

## Sunday Evening 8th December 2013, Kenneth Gray. John1:1-13 “Born of God”

This familiar and beautiful passage of Scripture causes some to wonder how such insightful and powerful words could have been written by a barely literate fisherman. The answer is, of course, that they were inspired by the Holy Spirit, God-breathed and reveal in an amazingly succinct and complete description the very nature of Jesus Christ - a man altogether different from all other men because he was also wholly God.

In our world we are continually looking for heroes. Currently, Nelson Mandela is being lauded across the world. His death has prompted the most glowing eulogies because of his attempts to draw together a society that for generations had been fractured. Yet however great and influential he may have been he was still just a man. In a world that believes in nothing dead heroes are being exalted, deified almost. As society rejects God it creates substitute gods to which it clings. In every dark situation if man does not have Jesus he has nothing else to sustain him. True believers understand the nature of a fallen world.

Kenneth recalled church history lectures when he was studying for the ministry. Studies in early church history seemed to deal with a new heresy every week. All heresies boil down to the same thing - questioning the true nature of Jesus Christ. John is quite clear. He states that Jesus was born into the world. He was wholly God and wholly man. This is orthodox Christian teaching. There was never a moment in time when Jesus, the Word, did not exist. Even before he was born he was God. This Truth is rejected by the Jehovah's Witnesses whose bible has rewritten John1 and they believe Jesus to have been the 'adopted' son of God. It is vital that we hold on to, preach and teach about the true nature of Jesus - the eternal second Person of the Trinity.

God created mankind but we fell from grace and became lost sinners. Man's obligation was to love and honour God but having chosen to disobey him there was no longer any way mankind could honour God. Jesus Christ's perfect life of itself could not help us because we were mired in sin. If Jesus were some 'divine superman' untempted and unaffected by the world how could he have become the substitute for us? He had to be fully human as well as fully divine.

John had been close to Jesus, had observed and learned from him over the years of his ministry and had acquired an understanding of these deep theological truths which he is sharing with us.

Mankind has achieved many wonderful things yet we are no closer now to understanding what creates life than we have ever been. The difference between 'life' and 'existence' remains challenging. Scientists and doctors are still trying to discover what preserves life - how shrivelled dried-up seed pods can contain life potential.

In verse 4 John tells us 'In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.' John is laying before us Jesus' purpose: Jesus is the author of life, the creator of life . Life is a God-given gift.

Drawing on his own experience of what life's wonders entailed, John knew that Jesus was totally different from all other human beings. Jesus embodied life on a different dimension. John was following the One who knew all the answers to all the questions. He has come to understand that the life he saw in Jesus has become his life too. He has become a follower of the Light of the world and everything has become clearer. He has been converted.

The dark world does not understand the new Life and new Light. But when one is converted, when one turns towards that Light, one has no desire to turn back to the darkness.

What a lot of profound theology is contained in those first few verses!

Now, in verse 6 John makes a new point. "There was a man sent from God whose name was John". Jesus himself set John the Baptist above all other men. John the Baptist's purpose was to be a witness to the true Light, that gives light to all mankind, coming into the world.

We do not have to be perfect to convert people. Our task is not to make people look at us and say “they are good” but to look at Jesus and know he is God. People cannot be transformed by us - only by God. God uses us as vehicles through whom to speak.

In verses 12 and 13 John declares that the world failed to recognise Jesus as the Son of God. Many saw him perform miracles; thousands ate the food he provided from the scraps of fish and bread yet they did not recognise him. They did not look with believers' eyes and open hearts so they missed becoming children of God.

We have been given the glorious right to be born of God. Just think what it means to a parent or grandparent to have a child to love, to support, to nurture. If we can love our children so deeply just imagine the scale and depth of God's love for us his children - a love that is eternal.

We are not saved by theological understanding but by being born of God. Let us pray for one or two in our circle of family or friends to become born of God.