



**Grace and peace be to you from God our Father, and from our King and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is coming soon.**

In Mark's gospel, you can read about how Jesus walked on the water. It's in chapter six.

At the end it says...

*"<sup>51</sup>Then he climbed up into the boat with them, and the wind stopped. They were completely amazed, <sup>52</sup>because they had not understood about the loaves. Instead, their hearts were hardened"* (Mark 6:51-52 EHV).

**Think about that for a second.** The disciples were amazed to see Jesus walked on the water—because they HAD NOT UNDERSTOOD ABOUT THE LOAVES.

Now, they KNEW that Jesus had performed a miracle to feed the 5,000. They got that part! **What they didn't understand was what that meant for them.**

Another translation phrases it like this...

*"...they were utterly astonished, <sup>52</sup>for they had not gained any insight from the *incident of the loaves...*"* (Mark 6:51-52 NASB).

Huh.

**They HAD NOT GAINED ANY INSIGHT.**

When we study the Word of God, we need first to understand, "What exactly happened here? What is this saying?"

But then we need to explore further, to discover, "How does God want this to impact ME? How does he want this to change the way I think? What's my take-away from this verse?"

**We need TO UNDERSTAND about the loaves.**

....

**If the disciples had understood about the loaves, that would have changed how they reacted to everyday events.**

And isn't that what God is seeking to accomplish in our lives? Change? Re-forming us to walk in step with his will? Making our emotions what they should be? Re-creating us in his image? **Yes!!**

If the disciples understood about the loaves they would not have been amazed to see Jesus walking on the water. They would have said,

*“Of course he’s walking on the water. He’s got all power doesn’t he? I mean, it’s awesome, but stuff like this is to be expected.”*

*“Of course the wind stopped immediately. He’s God. Nature must obey its maker!”*

*“We don’t have any bread? I’m not worried. Jesus will provide. He has in the past. He will in the future. And if he doesn’t, I’m guessing he’s got a very GOOD reason. I’m pretty sure he’s not plotting against us.”*

**We need to understand about the loaves.**

[PAUSE]

We’re going to visit the manger again soon.

**Do we understand about this Child?**

John tries really hard to help us understand about this Child in two of our readings for today.

Our reading from **John 1:1-5, 14-18** told us who this Child really is. John calls him “The Word” and says that he is God. He was there in the beginning, and was with God, and was God.

The Greek there is so simple and straight forward you can’t miss John’s meaning unless you deliberately want to deny it. **The Word became flesh and bone, and lived among the human race.**

**God himself became flesh and bone.  
THAT IS who was laid in the manger.**

[PAUSE]

But does THIS IMPACT ME? Does it change the way I think? What’s my take-away from this story?

**Well, John has some more words for us to consider.** These words aren’t from his Gospel. They sound similar, but these words come from a letter John wrote to his fellow Christians later in life.

**May the Holy Spirit bless our study of his word. Amen.**

**1 John 1:1-4 (EHV)**

**1** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have observed and our hands have touched regarding the Word of Life—<sup>2</sup>the life appeared, and we have seen it. We testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. <sup>3</sup>We are proclaiming what we have seen and heard also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us. Our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>We write these things to you so that our joy may be complete.

....

**During this year’s midweek Advent services** we looked at Names for our Savior: Jesus. Christ. Immanuel.

Well here, John gives us another name: **“The Word of Life.”**

We’ve already heard him called **“The Word”** ....

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (**John 1:1** EHV).

And it fits that John would call him, “The Word of Life”! We’ve been told that all things were created through him. The Son of God was there in the beginning, sharing in the act of creating the universe. He was there when the command was spoken, and the skies and oceans were filled with feathers fliers, and darting, diving swimmers.

And we remember God’s Words on the sixth day.

“Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness” (**Genesis 1:26b** EHV).

**He was there, giving a special kind of life to the human race.** Not mere biological life, but a unique connection to the Creator, “Spiritual life”.

It’s not hard to see that animal life and human life are not exactly the same. Animals are a blessing, but they are not the same as us.

**No, the life that God breathed into Adam was special.** From the very beginning he was given a close, family relationship with the Holy, only-good-God.

....

But the sin came—and death followed.

Not just physical death, but separation from God. Spiritual death.

Mankind was never created to exist apart from God. Fish were made to live in the water. Take ‘em out and they die.

Man was the same. Made to live in God--connected to him. Sever that connection, and we die.

We might continue to exist. Might continue to move around. But severed from God we’re not really alive anymore.

**True life is being connected to our Creator.**

[PAUSE]

With all this in mind, hear again what John said in his Gospel...

**“<sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind”** (**John 1:4** EHV).

**Stay with me here!**

In him was life, and that life was LIGHT.

Light illuminates. It’s scatters darkness, and makes it so we can see things. Understand things. And light doesn’t just help us gather facts, it helps us learn how to use these facts. Light helps us GROW in WISDOM.

Being connected to the true God illuminates the world in front of our very eyes.

It opens up the way to see and study the creation better.

When we have the Son of God at our side, directing us with his Word, we can understand better how to navigate human relationships.

Being connected to the Word of Life has the power to illuminate everything in our lives.

\*\*\*\*

**And if that sounds like it's saying too much, I guarantee that when you're NOT connected to the Word of Life—your human logic will lead you down some tragically foolish paths.**

When the light isn't guiding you, the darkness will spread, and will make life more painful.

**Our world today** has abandoned teaching our children real TRUTH, and instead invites THEM to come up with their OWN TRUTH.

The world today says we should follow our emotions, and even claims that what we FEEL determines reality.

**God says THAT'S A LIE.**

Apart from God, man struggles to determine the simplest of things. Like, "What is a woman?" or "What is right and wrong?"

If things aren't going well for me, does that give me the right to smash other people's property or murder them? The world says, "Maybe. Depends on the situation."

**In the first chapter of ROMANS, the Apostle Paul describes what the world without God is like.** It KNOWS God exists, but deliberately closes its eyes to that truth.

Paul says man's thinking becomes nonsensical. His heart darkened. He claims to be wise, but is a fool. He worships animals, and things that God created—instead of worshipping the Creator.

Pauls says that instead of fighting against sinful lusts, god-less man FOLLOWS HIS SINFUL LUSTS. Pursues them. Women with women. Men with men. All in the name of following the inner voice. Creating my own purpose. Listening to what is desired in my heart.

**But this path doesn't lead to wholeness.** Nor does it make man happy.

Because we weren't designed to live alone.

**We were designed to live with God.**

**TRULY connected to him.**

Apart from God the world has filled up with envy, murder, hatred, boasting, with precious little mercy, love, or faith. And even when man hears that God's judgment IS GOING TO FALL ON THE WORLD for all of this one day—mankind still encourages sin.

\*\*\*\*

**How we doing?**

We still awake?

**Maybe a story will help us.**

I want to tell you a story.

You ever heard of a story called, "The Golden Meteor"? It's a short story written by Mike Mason.

I'm going to summarize it here.

A grandson asks his grandad to tell him a story. And so Gradad tells him a story about way back when, when the world was very different than it is today.

He says, "Adam, look in the fireplace. In the flames, do you see anything? Any shapes, any creatures?"

Adam looks, and says, "Sure, all kinds." Adam has a good imagination. He sees a ship, a lion, a galloping horse, and trees.

Grand-dad says...

Well, Adam, that's the way the whole world used to be. The entire universe was filled with fire, dazzling and alive. And everything in it was made of a kind of pure gold. But not like the metal we have today, mind you, this was a living gold.

And everything was covered with living fire, inside and out. But this was a different kind of fire too—because nothing ever got burned up by it."

And there were people in the world back then. Two of them. And they lived and breathed and talked played all in this fire—all the time.

Really? Said Adam.

Yes, really. Said Grandad.

**But one day, that first boy and girl found something that was different than everything else.** They found it on the beach. And to us it would have looked like a black toad. Like a piece of lumpy, sooty, greasy coal.

Now, I know that doesn't sound very enticing. But it was different than everything else. And so, they wanted it. Or to use a grown-up word, they coveted it.

But as soon as they picked up that piece of black, greasy coal, it got smeared on their hands. And on their arms, and legs, and on their faces, and in their hair.

Ewe.

They found they could draw on rocks, and on the trees, and even on the sky with this black stone. And they had never done that before. And so that blackness spread all over. And it wouldn't come off of their hands, or anything it touched.

After a while they got tired of it. Tired of the greasy, sooty thing and tried to throw it into the ocean. But it just stained the water and came rolling back on to the beach.

And they found that the blackness didn't just cover all the gold in the world. It made the fire that was in everything go out. And so the world that was full of light, and warmth, and dancing color—grew dark, and cold, and dead.

The blackness even filled their minds. And after a while they forgot what the world used to be like.

But then came a rumor. It was said that a golden meteor was coming. And that it would come crashing down from outer space with a great big fiery tale, lighting up the sky from one end to the other.

Unlike the world, all tainted with black greasy soot, this golden meteor would be pure gold. The old kind. Full of light and fire, and life.

And everything it touched would be transformed back into fiery, pure-as-pure-can-be, living gold again!

So when will it happen, Grandad? When will the Golden Meteor come?

But don't you know, Adam? Haven't you heard? The great secret is—the Golden Meteor has come already!"

What?

That's right, it's already here. In fact, every year at Christmas time we celebrate its coming."

Christmas? I don't get it...

But Grandad? If the Golden Meteor already came, how come everything hasn't been turned to fiery gold?

Well, Adam, I think that's because everything needs to be touched first. Touched by that living gold.

Grandad? Have you seen this Golden Meteor yourself?

Yes, I have.

And been touched by it? Set on fire?

Yes.

Grandad?

Yes, Adam?

This Golden Meteor—its Jesus, right?

That's right, Adam.

Then why didn't you just tell me so from the beginning?

Well, Adam, sometimes its hard to understand things. But stories help. And God seems to like using stories to teach us about the more important things. After all, in the Bible God kept on telling people stories for a few thousand years before he finally let us know that every one of them was all about Jesus.

That's the story I wanted to share.

[PAUSE]

## **Jesus is the Word of Life.**

He was there in the TRUE beginning.  
And he has returned.

He was born.  
So that we might SHARE with God again.

In life.  
In light.  
In God's joy.

Like God wanted in the beginning.  
That's what heaven will be like: Eden, with no fall.

\*\*\*\*

**When it comes to Bible pictures, I usually like the realistic ones. The ones that match what the Bible says in all the details.**

But the pictures we see around this time of year where Jesus is glowing in the manger? **Well, I like those.** Because it reminds me what this Child really means.

## **The Word of Life came down.**

To Mary.  
To Bethlehem.  
To me.  
To us.

And because he did, Eden has been reopened.  
And until we live with God in heaven, he comes to live with us here. In our daily lives.

And that lights things up.

When you look into the manger, what's the impact for you?  
Does what you find there change the way you think?

**Do you understand about this Child?**

**Amen.**

**The peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts, and your minds, in Christ Jesus.**