

**Wednesday, December 5, 2018 – Advent Midweek I**  
**“Take My Word!”**

John 1: 1-5

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Definition Structure

Adapted from CSL Advent Series “The Word Became Flesh”

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

“You have my word!” It’s easy to become skeptical when someone says that—when they give us their word. And why is that? Because we live in a world of broken promises. Empty vows. Pledges made only to be forgotten. Assurances given, then ignored.

Words can be spoken with great fanfare. “I’ll always love you.” “We’re BFFs—best friends forever!” “You can count on me!” “Till death do us part.” But words can be autumn leaves in October’s wind. That’s why we’re a bit squeamish when someone says, “You have my word!”

This Advent we are going to work our way through John 1:1–18. And God’s biggest promise in John’s introduction to his Gospel is this—“You have my Word!” John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word.” John 1:14, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” If John’s first eighteen verses are about anything, they are about the Word. God’s Word. God’s Word who is Jesus Christ. We have God’s Word!

John 1:1–18 provides both a summary of John’s themes and is the lens through which we are to read everything John writes in his Gospel. Here is an overview of these verses: Jesus is the Word—God makes himself audible. (John 1:1–2) God is not silent! God speaks! God is audible! Jesus is the Life—God makes himself tangible. (John 1:4a) God is not a vague thought or an abstract idea! God is tangible. Jesus is the Light—God makes himself visible. (John 1:4b–13) God is not detached or hidden in darkness! God is visible. Jesus is the Son—God makes himself knowable. (John 1:14–18) God is not a mystery to solve! God is knowable!

What’s it all mean? It means that because of Jesus we can hear, experience, see, and know God. Today’s focus is Jesus is the Word. God makes himself audible. The Word is connected to creation. “In the beginning was the Word.” (John 1:1a) “In the beginning” takes us back to Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” John 1:1–5 further connects the Word, Jesus, with Genesis 1 because John uses the words “life,” “light” and “darkness.”

For instance, in Genesis 1:3 God says, “‘Let there be light.’ And there was light.” Your words can’t do that. Neither can mine. But God’s Word can. And God’s Word does! God’s Word is connected to creation. In fact, God’s Word created creation! Consider more verses that extol the power of God’s Word. Joshua 21:45, “Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord made has failed.” Isaiah 40:8, “Grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.” Isaiah 55:11, “My word will not return to me empty.” Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Here’s the point. The most powerful force in the world is God’s Word!

God’s Word called Abraham from Ur in the land of the Chaldeans; spoke to Moses from a burning bush; gave manna and quail in the wilderness; thundered from Sinai; and spoke to Elijah in a still, small voice. God’s Word even made dry bones come to life and stand on their feet, a vast army! Just ask Ezekiel! God said it. That settles it. Faith believes it! We have his Word!

The Word is connected to God. “The Word was God.” (John 1:1b) God’s powerful creating Word is more than just an utterance or an idea or a combination of letters. The Word was God. The Word is God! The Word is Jesus! Jesus isn’t a junior partner with God. Jesus isn’t the vice president of the universe. Jesus is 100 percent, fully, actually, really God. In Exodus 3:14 God tells Moses, “I am who I am.” To prove that Jesus is this God, the God, John records seven (!) “I am” statements of the Savior. John 6:35, “I am the Bread of Life.” John 8:12, “I am the Light of the World.” John 10:7, “I am the Door.” John 10:14, “I am the Good Shepherd.” John 11:25, “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” John 14:6, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life.” John 15:1, “I am the true Vine.” The Word is connected to God. In fact, the Word is God! The Word is connected to us. “In him was life, and that life was the light of men.” (John 1:4) This Word is connected to creation. “‘Let there be light.’ And there was light.” This Word is connected to God. In fact, the Word is God! And now, in great love, this Word (this Word!) connects to us! How does he do it? As light!

A clock for Christmas isn’t exactly the kind of gift that thrills a ten -year-old boy, but I said thank you to my Uncle Keith and Aunt Pat and took it to my bedroom, put it on the nightstand, and plugged it in. It was a square-faced alarm clock and its alarm could raise the dead. But, you

know, over time, I became very attached to my square-faced alarm clock. Don't tell anyone, but I even took it to college with me, and to seminary, and to California, where finally the alarm on my phone won out, but even then it remained plugged in for a couple more years. I'd grown used to the light. It glowed in the dark. And let me tell you, when your room is dark, your best friend is light!

All of us know about dark rooms. Loneliness. Depression. Shame. Guilt. Emptiness. Anger. Cancer. Death. Sooner or later, they sneak into the room, and it becomes dark, very dark. Then, just when we don't expect him, the Prince of Darkness shows up, pointing his accusing finger at us—mocking our feeble discipleship, our failed relationships and our fatal attractions. But when you're in the dark you have the Light! John 1:5, "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood/overcome it." Note the verb "shines." It's a present tense verb. John doesn't write "the light shone" or "the light will shine." No. John writes, "The light shines in the darkness." In your darkness; in your deep darkness; in the darkest hours of your life, this light shines. And "the darkness has not understood/overcome it."

With those last words John prepares us for Good Friday. Talk about a dark day! Nails. Blood. Sweat. Tears. Darkness. Oh my, the darkness! Three hours of darkness! And then death. Three days later, though, the light shines (present tense, shines!) The darkness will never overcome Jesus. The darkness will never overcome you! And why is that? We have God's Word! John 14:2, "In my Father's house are many rooms. I am going there to prepare a place for you." John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you." John 16:33, "In this world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer! I have overcome the world."

Press into God's Word. Press hard into God's Word. When fears appear, say, "But God said..." When doubts arise, say, "But God said..." When guilt overwhelms, say, "But God said..." Search God's Word like you are searching for great treasure. Once you find a pearl, grasp it. Trust it. Do what I did with the promise of the pilot.

Ever have a layover and your flight is running late? You're worried about being stuck in some city for hours on end, even overnight where you know no one? You're looking at your watch, taxiing, strategizing in your head how to politely yet assertively elbow your way to the front of the plane, praying the gate for your connecting flight isn't at the other end of the airport,

all the while your heart sinking about sharing your unwanted “Plan B” – won’t be there... can’t make it... with those at your destination. I have been in that situation more times than I’d like... \*cough\* Denver \*cough\*, but every once in awhile a voice comes over the loud speaker—a word! “This is the pilot. I know many of you have tight connections. Relax. You’ll make them. We’re holding your planes.” Now you can scrap “plan B.” Don’t have to make that dreaded phone call, or barrel through slow-walking crowds in the terminal, or check your watch every 30 seconds. You can relax when you get off the plane, march with confidence through the terminal... others are in panic mode, but not you – the pilot has given his word.

And God has given his to you. It’s a Word connected to creation and connected to God—all so he can be forever connected to you. Connected to you as the Light that shines (shines!) in your darkness! So slow down. Take a deep breath. There’s no need to panic. God says, “You have my Word.” And what an awesome Word it is. His name? Jesus! Amen.