in darkness, take time now to pray in response to the light of Jesus, and receive true life in Him.