

# SESSION 1: JESUS THE WORD

## 1.0 GENERAL COURSE INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this course called *Walking the Good Path*.

Today and in the following sessions, we will be looking at Jesus, not in a religious or churchy way, but as a real person who walked the good path of God the Creator whom He called Father.

From earliest times, the people who followed Jesus became known as ***people of the Way*** because they lived and acted in the ways that Jesus lived and acted in relation to God and others. What Jesus taught and how He lived was all about helping people and showing people how to walk the good path of life with God, their Creator and Father.

He said, ***“I am the Great Spirit’s pathway, the truth about who He really is, and the life of beauty and harmony He offers to all. There is no other guide who can take you to the Father. To know Me is to know My Father.”*** (John 14:6 FNV<sup>1</sup>)

We can read about this in the Gospel of John, which is in the Bible and contains stories about the life and teachings of Jesus. It is called the Gospel of John because it was written by John, one of the earliest followers of Jesus. The word gospel means good news. For John, the life of Jesus was good news because Jesus showed him how to walk the good path of life.

In the coming sessions, we will look at what John discovered about Jesus. In this first session, we will begin with one of the ways John understands Jesus, which is as the Word.

*What does John mean by describing Jesus as the “Word”?*

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<sup>1</sup> First Nations Version.

## 1.1 JOHN DESCRIBES JESUS AS THE WORD FROM THE CREATOR

Gospel means good news or good story. For John, the life and teachings of Jesus were good news. The way Jesus lived His life was full of love, compassion, and respect for other people. People wanted to be with Him because He was kind and cared about them. The things He talked about – love, truth, peace, and satisfaction – demonstrated who He was, especially when Jesus spoke about God the Creator. It was not as if God was some far-off stranger or tyrant; instead, Jesus called Him Father.

So, John begins by describing Jesus as “The Word.” Jesus is not just any word. John says that He is like the first and most important word because He is the word that comes directly from the Creator.

Jesus is the Creator’s message to humanity, and the Creator wants all people to know that He loves them and wants to rescue (save) them from going down the wrong path to destruction (John 3:16).

## 1.2 WHAT ABOUT WORDS?

When we want to know the real facts or inside information about something or someone, we might ask a person we trust or who is ‘in the know,’ “what’s the scoop on....?” or “what’s the word on...?”

The “word” we are looking for is reliable inside information. The “word” might be information or insight into what is going on between certain people or between groups of people.

Words can also communicate advice or instruction, for example, instructions on how to install the parts of a car, assemble a piece of furniture, or address a medical issue.

Let’s say you wanted to go to a place like Ecum Secum (yes, this is a real place in Canada) or some other unfamiliar place you have never been to. You need directions – reliable information on how to get there from where you are. Those directions might be specific verbal instructions, a map, GPS coordinates, or possibly someone who knows the place and can show you the way, perhaps even by going with you.

Communication comes in many forms. Here are some examples:

- Many animals communicate with each other using sounds (for example – birds, dogs, whales, even insects).
- Before there were written languages, our ancient ancestors also used art like drawings, symbols, and carvings to communicate a message or tell a story.
- Ancient cultures also communicated their history and values through dance and music.

One of the ways we human beings are unique from animals is that we use language and words to communicate. We use words to provide information, express ideas, share stories, and build relationships with each other. The words we use and the messages we share with one another can be helpful and positive, or they can be unhelpful and negative.

### 1.3 “WHAT MAKES A WORD GOOD?” (SCRABBLE EXERCISE)

Let’s try a word exercise by trying to create the best possible word we can from a random set of letters. You do not have to use all the letters. Just select the letters from the letters provided to make the best word you can.

*What do you think about the words that have been formed and why did you select these words?*

*What does the word mean to you?*

*What makes it a good word?*

### 1.4 WORDS HAVE MEANING AND POWER

Think about words you like, words that are helpful, words that make you feel good about who you are and about other people. You may have heard the saying: ***Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names (words) will never hurt me.***

*Do you think this is true? Why or why not?*

*Which of the words from the “Scrabble Exercise” do you think have the greatest power for good? Why?*

*What would it be like to live in a world where you cannot trust anyone's words; or the only words you hear are angry and hateful; or the only messages you get are negative and aimed at putting you down?*

*What kind of world would you like to live in – world **A** or world **B**? Why?*

*What kind of person would you trust as a friend – a person associated with **A** or **B**? Why?*

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
Inspiring words	Depressing words
Peaceful words	Angry words
Kind words	Hostile words
Loving words	Hateful words
Welcoming words	Disrespectful words
Trustworthy words	Deceptive words

### **1.5 COMMUNICATION WITHOUT WORDS (CHARADES EXERCISE)**

*Let's say you live in World **A**, and you want to communicate a positive message to someone in World **B**. How might you do that if they don't understand, believe, or trust the words you are using?*

*What can you do to communicate to someone who doesn't understand what you understand or trust your words? How can you help them understand and trust you?*

*Do charades exercise.*

### **1.6 COMMUNICATING INVOLVES MORE THAN WORDS**

Often, we communicate not only with our words but with our actions.

- What do you think is meant by this saying: "A picture is worth a thousand words"? (Discuss)
- Do you think that a person's "actions speak louder than words"? (Discuss)

- How would you respond to someone who tells you, “*Do as I say not as I do*”? (Discuss)
- What does it mean to call someone “*a person of their word*”? (Discuss)

## 1.7 JESUS IS THE WORD

John describes Jesus as “the Word” that comes from God the Creator even before he uses the name “Jesus.”

This tells us something particularly important about who Jesus is. Jesus comes from God the Creator with a message for us. More than that, Jesus Himself is the message from God.

Let’s look at what John says:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning...The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us* (John 1:1-2,14).

This tells us several things about the Word.

- The Word exists from the beginning with the Creator
- The Word has no existence apart from God the Creator
- The Word became a human person. (John will go on to tell us that person is Jesus, “*The Son of God*” John 1:34 ESV)

## 1.8 What Does it Mean That Jesus is the Word?

If the **Word** came to us from God and that **Word** is Jesus – what does that mean?

- **First**, we can say that since the **Word** comes to us from God that **Word** is a communication or message from God. So, if Jesus is **the Word**, it means that Jesus is not just a messenger bringing the word or message to people, but that Jesus is **the Word** – the message itself.

- **Second**, we know from John's Gospel that Jesus was called a "rabbi" or teacher (1:38). People knew and respected Him as a "knowledge keeper" or "wisdom keeper," a person who knew the ancient truths about God the Creator of the universe and God's fatherly goodness and love for all people. Jesus went about teaching people the ways of God and the way to live in harmony with God, their Creator and Father.
- **Third**, in John's Gospel we also see that Jesus went about doing good for people regardless of who they were, no strings attached. There was no contradiction between what Jesus did and what Jesus taught. The message (word) Jesus spoke was the message (word) people saw in Jesus' actions and attitude.

## 1.9 JESUS - WHAT IS THE WORD?

There are many ways Jesus can be described. After calling Him **the Word** who came from God to be a flesh and blood human being living among people, John describes Him as "***the One and Only Son who came from the Father, full of grace (kindness) and truth.***" (John 1:14)

- *From what you know of Jesus, if you could "boil down" or reduce His life and teaching to a single word, what would that word be? (There are no right or wrong answers).*
- *Out of all the words suggested, what three words, then two words, then one word do you feel are the most important?*
- *What do you see or understand of Jesus as the **Word** or message from God. What is the message you hear? (Discuss)*

## 1.10 THE POINT

If Jesus is the **Word**, that is the message from God, then we need to pay attention to the message. Just like a road map that gives directions to a destination, we need to study what He said and did to understand the message and avoid detours, dead ends, and roads that do not take us in the good way.

## 1.11 ASSIGNMENT

Read John 3:16-21.

- a) What do you think the Word (message) is that God the Creator was communicating to humanity in Jesus?
- b) How can you tell if someone believes that message?

Read John chapters 1 and 2.

- a) Who followed Jesus? Why do you think they trusted and followed Him?
- b) Is Jesus the kind of person you would want to spend time with? What is it about Him that would or would not make you want to trust Him?
- c) Words define and words have power. If someone says something about himself/herself, it means something. (In one word what do you say about yourself?) Who does Jesus say that He is?