

# Rejoice in the God-Man

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[ 0 : 00 ] I'm going to ask you to open your Bibles to John chapter 1, and we're going to look at verses 14 through 18 this morning, and pray that the Lord would add to the reading of His Word.

John writes, beginning in verse 14, that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John testified about Him and cried out, saying, This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me. For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten God who's in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

Let's pray together. Father, thank You for Your Word. We thank You that You've given us this privilege and the opportunity to come and to be in Your house together, to be with Your people, to come and to worship. We thank You for the gift that You've given to us of Your Son.

[ 1 : 14 ] We thank You because without that gift, we would not be here today. And so we just pray that You would give us a glimpse of Christ. Give us a glimpse and understand Him more, so that we might love You, follow You, and adore You.

And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. So generally speaking, I think it might be true, I think, that we tend to not trust things that we don't know, we don't understand, or that are new to us. We look at it and we say, I don't know, maybe that'll work, maybe that won't work. It could be in any area of life. I know when you join a new community, whoa, what happened there?

Don't trust that either. When you join a new community, you have to build up trust a little bit. People have to get to know you before they open up. It's just sort of one of the things that's there.

We tend to hold our full trust until we begin to really know something or know someone. And I think that that's one of the reasons that we constantly, in the preaching of the Word, are talking about Jesus Christ.

[ 2 : 31 ] Because we want you to know Him so that you may trust Him. And I'm not just talking about the idea of someone becoming a Christian for the first time. But you as a Christian, you love the Lord, you follow after Him, but you do not know Him as He is because there is more to Him to know than we could ever exhaust in our lifetimes.

And even when we go on to be with the Lord, because He is infinite, we will never exhaust all of who He is. So coming to know Him is what we're supposed to do.

As a matter of fact, Jesus says in His high priestly prayer in John chapter 17, that eternal life is to know God. So the more that we know of Him, the more that we can trust Him.

And this passage, very famous. You know, I think most people understand and know what this passage is and what this passage means. So I just want us to take a look at a few things about Jesus from verses 14 through 18 to help us understand more about who He is.

The first thing is that He is the Word made flesh. That's from John chapter 1 verse 14. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Who is this Word? Just briefly, He's the Word from verse 1.

[ 3 : 59 ] The eternal Word of God. In the beginning, the Word was already. He is the relational Word. He was already with God. And He's the divine Word.

He was already God. He's also the powerful Word in verse 3. Because all things came into being through Him. This Word is Jesus Christ.

You can trace that out through John's Gospel and see that this Word is Jesus Christ, whom He's talking about. This Word became flesh. Now we have to be careful when we talk about this.

Because we can say that the Word became flesh. Or we can say that the Word took on flesh. And both of those are... It's easy to get misunderstandings out of those.

And so let me just help you just a little bit. We say that He became flesh. We do not mean that the divine Son of God had any kind of change in Him at all.

[ 4 : 56 ] There's no change. But He becomes fully human. To take on flesh... To take on flesh... Is not an empty human shell like a coat that He slips on so that it's devoid of any humanity.

What we have is we have one person who is both 100% fully God and 100% fully man. God became man.

Now if you were to start to say, well, so how does all that work? The answer to you that I have is, I don't know. But if we take the Bible seriously in what it says, we see that He is both divine and human all at the same time.

We see that because we can read text where His humanity comes out. We see that He's hungry. We see that He's thirsty. We see that He's tired.

But we also see text where the divinity comes out. I mean, if He could die upon the cross and the sins of the world forgiven, only divinity can do that.

[ 6 : 03 ] If we see that He rises from the grave, only the divine can do that. So what we have when we say that the Word became flesh is we get this idea that Christianity has taught for years is that there is one person, two natures, fully God, fully man, in the one person, Jesus Christ.

Now, here's the question. Why is that important? It's important because, number one, our salvation is bound up in His divinity and His humanity.

It was a human, Adam, who sinned, and because He represented the human race, therefore a human must pay the penalty for the sin. So Jesus must be fully human.

However, to pay for the sin of all mankind, to face death, to defeat death, to take the punishment for sin, and only God could do that.

A mere man couldn't do that because He would have His own sin to have to die for. Jesus didn't have sin to die for. So our salvation is bound up in Him being divine and human.

[ 7 : 21 ] Our sanctification and growth and grace is bound up in His humanity and His divinity. In His humanity, we see the example of how we're supposed to live. In His humanity, we have His death that pays for our failings in sanctification.

But in His divinity, we have the power of the Holy Spirit that's poured out upon us so that we may live the way that we ought to live. But I want to focus in also that our comfort in trials and sufferings is bound up in His humanity and divinity.

We suffer greatly, and when we do, we need God to help us through that suffering. We need other humans to help us identify in that suffering.

So I don't know if you get that, but here we are on one hand. How are we going to make it through? We know, as Christians, the only way I make it through is by the grace of God. And yet, many times I find myself wanting someone who's like me who will understand what I'm going through because then I don't feel like I'm alone and unique in my suffering.

And so what do we have in the Lord Jesus Christ? We have one who is God, who can help us by grace get through our suffering, but yet He has suffered as we have, yet without sin.

[ 8 : 47 ] He sympathizes with our weakness. He knows what it is like. He was fully human as we are. He's lost loved ones as we have. He's been betrayed.

He's been denied. He lived in poverty. His brothers didn't believe Him. His disciples tried to get Him to do the ministry that He was doing differently. He was falsely accused. He was wrongly tried.

He was wickedly sentenced. He was tortured. He was given a slow and painful death. He carried the weight of sin upon His shoulders. And in that moment, His Father turns away so that He cries out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

My point is this, that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, so He has come and entered into our pain and suffering with us. He can identify with us.

He knows what you're going through. He understands what it is that you're facing in your life. And it's okay.

[ 9 : 47 ] It's okay if you haven't faced the kind of suffering that Jesus faced. It's okay if you haven't been nailed to a cross or you haven't had some of these same things happen to you because the point is not can you identify with Him.

The point is can He identify with you? He knows our pain. So what that means for you and I as Christians is that we need to cast our cares upon Him.

1 Peter 5, verse 7 tells us that we should cast our cares upon Him because He cares for us. So whatever you're struggling with, whatever's knocked the breath out of your soul, whatever sits like a rock in your stomach, take it to Him and cast your cares upon Him because He cares for you. If He didn't care, He would not have come. But He cares for you. So how do you cast yourself upon Him?

Let me just tell you three things about this. Number one, it's a momentary thing and what I mean by that is this. It's something you have to do moment by moment by moment by moment.

[11:01] I don't know about you, but when you've had something difficult happen to you when you've had some sort of suffering, some sort of trial in your life, it's not one of these things that you go to the Lord, you pray, Lord, this thing's happened, this is difficult, I don't know how to deal with it, please help me, amen, and walk away and never say anything else to the Lord about it.

That's not the way it works. The way we're supposed to do it is we're to bug God with our problems. We're to go to Him and say, Lord, just five minutes ago I was struggling with this and I can't deal with this and so please help me.

And then five minutes later we go back and say, Lord, I'm back there again, I'm thinking all of these thoughts and I'm being weighed down by this, please help me. It's a momentary thing, every single moment.

We need to pray and cast our cares upon Him, but it's a believing thing, secondly. It's a believing thing, secondly, and what that means is this. You've got to believe.

I mean, let me ask you. 1 Peter says, the casters cares upon Him because He cares for you. Do you believe that's true?

[12:18] Do you believe that's true? You know, so often we find ourselves in a place where we, I don't know about you, okay, maybe I'm the only moron here today, okay, but like here's the word, it's very clear, He cares for you, and yet there are times in my prayers I will go to Him and I go like, Lord, do you not care for me?

Do you not care that I'm hurting like this? Do you not care that the struggle is so real and so hard? Lord, we have to believe what He says.

We don't believe it based upon evidence that somebody is marshaled out by some sort of scientific experiment and printed out the data for us. We believe it because He said so by His word.

And then third, it's a prayer thing. The way we cast our cares upon Him is we do it through prayer. prayer, we go to Him and we pray. Now, I just want to say one other thing about the idea of that Christ has come into our world and He is here for us because there are some who are not believers. There are some who don't trust in Christ. And as they look at the world around them and they see the difficulties and the heartaches and the sufferings and the trials, they'll ask questions like I was asked, this gentleman that I knew way back when the shooting happened at the Sandy Hook School up in the Northeast.

[13:55] He asked me, he said, how can God be good when there's so much suffering and evil in this world? Where was your God when that happened?

Now, I knew that this guy was an atheist. I knew that he didn't believe that there really was a God. And one of the things that we need to remember in the middle of this is that as rich and as beautiful as it is to know that God has come here to enter our pain with us, He is also not up for debate or judgment.

So I looked at the young man and I said to him and I said, so let me just say this. What difference does it make to you where God was that day since you don't believe that there is a God?

And if you do believe that there is a God, then how dare you question Him? Because He is the one who sent His perfect, righteous, only begotten Son into this world to save us from our sin.

The reason evil and wicked and suffering happens is because sinful people do sinful things. That's why. The Bible tells us that there is none righteous and there are none who seek for God and all become wicked and turned away from Him.

[15:22] But Jesus came and tabernacled among us. He pitched His tent here with us. He has come and faced the evil and paid the price.

And you, you can trust Him. I'm going to look secondly at this idea that He's the only begotten from the Father.

Twice it says, verse 14 and verse 18, that He's the only begotten of the Father. It's the Greek word monogonese. It's an important word.

It means a couple of things. Two big ideas. One is this, that Jesus, that the Son, that the Word of God, the second person of the Trinity, has always been the Son of the Father and always will be the Son of the Father.

In other words, because God is infinite, having no beginning and no end, and because He does not change, Malachi tells us that I, the Lord, do not change, then God has always been the Father infinitely and the Son has always been the Son infinitely.

[16:40] The whole reason that we have the relationship and our experience of Father and Son is because of the Triune God. That's where it comes from.

He's eternally been the Father, eternally been the Son. There was not a moment that He was not the Son. He has always been the Son. So, He comes then as the only begotten of the Father.

He is the One. So, here's the importance of that. It means that there's been this relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit infinitely and infinitely.

the second thing that it means is that He's unique because the Bible describes us as Christians as being children of God, sons of God.

But we are not like Him. We're not sons of God the way Jesus is the Son of God. So, He's uniquely the Son of God in a very particular way. He's different from us.

[17:42] So, it has two applications. One, because He is eternally the Son of God, because He's eternally the Son of God back that way and that way, and because the Trinity was in a perfect harmony, a perfect relationship, God does not need us.

There's a lot of people that when they go to share the Gospel, they want to share it in such a way as to say, listen, God needed us. He was lonely, so He created humanity, so He wasn't lonely anymore.

But that is not who God is. God is not lonely. The Father is not lonely saying, I wish I had somebody to talk to. No, He has somebody. He's got the other two persons of the Trinity. They are in perfect harmony, perfect relationship with one another.

He does not need us. He did not create us because He had an empty hole in His heart that wanted to share with somebody. He does not need you even now, and He will never need you.

And that is something we've got to come to grips with. That's why the prayer, the Lord's Prayer, starts with our Father who art in heaven, because He's other than us, because He's not like us. He does not need us.

[18:49] But here's the truth on the other side of that. He wanted us. He's not some sort of, you know, panicky little boyfriend or girlfriend going like, I really hope you like me.

Here's my note. Circle yes or no. Will you go with me? That's not who He is. He's not a pathetic person standing there waiting, waiting, and waiting, and waiting, just, I hope you like me. He doesn't need us.

But He's a God who wants us. He wants us. Which is why He gave up His only Son for us. The second half of that idea that He's being unique means that not only does He not need us, but He is the only way to the Father.

Our, our country and the countries that are a part of this sort of Western world mindset have fallen off the deep end. When you hear statements that all religions are equal or all religions lead to God or all religions are just as wrong as one another, just as right as one another, then you, you come to understand that there's something wrong in our world.

It's a pluralistic society that teaches that kind of a thing and that's the direction that our country and our culture has been going for years. As a matter of fact, one of the famous stories that's often told in connection with this is the story of the blind men and the elephant.

[20:37] You've ever heard that story? You know what I'm talking about? You have an elephant standing sort of in the middle of the story and you've got these blind men that come up and they begin to touch the elephant and they begin to describe what the elephant's like from their perspective.

Right? One grabs the trunk and says it's, I don't know, trunk-like. What do you say about a trunk? It's long, slender, strong, snotty. You know, there's a trunk and then you've got one touching a leg and you go, no, it's big, strong, like a tree.

One grabs a tail, one grabs an ear. They all grab some part of it. They begin to describe this thing from whatever angle and so we're told by the world around us that, you know, you as Christians say that your religion is the only way but that can't be true because you just have a part of it.

Just like this story, you just have a part of the truth or you've got part of your, whatever it is you believe that's wrong. But do you understand what the problem with that story is? Somebody had to be outside the story looking at it telling us that there was an elephant in the middle of the story. And so what our world likes to do is they like to tell us as Christians that know what we believe is just as right or just as wrong or just on equal par as every other religion in the world and that means that the person telling us that is the most arrogant person in the world because they think that they know the truth about all the religions in the world and they have the right to tell us this is what is true and what is not.

[ 22 : 06 ] In other words, they have to be omniscient in such a way as to know what all religions believe, what the outcome of those beliefs will be, and how all religions can't be contradictory to one another and about every religion that could ever come across the path in the future.

You see what I'm saying? So how do we know that Christianity is the only way?

Well, because God sent his son into this world. Historical fact, Jesus lived. Historical fact. Take the Bible away, go read all the other history books we know Jesus lived.

Look at the calendar, right? Look at how time is split. It happened. I can't remember when AD and BC began to be used.

They've changed it now to BCE and ACE because they're trying to get away from letting Christ be the center of everything. But I mean, come on. You just changed a couple initials. You didn't really change the effect.

[ 23 : 09 ] The point is this. Jesus himself says this. I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

And what that is going to mean for you and I as Christians is that we go and we share the love of Christ with those around us. We're not sharing Christ as one of many ways that you can make your life better.

We're sharing Christ as the only hope you have to escape hell and join the Father for all eternity.

The third and final thing about Jesus is that he's the revealer of the Father.

Now this takes up verses 14 through 18. I've basically just stayed in verse 14 for the last two points. But let's just take a look at this again. Let me read the whole passage again one more time. And the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we saw his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John testified about him and cried out saying, this was he of whom it was said, he who comes after me is of higher rank than I for he existed before me. For of his fullness we have all received in grace upon grace.

[ 24 : 21 ] For the law was given through Moses and grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only God who is in the bosom of the Father, he has explained him.

We see in verse 14 that John says, we saw his glory. When John is saying, we saw his glory, he's talking about himself and the other apostles that they saw Christ.

They saw him live and walk and eat and do the things that he did. They watched him die. They saw him resurrected. They saw him pour out his spirit on the day of Pentecost. Now, years later, John is looking back saying, we beheld his glory.

Now, what does the word glory mean? The word glory is something like the sum total of all of his attributes. You know, many of his attributes, if we begin to talk about them, they are actually immaterial and invisible.

You can't see them. Love, while you may be able to see the effects or feel the effects of love, love is something you can't actually see. It's immaterial, it's invisible.

[ 25 : 25 ] Something like faithfulness. Faithfulness, while you can see the results, feel the results, it's immaterial, invisible. It's not something that you can see. So, if we were to say that his glory is the sum total of all of his attributes together, in a way, what we're saying by analogy is we're saying that if you could see his love and if you could see his faithfulness in terms of the thing itself, if you could see all these attributes put together, then what we would see is resplendent glory shining out, bursting forth in unapproachable light.

It is all of who he is. John says, we beheld his glory. Now, which particular glory is John talking about? Glory of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

What is grace and truth? It's what we read in Exodus chapter 34, verse 6 and 7. Steadfast love and kindness. All through the Old Testament, we see this steadfast love and mercy.

The Old Testament, translated into the Greek, uses the same exact grace and truth words that we have here. Then we get to verse 16.

It starts with the word for. And the Greek here is because. Because. So, what we have here is that the apostles saw glory because they received grace upon grace.

[ 26 : 52 ] That without that grace upon grace, they would not have seen glory. Now, what is this grace upon grace? grace upon grace. The idea is wave after wave.

That is, one wave hits the shore and it begins to fade away, another wave comes. And so, there's wave replacing wave or grace replacing grace. And he gives us the definition of what this grace is. Verse 17. That the law was given through Moses. That's one form of grace. This law came and as it begins to fade away, it was replaced with another grace and that is through Jesus Christ.

A revelation. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. What the apostle is saying here is that we have beheld his glory because by the grace of God he has been revealing it since the beginning.

He revealed it through the law. Why does the law come? So that we have a tutor that leads us to Christ. We see his grace through there.

[ 28 : 00 ] As a matter of fact, part of the reason that you have the entire sacrificial system is to point to Christ. As a matter of fact, I would say this, pick a verse, any verse in the Bible and then make a beeline to Christ because everything is about Jesus.

So we get down to verse 18 and he says, so the only begotten God has explained the Father to us or he's exegeted. That's the Greek word there.

He's exegeted the Father to us. Here's the point. The point is that we would not know who the Father is. We would not know what the Father is like. We would not know what God is like had Jesus not come.

One of the things I've said over and over again is that in Romans chapter 1 verse 18 and following, there's enough in nature to condemn us because we do not honor God as God but we reject him.

We suppress the truth. We do all that we can to suppress that truth. We don't acknowledge him as God but there's not enough in nature to save us.

[ 29 : 06 ] You will never see someone go out into the wilderness rejecting the scriptures and ever find God. It will not happen. You will never see someone taking up some sort of book from some other religion and finding God because they can reason their way to him.

You will never have anyone coming to God except through the Son. The Son has revealed the Father to us and it is by his grace that we see him.

I mean that is one of the reasons why John Newton wrote the song Amazing Grace. We know the first line Amazing Grace how sweet the sound.

but the second line that saved a wretch like me. You see that's the problem. The reason that we need someone to explain the Father to us is because we're wretches.

Because we're wicked. You see I think that's part of the problem is that we don't like to say that. We don't like to admit that. We don't want people to know that. We don't want to feel that because it feels guilty.

[ 30 : 14 ] But the problem is not that there's not enough information. The problem is not that the scriptures are unclear. The problem is is that we don't want to believe. But it saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost but now I am found. Was blind but now I see. How did I come to see this? How did you come to see that Christ is the only way?

How did you come to believe that Jesus died for your sin rose again? How did you come to that place in that day that you were converted and you turned to him?

By grace. By his grace. By his grace. By his grace. Without that grace leading and guiding and directing without that grace you would have never ever seen it.

And I just want to make the call because this is Christmas and because God is in the business of giving great and beautiful gifts to us. We have an opportunity and a privilege to give a gift to others and that is by sharing the story and the gospel with them.

[ 31 : 40 ] Because here's what I'm afraid that we believe. I'm afraid that we believe that because somebody is moral they're okay. I'm afraid that we believe that because someone is conservative that they're okay. I'm afraid that we believe that because somebody sort of views life the way we view life they're okay and they probably don't really need very much and maybe Jesus would help them a little bit but not a whole lot.

But here's the thing there's going to be a lot of people on the right who are conservative who are going to bust hell wide open because they've never been told about Jesus Christ. We cannot sit back and expect and say well they're really close.

Nobody is really close. If it's not for the grace of God opening our eyes revealing to us who he is and who we are we will never ever ever trust Christ.

So how do we then take the gospel to other people? How do we do the ministry of taking the gospel out? And I just want to leave you with this three Ps.

Number one prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit. You see the gospel message is a message that needs to be believed.

[ 32 : 55 ] It's not advice to live out. It's a story and it's news that changes the world. If you go to the doctor and he tells you you need to lose a few pounds that's advice.

But if the doctor tells you listen I've just gotten the test back and I've got news for you and it's bad news or I've got the test back and it's good news what he tells you next changes your life.

We have the gospel the good news and we are to declare it. We're to be little newsies sitting on the corners with the newspaper yelling out that Jesus Christ lives.

We're to tell that news. A person will never believe it unless grace and therefore our first and primary duty in sharing the gospel is to pray for God to give them grace to change their heart.

Pray that God would save them. Pray that God would grow them. prayerfully depend upon the Holy Spirit in the work. Secondly, proclaim the gospel.

[ 34 : 04 ] Proclaim the gospel. When I say proclaim the gospel, I'm not saying tell them about your pastor. I'm not saying tell them about your church.

I'm not saying tell them about how you became a Christian. I'm not saying argue with them about whatever question that they might have.

I'm saying proclaim the gospel. Tell the story of Jesus. Now all those other things are good things and they have their place. But none of them are preaching the gospel.

You were saved and you have a testimony like Paul on the road to Damascus. Right? He's going to take and arrest Christians. God knocks him off the horse.

Right? Knocks him off the horse. He's blind. Now God is saving him in that moment. He has a time when he was not saved. He has a time that he is saved.

[ 35 : 02 ] That's his conversion. That's his story. That's how he became a Christian. You have a story. And it's an important part of who you are. But it's not the gospel.

So what we need to do in prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit, proclaiming the gospel, and third, and finally, we need to patiently wait. we need to patiently wait.

I think this is an important message for parents particularly because we have our kids with us for 18 years and then we kind of send them off into the crazy land out there. They go off to college.

They go off and get a job. We've done a lot of work with them. We hope that they've received Christ. We hope they've prayed. We hope that they really love Jesus. And when they get off into college, we're hoping that that sticks.

And then there are things that happen maybe before they go off to college or right after they go off to college and they get some crazy idea in their mind and then they are starting to say things like they don't believe in who God is or they don't believe this.

[ 36 : 05 ] And we look at that and we say, oh, we failed. But here's the point. The point is this. You must patiently wait and continue to preach because they may be 30 years old denying the existence of God, but that doesn't mean that there's still not hope.

my wife's grandfather, he was, he was saved at 80, 80 ish.

I should say 80 ish. Saved at 80. We went to watch him be baptized. You and I have no idea when God is going to save a person.

And so parents and grandparents, you look at that wayward child, you see, you see to yourself, it's like, well, they once were like this and they once were doing this, but now it seems like they've abandoned God.

I'm saying to you, don't give up. Don't doubt. Trust the Lord. Preach the gospel. Pray and patiently wait. It's easy to give up.

[ 37 : 21 ] It's easy to want to say no more, or it's easy to want to change your beliefs and say, well, they're okay. Patiently wait.

George Mueller prayed for about five different friends that he wanted to see come to know Christ. Prayed for them for years. I think, I think the story has it in the decades of how long he prayed.

four of them were saved at his funeral. He never saw them come to Christ himself.

Beloved, we are in this for the long haul. It's not about in the next 20 weeks, we've got a program and we're going to run the program and in 20 weeks, everybody gets saved.

That's not the way it works. We prayerfully depend upon the Holy Spirit. We proclaim the gospel and we patiently wait.

[ 38 : 27 ] God bless you. And you know, the good news about the Christmas message and story is this. If you're like me, sometimes you get impatient with waiting on people to change.

You get impatient, you get angry, you get scared. And so sometimes you don't say the things that you ought to say. Sometimes you don't do the things you ought to do.

Sometimes you lack kindness. Sometimes you lack prayer. There's so many ways that we fail in that. And the good news about the Christmas story is that that's exactly why Christ came.

He came to pay the price for our impatience, for our giving up. And he died on that cross.

He paid the price for our giving up. And so as you sit here today, Christians, just know, just know that this great gift was given for you that you might be set free from the guilt and the corruption that sin brings.

[ 39 : 44 ] Trust the Lord. Let's pray. Well, let's take aNING