

# Gospel of John li

by Stephen Kaung

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*The Gospel of John presents Christ as the Son of God, who has declared the Father and revealed God's nature and character to us.*

**Duration:** 1:00:48

**Scripture:** John 1:1-18, John 20:30-31

**Topics:** "John"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the Gospel of John and its four different approaches to presenting Jesus. He uses the symbolic pictures of the four living creatures before the throne of God in the book of Revelation to help us remember these approaches. The first living creature, resembling a lion, represents the Gospel according to Matthew, where Jesus is presented as the majestic and powerful king. The second living creature, resembling a calf or ox, represents the Gospel according to Mark, where Jesus is portrayed as the humble servant of God. The third living creature, resembling a man, represents the Gospel according to Luke, where Jesus is presented as the son of man, the beginning of a new mankind.

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## Transcript

This is Monday morning, September the 11th, 1972, in Richmond, Virginia, ministry given through Brother Stephen Kong. May we look to the Lord in prayer. O Lord, how we praise and thank Thee that Thou didst come to this world to give life to those who believe in Thee.

We praise and thank Thee for this life which Thou hast given to us. Indeed, it is the light of man. How we praise and thank Thee because Thou art in us and we are in Thee.

And nothing can separate us from Thy love. For we do worship Thee together this morning. We do ask Thee, Lord, to breathe upon Thy Word.

Make it living to all of us as we fellowship in Thy Word. We just commit this time into Thy hands, Lord. We look to Thee for wisdom and revelation.

We want to see Thee. In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

Last night we fellowshiped together on the writer of the gospel according to John. In other words, we fellowshiped on the life of John, the evangelist. Now this morning we would like to go into this gospel according to John.

So will you please turn to the gospel according to John? Chapter 1. We'll read the first 18 verses because the first 18 verses serve as an introduction of the whole gospel. John 1.1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things received being through Him, and without Him not one thing received being which has received being. In Him was light, and the light was the light of man. And the light appears in darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God. His name John. He came for witness that he might witness concerning the light that all might believe through him.

He was not the light, but that he might witness concerning the light. The true light was that which coming into this world lightens every man. He was in the world, and the world has its being through him, and the world knew him not.

He came to his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave him the right, gave he the right to be children of God, to those that believe on his name, who have been born not of blood, nor of flesh will, nor of man's will, but of God. And the Word became flesh, dwelt among us, and we have contemplated his glory, a glory as of an only begotten with a Father, full of grace and truth.

John bears witness of him, and he has cried, saying, This was he of whom I said, He that comes after me is preferred before me, for he was before me. For out of his fullness we all have received, and grace upon grace. For the law was given by Moses, grace and truth subsist through Jesus Christ.

No one has seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father. He has declared him. Then we turn to the end of the Gospel, John chapter 20, John chapter 20, verses 31, 30 and 31.

There are many other signs, therefore, also Jesus did before his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life in his name. That's all we'll read for this morning.

We mentioned in the past that the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us with four different approaches. And some people, in order to help us to remember these four different faces or aspects of our Lord, they try to help us to give us a kind of symbolic pictures. As you remember before the throne of God, there are four living creatures.

You'll find that in the fourth chapter of the book of Revelation. There are four living creatures before the throne of God. The first living creature is like a lion.

The second one is like a cow, an ox. The third one is like a man. And the fourth one is like an eagle.

Now brothers and sisters, just to help us to remember, the first living creature that has the resemblance of a lion represents or helps us to remember the Gospel according to Matthew. Because in Matthew you'll find that our Lord Jesus is presented to us as the king, the lion of the tribe of Judah. Majestic, glorious, mighty, powerful.

Now the Gospel according to Mark we find our Lord is presented to us as the servant of God. Most humble and giving his life for the ransom of men. It's like the cow, the ox that always serves.

Then in the Gospel according to Luke you'll find the Lord is presented to us as the son of man. A new mankind. The beginning of a new race.

The man at the God's own heart. So here you'll find the third living creature has the resemblance of a man. And finally the last living creature is like an eagle.

And this is what we find in the Gospel according to John. John presents to us Christ as the son of God. As God.

Like an eagle in heaven. Now brothers and sisters I do believe that everyone who reads the Gospel according to John will come to this conclusion that in the Gospel of John he presents Christ to us as the son of God. Because he himself says explicitly at the very end of the Gospel that he writes these things in order that we may see that Jesus is the Christ the son of God.

And in believing him we will receive eternal life. But I wonder brothers and sisters do we know what is the meaning of our Lord Jesus being the son. Now we know that he is the son of man.

As the son of man there is a peculiar meaning to it. In other words as the son of man you do not think of him just in terms of a man's son. Rather you think in terms of he is the beginning of a new mankind.

Now that is the peculiar meaning of his being the son of man. He is different from the first man. He is the second man.

A new mankind. That's the reason why he is called the son of man. And out of him comes a new mankind.

When you think of our Lord Jesus as the son of God what do you mean by his being the son of God? Of course he is God's son. That's right. But then you probably will ask the question when was he born? And you know this is a theological question.

When we tell people that Jesus Christ is the son of God immediately their question will be now when was he born? And theologically the theologians try to solve that mystery and said he was eternally generated. Now still we do not understand what it means. It is true that his generation is different from our generation that is clear.

But it is still a mystery to us. But dear brothers and sisters when we think of the Lord Jesus as the son of God what really does it mean? What does God try to tell us? I believe the Lord does not want us to think more in the theological terms. That is when was he born? Whether he was eternally generated or not.

I think probably God does not want us to think of these things because it is a mystery. No matter how we explain it is still a mystery. We do not understand.

But I do believe that when Christ is presented to us as the son of God there is a special significance to it. And this you will find in the gospel according to John. What do you mean by being the son of God? Christ the son is simply meaning he is the revelation.

No one has ever seen God. But the one who is in the bosom of the father he has declared him. Now that is the meaning of the son.

And I think if you see this it is very clear. You do not need to delve into the mystery of God. You simply accept what the scripture has told us.

Christ is the son of God. Why? Because he declares God. He reveals God.

He is the revelation of God. No one has ever seen God. No one has ever known God.

God was the great unknown. But this great unknown is now being made known to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because he is.

Again and again in the gospel according to John you'll find he says when you see my works you know that the father is in me and I am in the father. He said if you see me you see the father. If you honour me you honour the one who has thanked me.

And towards the very last you see even Philip as the Lord cured the father. And the Lord said Philip have I been so long with you and you still ask show us the father? Don't you know that the father is in me and I am in the father? If you see me you see the father. I have declared him.

I am the son. And this is the meaning of Christ being the son. But in order to reveal or declare the father two things are necessary.

One he has to be the fullness of the Godhead. In order to declare God all that the father is and all that the father has must be in him. Probably we'll sing a chorus while we are waiting.

All right? I think no, that's all right. We have just mentioned that the gospel according to John presents Christ to us as the son of God. The special meaning of the term the son of God is that he is the one who has declared the father.

No one has ever seen God. No one has ever known God. But the son who is in the bosom of the father he has declared him in fullness.

Now that is the scriptural meaning of the term the son. But in order to reveal the father in order to declare the father to us as the son two things are necessary. One all that the father is all that God is and has must be in the son.

Otherwise he will not be able to fully declare the father. Otherwise there will be something missing. And it will not be a full revelation.

And he will not be able to be the son of God as he is. Therefore you'll find in the gospel according to John again and again he says the father loved the son and has given to him all things. The father loves the son and has shown him all things.

Whatever the father has shown me this I do. Why? Because unless all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily he will not be able to be that revelation. So dear brothers and sisters we will see here as the son of God he is also the fullness of the Godhead.

There is nothing that belongs to the Godhead. There is nothing that belongs to the father. There is nothing that what the father is is not in him.

Everything all things are in him. He is the fullness of the Godhead. So you see how rich is the son.

He is as rich as the Godhead. Then secondly he must not only be the fullness of the Godhead and he is but he has to empty himself completely in order that he may be a pure representation decoration of the

father. In other words there cannot be anything that is of him remain.

If there is anything that is himself remain it will distort the picture. It will distort the testimony of God. Now of course this refers especially to our Lord Jesus as a man.

That's the reason why you find he has to empty himself of his glory of his honor of his position of his power and to become a man submit himself completely under God under the father. And again again in the gospel according to John you find he said I can do nothing by myself. I do it because the father has done it and I have seen him doing it.

I can say nothing by myself. Whatever I say is because I have heard my father has said it. Now dear brothers and sisters why is it that this is necessary? Because he is the son.

You know as God as God he has all the glory all the honor all the position and all the power that are his duty. But in order to be the son of God he has to put himself under the father. Now to put himself under the father he has to empty himself.

And that's what you find in the life of our Lord Jesus. So brothers and sisters this is what you find in the gospel according to John. He is the son of God.

On the one hand he has the fullness of God in him. Yet on the other hand he seems to empty himself of everything. And with these two conditions in him he presents he is presented to us as the son of God came to this world to declare the father.

There is a great difference here between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament time God as he is presented to the children of Israel as he is presented to the world he is the God transcendent. In other words he is the God who lives in the third heaven.

He lives in glory. Even though he reveals somehow in part to the children of Israel and to the world. And yet you find when he reveals himself partially he always reveals himself with such majesty with such glory that the people was just put in fear and tremble.

You know when God gave the law through Moses to the children of Israel on Mount Sinai the children of Israel were in such fear they pleaded with Moses and said now don't let God speak to us directly. Just speak to you and you pass it on to us that will be enough. Why? They were afraid.

They were afraid. They saw God transcendent. He was the God who was high above full of glory and majesty.

He was not one that you could approach. He was one that you worship at the distance. The more you fear God the more you retreated.

Why? He was so full of majesty and glory. So in the Old Testament you'll find God was presented to us as God the transcendent far above all. And under the Old Covenant the highest spiritual life you can ever achieve is the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

In other words the more you are afraid of Him the better you are. The more you worship Him at a distance with fear and trembling that's all you can do because He is the God transcendent far above all. But dear brothers and sisters when the Son of God came to this world He has brought God.

God is still the God transcendent He is still the God who lives in the third heaven and yet He is also God who is so near to us. Not only so near but He is near. God imminent.

Not only transcendent but imminent. And this is the meaning of incarnation. The Word became the Word.

Why the Word? Because He was the utterance the expression of the Godhead. But the Word became flesh. Now the Word has become flesh.

He has tabernacled among men and as John the apostle says we see Him we hear Him we touch Him we contemplate Him. He is no longer the God that is far, far away. He is the God who can be seen can be heard can be touched can be contemplated.

God is now here. God is now present. And now you'll find it is no longer a matter of the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Here you'll find it is the love of Christ through the Son of God. God has come. God is now with us.

And God is now and this is quite Christ as the Son of God has brought to us. Therefore John said the Word became flesh and tabernacle among men and we have beheld His glory even the glory of the only begotten Son with the Father. Here you'll find our Lord Jesus in our midst.

The Son of God when we see the Lord Jesus we see the Father. When we hear Him we hear the Father. When we touch Him we touch the Father full of grace and truth.

Now why is it He is full of grace and truth? You know in 1st Epistle of John you'll find John shows us that God is light. God is love. The very qualities of God the very nature of God He is love He is light.

This is what God is. And then in the Gospel according to John you'll find Christ is full of grace. In God is love.

But when the love of God comes to us it is grace. The grace of our Lord Jesus. In God is light.

God is light. But when God's light comes to us it is truth. It is reality.

It is truth. Therefore you'll find our Lord Jesus being the Son of God being the one who reveals to us what God is. God is love.

Therefore all the grace that our Lord Jesus has shown us are but the expression of the love. It is not just grace. It is love.

But when we receive it it is grace. What is grace? Something undeserved. We do not deserve it.

It is free. Freely given to us. We who are unworthy.

Why? Why such grace? Because of love. God is love. And brothers and sisters today we find truth.

Not in the sense of cold truth. In the sense of reality. How do we enter into the reality of all spiritual things? It is because God is love.

There is no doubt. And in the whole Gospel according to John you'll find this book is written in that way. I believe you must have noticed in the Gospel according to John the way that John writes his Gospel.

Usually he will give us an incident. Something happened. Something that our Lord Jesus has done.

And after that incident or story he will enter into a kind of discourse of teaching. Telling us what that story really means. You know it simply is when John writes his Gospel you'll find he always presents to us a story of grace.

Then followed by a teaching of truth. The story is the story of grace. What the Lord has done to us who are so undeserved.

But after we have received such grace then the Holy Spirit begins to teach us what that grace really means. It brings us for instance for an example here was a man who was sick for 38 years. And the Lord Jesus came and said do you want to be made whole? And he said nobody put me in the pool.

The Lord said rise up and go. And he did. And afterwards the Lord met him in the temple and the Lord said now you're healed say no more.

Otherwise something worse will happen. And now this is the story. This is the story of grace.

But after the story you'll find in chapter 5 of the gospel according to John the Lord began a discourse. And during his discourse he said the Father does not judge anyone. Because he has given judgment to the Son.

So that people will honor the Son as they honor the Father. But anyone who has heard the voice of the Son and believed in him he shall not be judged. He has passed out of death into life.

Hear the Lord say that he is the judge. The Father has given to him judgment. And he judges according to the Father.

And his judgment is true. But he is able to dispense grace to us while he himself take upon our judgment. Therefore anyone who believes in him will not be judged.

So you'll find here first the story of grace and then it is followed by a teaching. Now that is the whole method we may say that the gospel according to John is written. But this grace and this truth are not something that are apart from the Lord Jesus.

Why? Because the Bible says the law came through Moses. But grace and truth survived through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now there is a great difference here.

The law came by Moses. Moses was the law giver. Through him the law was given to the children of Israel.

But he was not. Moses was the law giver but he was not the law. And you'll find even in the lifetime of Moses he himself had violated, offended the law.

And because he had offended the law he was not allowed to enter into. He was put. But with Christ Jesus it is different.

It is that grace and truth subsist through Christ Jesus. Now what do you mean by subsist? It means that grace and truth are in him. They are maintained by him and they are only real in him.

He is not only the one who dispenses grace. He is not only the one who teaches truth but he is grace and he is truth. Now this is something we have to remember.

Grace is not something that Christ dispenses to you as if you have a need. You ask the Lord for that need and the Lord said alright I will give you grace that you may have your need met. Then you take the grace and you go away.

The Lord said I am the grace. I am the grace. Now this is why you find in 2 Corinthians chapter 13 here was a man a man of God.

This man of God had a problem. He had a thorn upon his flesh and the reason why he had the thorn was not because he had sinned but because he had received much revelation. You know isn't that strange? Not because he had sinned but because he had received so great revelation and because he received so much revelation God allowed Satan to attack him.

Why did God allow Satan to attack him? That he may be humble and not exhausted. So here you find he had a problem a thorn upon his flesh and it was very painful. I don't know if you are touched by a thorn.

Now this morning our brother and I we were walking and our brother picked up a thistle. I have never seen a thistle before. I mean I read it in the Bible thorn and thistle thorn and thistle but I never knew what a thistle was.

So he showed me a thistle and when I took it from my brother's hand I was pricked only a little bit of course but I was I was pricked. A thorn in the flesh. Not only just a touch of the thorn but the thorn is in the flesh is there all the time.

It's so irritating it's so painful and because of that poor praise three times Lord removed it removed it but the Lord said my grace is sufficient for thee for my power is made perfect in your witness. Now what is this grace that the Lord is talking about? My grace is sufficient for thee. Is it that the Lord gave him some kind of numbness that he wouldn't feel the pain of the thorn or is it some kind of a strength an insensitivity or what is it that he may not feel that much or he may overcome that? The Lord said my grace is sufficient for thee.

In other words I am your grace I am with you even though you feel the pain of that thorn and yet you can overcome it. My power will be manifested in your witness. You are weak you will continue to be weak you are not made strong you will not come to a point and say now I am strong you will never.

You will remain in weakness but at the same time you will find the power of God is strong. You can overcome the thorn and turn the thorn into a crown. Why? Because the Lord is your grace.

Brothers and sisters that is John. John is such a subjective person. His knowledge of the Lord is so intimate.

You remember when he first met the Lord the Lord said what do you want? His answer is where do you live? And you remember at the last supper how he leaned upon the breast of the Lord. In other words with John it is not a matter of things. With John it is a matter of what is grace.

He is the Son of God full of grace. But what is grace? It is not something that he dispenses. You need one thing and say all right I'll give you one grace.

Now you need another thing I'll give you another grace. When you are sick I will give you a grace called healing. When you are in lack I'll give you a grace called food.

He is that grace. He gave himself. And as he gave himself to us as we experience his life we receive grace.

In other words there is no such thing as a grace apart from the life. The same thing is true with truth. Now often times we take a truth well as a teaching.

We say this truth and that truth. The truth of sanctification the truth of redemption the truth of transformation or the truth of death and the truth of death the truth of second coming and all these things. Now we think of truth in terms of objective teachings.

But according to the gospel of John truth subsists in Christ. In other words when you take a truth away from Christ it no longer is truth. And how you experience it in your life.

We said we were crucified with Christ. No longer we but Christ who lives in us is it truth? It is truth. Do you believe in the truth? You do.

But sometimes it doesn't work. Why is it that sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't work? The reason is sometimes you abide in Christ sometimes you are away from Christ. When you abide in Christ it is truth.

It is reality. It works. But when you are not abiding in Christ no matter how true the whole thing is it is still truth.

But it is not real. It has subsisted in Christ. Full of grace and truth.

But all subsist in Christ. There is one word that John uses very much and that's the word life. You know in the gospel according to John he uses the word life or to live 52 times.

There is only another word that uses more than that that is belief. Belief is used 98 times. But here you'll find the word life.

Now what is life? The whole gospel according to John emphasized a great deal upon life. Now what is life? It is just the combination of grace and truth. In other words how does Christ dispense His grace to us? How does Christ teach His truth to us? It is it is all in this life.

God has come to us in the person of His Son. And His Son gives us His life. May be imparted to us that grain of wheat must fall upon the ground and die.

If it doesn't die it abides alone. That speaks of our Lord Jesus. When He was on this earth before His death He was that grain of wheat among a field of pears.

And as you read the gospel of John and the full gospel you will find what a life that grain of wheat. How does He speak? How does He walk? How does He act? How does He react? And everything you'll find He is totally different. He is heavenly.

He is spiritual. He is eternal. You look at the life of the Lord Jesus and you cannot but say now here is a life full of grace and truth so totally different from everybody.

But He abides alone. He abides alone. I was told somebody discovered a grain of wheat or something after a hundred years it is still one grain but after a hundred years they put it in the ground and it bears fruit.

The life is still there. Now our Lord Jesus outside you'll find a shield the form of a man but within Him is the divine life. In Him was life.

And this divine life is full of love and light. And when this divine life walk upon this earth you'll find it is expressed in grace and truth. And this is what we see the life of our Lord Jesus.

Oh we admire that life if He remains and does not die He will be alone. All together alone. He is just beyond human imitation.

You can admire Him but you cannot copy Him. It's impossible. And on the cross when He died when His outward shield as it were was broken then the life within is relieved.

You know with John he emphasizes very much on this life. God has come to this world in the Son. But how can the Son share God with us? How can the Son give us His life? Death is the only way for the relief.

And because of His death on the cross dear brothers and sisters now we have received eternal life. Eternal life simply means His life. God's life by His death and resurrection and by the Holy Spirit.

Today we who believe in the Lord Jesus we have now His life. To put it in another way we are now united with God. God is no longer the God who is far, far away from us.

God is now and we are in Him. As the Lord said my Father is in me and I am in the Father. But now you are in me and we are.

That you'll find in John chapter 14 through chapter 15. So dear brothers and sisters the whole emphasis of the Gospel of John is not that we may see God. But the whole approach is God has now come in the Son and the Son by His death and resurrection is now able to bring God to us.

There is now a union. As the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father so we are now in Him and He is now with us. It is very, very subjective.

Having received this life brothers and sisters the thing is what is the nature of this life? Or before we say that let us say how do we know God? Today we do not know God just as an objective object of worship. He is still there no doubt about it. But we know God more as our Father.

You know in the Old Testament times people know God as God the Maker the Creator but they do not know God as even though sometimes in the Old Testament you do find such expression. God is like a Father to the children of Israel to the nation of Israel but they do not have that personal relationship. It is only through the Son that God has become our Father.

It is the Son who has brought the Father to us. So now we know God not only as our Maker as one that we should worship in the distance with fear and trembling but we know Him as our Father so near so dear even in us. And we are in Him.

Now that is what the Son has. Now we have that life of the Son in us. He that has the Son has life.

But brothers and sisters do you know what that light is? Do you know what is the nature of that light? The nature of that light is light and love. So we have in us a light. The light of the Son of God.

And the nature of that light is light and love. And because this is the nature of this light what will be its expression? If we allow this light to take control of our life it will be great. So our problem today is in principle we have to follow the footsteps of our Lord.

The Lord said a grain of wheat except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it abides alone. But if it dies it bears much fruit. And then the Lord continued he who loves me should follow me.

Wherever I am there he should be. If you lose your life for my sake you are doomed. So brothers and sisters you find the same principle is now working in us.

In a sense the Word has become flesh in us. Christ is now in us. God is now in us.

His life is now in us. Now how can that light be released? And multiplied? The same principle. As the Lord has to go to the cross through death in order that His life may be released to us.

So if we want to see the life of Christ multiplied increased in us we have to deny ourselves take about the reason why the life of Christ is not more manifested through us is not because the life is not there. The reason why we are not so gracious and so truthful we do not seem to express Christ in His grace and in His truth. It is because not because the life is not there.

We have already had that life in us. It is because we try to preserve our share that is our outward man. And if we try to preserve our outward man intact the result is life is being increased.

So here you'll find the same principle. We have to break through. Life has to break through the share.

And if we are willing to deny our soul life let our outward man be broken then you'll find the life of Christ will be revealed. And what do you find there? You will find within you love. And people will find without you grace and truth.

Therefore the gospel of John is not just presenting Christ to us as the Son of God in an objective way. John presents Christ as the Son of God in a most subjective fashion. In other words John says now the Lord Jesus comes the Son of God.

Now why does he come? Because he comes that he may have many sons. He is to lead many sons into glory. He is to be the firstborn among his brethren.

He is the Son of God the Son of God. But by sharing his life that we too may be many sons just. And he is to lead many sons into glory.

To put it in just another way he is the bridegroom who came to this world to seek for his bride. That's the whole outlook of the gospel according to John. In the beginning you see the Son of God and towards the end you see many sons into glory.

So dear brothers and sisters as we read the gospel according to John we should not read it just objectively you know knowing Christ as the Son of God in an objective way and knowing that he gives grace and truth in an objective way that is not John's approach. John's approach is he presents Christ as the Son of God that we may receive him and as we receive him we allow his life to take control of us and to live out. That

as he is so shall we be.

Why? Because he is in us. And that is the whole approach of the gospel according to John. Let us pray.

Oh Lord we do ask thee that as we read the gospel according to John that we may truly see Christ the Son of God full of grace and truth imparting himself to us that we in turn may manifest him as he has manifested the Father. Oh Lord do let us see this union this mystery and do allow this mystery of the union be expressed and manifested that Christ may be exalted in our lives. We ask all in the name of our Lord Jesus and for his glory.

Amen.

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