

Text: John 1: 1-16

Theme: I Believe in God the Father and the Son

Sermon delivered by Reverend Dele Agbelusi during Service of the Word on 04/09/2016 at 10.30am

A young man once declared: "I don't believe in God- never have, never will". "Why?" I asked in return. "I don't know." He said after a moment's hesitation. "I guess I've never seen anything to convince me that God is really there. God may exist, I guess, but he does not care about me."

I also talked some time ago with a man who hasn't been in church for quite some time. At one time, he attended services regularly and even participated in the leadership of a congregation. "Why did you quit?" I asked. His answer was one I had heard before. "I just didn't get anything out of it. I got bored and haven't been back."

Have you come across any of the above scenarios or does it describe you in anyway?

It's difficult even for committed Christians to remember that genuine worship isn't really about getting; it's far more about giving. We give God our praise and adoration; we give our time and money and energy in honour of the Lord and in appreciation for his goodness; we give ourselves in ministry and service to others. And when we give freely and sacrificially, an amazing thing happens. Our needs are met too, and we receive an abundance of blessing from God.

Why do you believe God exist, If I were to ask you that question?

Too many in the church do not know who they believe and too many cannot give a reason for what they believe. No wonder, when little storms come their way, they lose heart because they do not know how powerful and great their God is. **It is impossible for you to have faith in God unless you KAT- Know Him, Accent to what you know, and Trust Him.**

Knowing God

What has the church traditionally taught about God?

The writers of the Bible never set out to prove the existence of God. They just declare that He is – and that He is personally involved with the world and the people He has made. In the first verse of the Bible we come face to face with Elohim, the awesome God of creation. The Hebrew word translated God speaks of God as the one eternal being, the majestic, powerful Creator. (Read Genesis 1.1)

The Hebrew word translated "God" here is Elohim, which speaks of God as the one eternal being, the majestic, powerful Creator. Everyone and everything else had a beginning, but God has always existed. As our passage reveals, when the eternal God speaks, things happen, just as He spoke the world to existence (Genesis 1:3). What does this fact convey to you about God's power? **Into what situation in your life would you like God to speak with his creative power?** He is able to do more things than we can ask or even imagine (Ephesians 3:20). Furthermore, He answers to no one as to His plans and purposes. He expressed his almightiness by creating the heavens and the earth.

It is through His creation that God is clearly revealed to those who have eyes to see.

No sinner will be able to stand before a Holy God on Judgement Day and declare, "I just never saw any evidence of your reality. If I had, I would have responded to you." And God will answer, "You had the stars, and the oceans, and the mountains, and the plains, and the glory of a sunset. Those things alone should have pointed you to me."

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse." (Romans 1:18-20, ESV).

The affirmation that God is maker of heaven and earth helps check our misunderstandings of God. If it is true, that God creates the heavens and the earth, then it is the most astounding declarative statement in all of Scripture and puts everything in perspective. If it is not true, then what part of the Bible can you believe? Did Abraham really live and gave rise to the Jewish people? Did Moses really lead a million Hebrews?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty. What does this mean? It means He is the Father of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and it means that He is the Father of all believers who have put their trust in Jesus the Son and have been given the right to be called sons of God. (John 1:12)

In which other ways has the almighty God revealed Himself to us?

God said to Moses, "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them." How is this significant? It is significant because God, whom we previously knew only as God Almighty, has now given a new, more personal and intimate name to Moses (and Israel). That name is Yahweh (or, in older versions of the Bible, Jehovah). The name Yahweh speaks of God's eternal existence and his unchanging character. He is the "I AM WHO I AM" (which is what Yahweh means in Hebrew), (Exodus 3:14). Our God stands above the past, present and future as the ever-present Lord of all.

This desire on God's part for a more personal relationship with mankind would culminate later when God Almighty sent His only Son to earth--God in flesh--to die on the cross so that a way for forgiveness of our sins could be provided. The fact that God Almighty would humble Himself in this way for us makes His name all the more remarkable.

Jesus Christ our Lord

When the Pharisees' questioned Jesus "Who do you think you are?" He said, "'Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.' 'You are not yet fifty years old,' the Jews said to him, 'and you have seen Abraham!' 'I tell you the truth,' **Jesus answered, 'before Abraham was born, I am!'** At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds" (John 8:56–59). The violent response of the Jews to Jesus' "I AM" statement indicates they clearly understood what He was declaring—that He was the eternal God incarnate. Jesus was equating Himself with the "I AM" title God gave Himself in Exodus 3:14.

Jesus used the same phrase "I AM" in seven declarations about Himself. In all seven, He combines I AM with tremendous metaphors which express His saving relationship toward the world. All appear in the book of John. They are I AM the Bread of Life (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51); I AM the Light of the World (John 8:12); I AM the Door of the Sheep (John 10:7, 9); I AM the Good Shepherd (John 10:11,14); I AM the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25); I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6); and I AM the True Vine (John 15:1, 5).

Some facts about the Name Jesus Christ. Contrary to the way most people use the term, **"Christ" is not a surname, it's not Jesus' last name. It's a title.** It comes from the Greek word- Christos- which means "the anointed one". The Greek is itself a translation of the Hebrew Mashiach, from which we get the word "Messiah." When we use the name Jesus Christ, we are proclaiming Jesus as the Christ, as the Messiah, the Anointed One of God.

We affirm that God did not abandon the hope of Israel. That Israel's hope for a messianic redeemer is being fulfilled. Therefore, when we Christians confess Jesus as "Christ" we are confirming the fidelity of God to the people of Israel, and that we expect Jesus in his coming to fulfill all the hopes of Israel and now of the Church. It is a confession of God's constancy and dependability.

"His only Son" - But what does it mean when we confess Jesus as "God's Only Son"?

Jesus is not God's Son in the sense of a human father and a son. Jesus is God's Son in the sense that He is God made manifest in human form (John 1:1, 14). **Jesus is God's Son in that He was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit. Luke 1:35 declares, "The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.'"**

During His trial before the Jewish leaders, the High Priest demanded of Jesus, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God" (Matthew 26:63). "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64). The Jewish leaders responded by accusing Jesus of blasphemy (Matthew 26:65-66).

Later, before Pontius Pilate, "The Jews insisted, 'We have a law, and according to that law He must die, because He claimed to be the Son of God'" (John 19:7). Why would His claiming to be the Son of God be considered blasphemy and be worthy of a death sentence? The Jewish leaders understood exactly what Jesus meant by the phrase "Son of God." **To be the Son of God is to be of the same nature as God. The Son of God is "of God." The claim to be of the same nature as God—to in fact be God—was blasphemy to the Jewish leaders;** therefore, they demanded Jesus' death, in keeping with Leviticus 24:15. Hebrews 1:3 expresses this very clearly, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being."

John 1:1-18

Who is Jesus with respect to creation and God's redemption plan?

Some suggest that he was merely a great teacher. But as C. S. Lewis wrote, any serious look at the Gospels rules out that option. In fact, Lewis reduced our options to three words: liar, lunatic or Lord. If Jesus knew he was not God but chose to deceive others anyway, then he was a liar. If he truly thought he was God but was self-deluded, then he was a lunatic. However, if Jesus was neither a liar nor a lunatic then the third option is inescapable—he is Lord and has the right to be believed and obeyed. In his opening chapter, John explores the question of who Jesus is.

Hebrews 1:1-3

He is God's final revelation, listen to Him.

"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being."