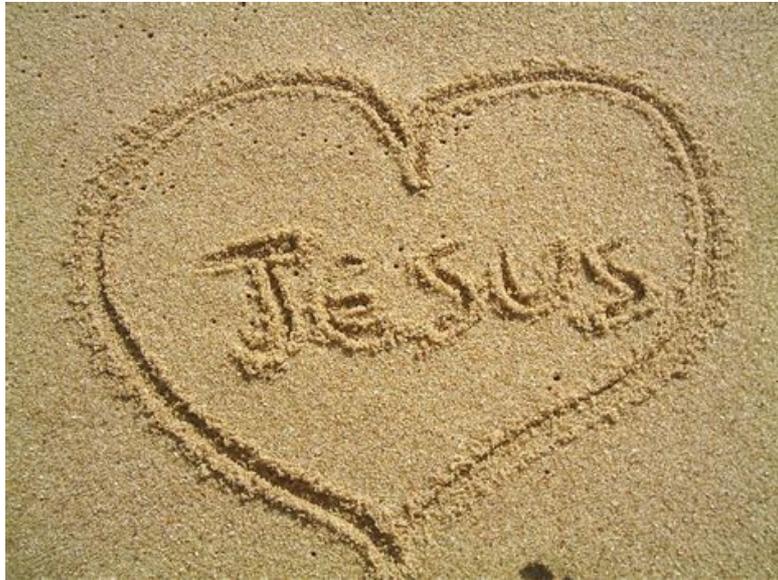


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# Christmas Day. Jesus #1

**Sermon • Rev'd Andrew Hoggan • 25 December**

Colossians 1:15-16 • John 1:1-5, 14,16-18



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 came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

...And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

....From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, [5] who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you came among us that we might know freedom, hope, joy, love and life. Whatever the reason we came today, may it be that we will receive of you, and our lives will be the richer for it, Amen.

Let me begin by saying thank-you for taking time out to gather in a place of worship at what is traditionally a really busy and often quite stressful time of the year.

I hope that what I share this morning from Gods word the bible, will be an encouragement to you and you go home thinking this has been a good investment of your time.

You have probably heard of the term influencer. You may even be following one or two on social media. If enough people follow them they can make huge amounts of money. I mean huge.

The highest paid influencer on the planet, and he has been for several years, is:

- Portuguese Footballer Cristiano Ronaldo who earns up, wait for it, 3 million dollars per sponsored instagram post.
- 5th, Dwayne the Rock Johnson gets up 2,300,000
- 10th, Justin Bieber 1,700,000

Not bad for 30 seconds work. Take a selfie showcasing whatever, and a million or three pops into the old bank account. Happy Christmas.

Ronaldo, at the top of the list as far as monetising his profile, has 668 million followers. That's about 11% of the worlds population. Not bad for a football player, all be it a petty good one.

Ronaldo though doesn't hold a candle to another influencer that I would argue is the greatest influencer of all time. You can guess who I'm going to say can't you?

Jesus currently has 2.6 billion followers. That's about 30% of the population.

Jesus though has not monetised his message, even though regrettably, some of his followers seem to think monetising the message is an ok thing to do.

We have just heard the first few vs of how John presents the Jesus story. John's aim is clear.

- He wants us to know who Jesus is.
- He wants us to what that means for us, for those around us, for creation itself even.

You could say John wants us to know what will happen if Jesus influences us, and we decide to click that like and follow **button**.

John is writing as old man so he has the perspective of time. John was also the apostle to have that rather strange vision that we call Revelation, the last book in the bible. That means that John, more than any other biblical writer, knows the whole story.

In fact, as John tells the story, Jesus is right there at the beginning in Genesis, actively taking part in the very creation. And right there at the end as Revelation talks about Jesus returning to put things right.

They didn't, of course, have the term influencer in John's day. But by any standard Jesus would tick all the boxes. His influence is not just moral and spiritual. It is cosmic in scale as the very creation is influenced.

It is pretty brain stretching to think about God as Trinity Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So to simplify it let's just say the Trinity was involved in creation.

John begins by making the point that the same Word that spoke creation into being, as recorded in Genesis, is the same Word that John says took and flesh and dwelt among us.

The apostle Paul in Colossians, has a crack at explaining it . "in him, talking about Jesus, in him, all things in heaven and on earth were created. If that all sounds too out there. Think of it this way.

If Jesus spoke creation into being, bringing order where there was chaos and disorder, if he did that, do you think any of the things we might be wondering, and or, worrying about, would be too hard for Jesus to help us with?

The message of the gospel is that Jesus can even deal with sin and death. That's why it's important to link Christmas and Easter. Jesus coming into the world, and then through the cross Jesus conquering sin and evil.

As we link the crib and the cross, then we factor in the resurrection, we get pretty compelling evidence that Jesus' message, and the hope of the gospel is more than wishful thinking.

Let's focus very briefly on Vs 5 because if you want encouragement you can't go past **this vs.**

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it." Nor can it. Nor will it. That's the inference in the original language.

In other words Jesus enters right into our experience and no matter how bad and dark and hopeless things might seem, the light and life of Christ is able to transform and redeem anything and anybody. Anytime.

If that seems like too much of an ask given all that goes on in the world, John's linking of the Word made flesh in Jesus, and the creative, cosmos changing Word we see in Genesis is a way of saying Jesus gets things done.

The argument goes like this. If Jesus can do a really big thing, surely he can do, by comparison, a small thing.

Imagine if I rolled in a couple of fairly sizeable wheels on a piece of scaffolding bar. Then I proceeded to impressively bench press them in front of you. Now just for transparency, that would be a Christmas miracle with my puny arms.

But just say I did. What then if there was a couple pillows tied to a broomstick. Do you think I would have any difficulty bench pressing that? Just so, if Jesus can transform the cosmos do you think that any human problem is too big for him to deal with?

Lastly to encourage us for the journey as we get ready to launch into a new year. John having described Jesus as light, life and truth, goes on to highlight the grace that is available for us.

Grace. That is the ongoing goodness and work of God in our lives. That which is given freely and generously. To help us grasp the generosity of a God's Grace John paints an amazing picture.

Vs 16 From His, that is Jesus, "from His fullness, we have all received Grace upon grace." Grace upon grace.

Imagine, if you can, a multi layered cake. Something like a wedding cake maybe. The bottom layer is the biggest and each subsequent layer is smaller. Now turn the cake upside down.

Now each layer is now bigger than the layer under it. Now think of each layer as a platform of grace. Each portion of grace is now a platform for a greater portion of grace.

That is the picture John is building when he says “from Jesus fullness we have all received grace upon grace.”

It is as if the work and grace of Jesus in our life becomes a platform for an ever greater work of Jesus in our lives. It’s a way of saying Jesus’ influence in our life gets increasingly more productive as he works and transforms us.

Where that all ends is with us being just like Jesus.

That of course doesn’t happen till the very end of the story when Jesus once and for all puts things right and there is a new heaven and a new earth. When that day comes we are to be fully conformed to the image of Jesus, being just like him in character and nature.

C.S. Lewis the theologian and writer of the children’s books in the Nania series tries to get that across in this way.

C.S. Lewis says this, on that final and great day, the day where we will be like him and with him. If on that day “we were to see another believer before we saw Jesus we might be tempted to fall down in worship.”

God with us. God for us. God in us. That is the present of Christmas. He became like us so we can become like him. That is our calling and our hope as followers of Jesus.

To wrap up. The thing about purely human influencers; while they can inspire, guide, motivate, there is only so much they can do.

- Ronaldo can’t make us play football like he does.
- Dwayne the Rock Johnson can’t give us his huge muscles.
- Justine Bieber can’t give us his voice.

Jesus, on the other hand is not just an influencer in the sense of inspiration and motivation. The gospel assures us that Jesus actually can do things for us. If we let him. █

- Jesus can deal with our sin.
- Jesus can give us new life.
- Jesus can give us hope like no other.

Christmas 2025. There are all sorts of reasons why people come to church over the Christmas period.

It's always wonderful to see folk. Even though you know for some it may well be a periodic visit.

As I said at the beginning, thank you for coming, and I do hope you feel it has been a good investment of your time.

More than that though. I would dare to hope that if the Christmas story is just that, a story. And not a history and life changing event that has impacted you personally. ■

Could I dare to encourage you to seek out and take hold of the greatest gift God has given us. Even Jesus Christ.

I promise you, Jesus really is the gift that keeps on giving. He takes sin. He gives forgiveness grace. It truly is the best deal in the world.

If you don't know that as you sit here this morning. Maybe it's your time. I pray and hope that for you this Christmas.

Lets close in prayer;

Jesus light of the world.

Jesus source of life and hope.

Jesus God with us.

This Christmas day fill us afresh, or fill us anew with the reality of who you are, and what that can mean for our lives, and our world. Amen.