

# The Word is not enough

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[ 0 : 00 ] I want to draw attention to part of the passage that we read in Philippians chapter 2 and the verses 5 to 11 in particular.

Let me read these verses to you again. Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form.

He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Now it won't be possible in the time that we have to consider all this section, nor to consider it in any depth, but what I want to do is to remind ourselves in this season in which we are as to what is vital that the Apostle Paul brings out.

It's one of the most important passages and statements of the whole Bible, and it declares to us that God has come in flesh and dwelt among us, that Jesus has been born, born as a man, born as a baby, a male child, the same as we were born, though some of us of course weren't born males, but human beings.

[ 2 : 15 ] And Jesus became one of us. Now you've probably never heard of the island of Molaikai, which is in the Hawaii state, but it's got quite a history.

Back in the late 1800s, there was no cure for a highly contagious disease called leprosy. And this disease attacks the extremities of the ears and nose and toes and fingers, and it's a horrible disease, which is now curable, but wasn't then.

And in order to prevent the spread of the disease, the government sent lepers to a colony on the island of Molaiki.

And here they were secluded and isolated, almost forgotten. In 1873, a young, brave priest named Father Damien, and there's a movie on Amazon Prime or YouTube, on the life of Father Damien here, he volunteered to spend his life serving the people on the island.

And when he arrived, he found people not only suffering physically, but socially, emotionally, and spiritually. He saw extreme drunkenness, immorality, abuse, and an overall sense of hopelessness.

[ 4 : 06 ] And what he saw were people who desperately needed to know the answer to the question that we all ask, where is God?

They needed God's presence in their lives in the midst of their tragedy. Father Damien lived among the 700 lepers, knowing the dangers, realizing the inevitable results of so much personal contact with this highly contagious disease.

He built hospitals, clinics, and churches, and as a carpenter, he built some 600 coffins. For the whole of the time, he was giving them the answer to the question, where is God?

Whenever a church service was held, he would stand up in front of the lepers, and he would warmly and lovingly address them as, my dear brothers and sisters.

But then one morning in 1885, at the age of 45, in a calm, clear voice, instead of my dear brothers and sisters, he began with, my fellow lepers, I am one of you now.

[ 5 : 35 ] The point of this story, as far as we are concerned, is to illustrate that Christ became one of us.

He became human, but with one distinction, and that is, he didn't inherit our fallen condition. It was out of love that this humble priest, Father Damien, became one of these lepers.

It was out of love that he gave these lepers a gift that would change their lives. He shared with them the answer to every present question, where is God?

In a way that the Lord Jesus has, of course, more fully and more completely answered that question. when troubles come, where is God?

[ 6 : 47 ] God has come, has come to this planet, has dwelt among us, has died upon the cross for us.

God cares. He cares for our condition, even our fallen condition, and has come to provide the answer that we need, the answer that we most desperately need, our salvation.

But the only way in which he could do this is by becoming one of us, one with us.

As the Word, the Son of God, was the Creator, but as the Word, as the Creator, he dwelt among us. As the Word, he was powerful. He spoke at creation, and it was done.

[ 8 : 02 ] Let there be light, he said, and there was light. And so on, as you read Genesis chapter 1, you can see how that God, as the second person of the Godhead, speaks the Word, and it comes into being.

God communicated later, as the Word, through the prophets, through his prophets. Now, in the Greek, the term word, indicates an intermediary, an interface.

Yet in Greek thought, it was actually a way of not touching the world. To the Greeks, of course, the world, the material, were something you wanted to be rid of.

But it brings home to us, and I say this respectfully, but for God, words are not enough.

Words can isolate. they can keep at a distance. And we can have many words. We've seen this in the electioneering, in this, leading up to this general election.

[ 9 : 29 ] Politicians in their, or candidates in their ivory towers, promising all kinds of things. Words. But they were just words.

words. Words are not enough. So much so that God came talking to Adam, in the garden.

He didn't just speak, his word to Adam. He came, and walked with him in the garden, in fellowship.

That was the bond that God, and his creatures, human beings, the first human beings, had.

One of fellowship. But God speaking words to us, is as I say, respectfully, not enough.

He must become flesh. Henry Scogel, in his book, The Life of God in the Soul of Man, the 17th century Scottish minister, said this, God hath long contended, with a stubborn world, and thrown down many a blessing upon them.

[ 10 : 54 ] But when all his other gifts, could not prevail, he at last made a gift, of himself. He became, incarnate.

He walks, the talk. He comes among us. But not only did he, come among us.

If he had come among us, as God, in all his glory, and splendor, we would have been consumed. It would have been no use to us.

He comes veiled in flesh. And as I suggested, to the children, he comes so low, that we can come to him. He's not in the palace, where he was not accessible.

He comes to the stable, the place of animals, and is laid in a manger, so that we may know, that we can come to him, whoever we are, whatever we are, we may come to him.

[ 12 : 09 ] He's accessible. God has made himself, available to us. God is invisible, in his own nature.

He's a spirit, and we can't see him. Physically, we cannot see God. But in Jesus Christ, he became visible.

As God, he is beyond our grasp, and yet he comes, to be among us. And the Apostle John, opening his first letter, tells how, the disciples, and others, saw Jesus.

And they handled him. Can you imagine that? They could touch, the Son of God. They could come near.

And you remember, it was John, we think, who laid his head, upon Jesus' breast, at the Last Supper. You could come that close, to Jesus, because he was amongst us.

[ 13 : 22 ] Now to Greek, and Jewish thought, this was just, incredible. And it was contemptible. Touching the earth, matter.

How would God, ever do that? They thought. To the Jews, it was blasphemous, to think that God, could become a creature.

And yet, this is what the Bible, tells us. This is what the Gospels, make clear to us. This is what Paul, is telling us, in this passage, in Philippians, that God, in Jesus Christ, came among us.

The Son of God, didn't think it was above him, or beneath him, to come.

God, his divinity, was not something, he held on to, and said, I'm not going. He lays it aside.

[ 14 : 33 ] He doesn't, cease to be God, but he comes in flesh. He's constrained. He can only be, in one place at once. He knows, what it is, to be hungry.

He knows, he knows, what it is, to sorrow, and to cry. And the Gospels, show us, that he is very much, a human being.

Yet he is God. God has come, a long way, to be, our Savior.

Jesus has left, the courts of glory, being surrounded, by the angels, and all that's, holy, and pure, and good, and, no pain, no tears, no anything.

And he's been born, of poor parents, in the midst of scandal, concerning his, his, his conception, and birth. He's laid, in this, borrowed stable, in the manger.

[ 15 : 49 ] This is God, who has emptied himself, for us, so that we might, draw near.

And then, of course, not only was he laid, in that manger, later, he went, to the cross. He was crucified.

God, was nailed, to a cross. And he died. And he was laid, in a grave, a borrowed grave.

But then, gloriously, he rose again. And now, he's back in heaven. And we may ask, why, God, did you go to so much trouble?

Why did you do all this? And the simple answer is, because he loves us. Because he loves us.

[ 17 : 05 ] You see, Satan would spin another line for us, and tell us, you've done this, God will never receive you, never accept you. You must pay penance for this, you must do that, you must dry this, and you must, go the other way.

But no, God has come all the way for us, because he loves us. He had no illusions about us. He knows what we're like, he knows our hearts.

It's not going to be that one day, God says, oh, I didn't know she was that bad. Oh, I didn't know he'd do this kind of thing. He knows all about us.

Nothing surprises us, surprises him. But he loves us nevertheless. You see, if we had been there, when Jesus was here, would we not have also, left to ourselves, have joined that crowd, and shouted, crucify him.

We were enemies. Yet Christ came, to die for us, to redeem us, to save us, because he loved us.

[ 18 : 30 ] He took the form of a servant, to serve us. Think of that. I couldn't imagine, her majesty, the queen, coming here, to serve us.

She would expect, expect to be served. But the king of kings, and lord of lords, came to serve us, and to serve us, by death upon the cross.

He came for us, because he loved us, because he wants us, to come to him, that we may have life, eternal life.

He wants the best, for us. We needn't run away, and hide from him. He says, come to me. He says the same, as I reminded us, with the children.

He says the same, as he said to, his first disciples, follow me. Jesus then, though, in the very nature God, lays it aside, so that he can serve us.

[ 19 : 55 ] Veils it, in his flesh, so that we might draw near to him. He didn't say, well I'm God, I'm not going.

He emptied himself. You remember Adam, our first father? He grasped at being God, and that was the problem.

the son of God, was willing to lay aside, his divinity, in the sense of failing it, and hiding it, so that he could become a man, and dwell among us.

He was vulnerable. He had to run for it, with Joseph and Mary, to Egypt, because his life was in danger.

And then, of course, eventually, they killed him, crucified him. He was vulnerable, but for us.

[ 21 : 22 ] He gave himself.

He gave himself. He couldn't have given us more. He gave himself. So that whoever believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

We wouldn't want everlasting life, if it meant living here forever, would we? Not with all the trials, and tribulations of this world, the sin, the muck, and the filth, of our humanity.

But we don't have eternal life here. It will be with him, when sin is finally done away with, and we shall live pure, clean lives.

None of this could have been accomplished, merely by words. He had to come. The word had to become flesh, and dwell among us.

[ 22 : 55 ] And he came. He came. Isaiah says, in 53, 53, 3, he was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering.

What a cost to him. You see, our salvation is free.

It's by grace, through faith, in Christ. It's free for us, but it costs Jesus a great deal, to secure for us, that salvation.

What does all this mean, then, to us? How are we to respond, to what the apostle is telling us, about Jesus coming, in our nature, being a man?

Well, let me say, that first of all, it affects us, each one, and personally. We have to follow Jesus.

[ 24 : 30 ] That's what he calls us to do. But if we don't know Jesus Christ, we don't know God. And we can't know God.

We're at odds with God. Sin has driven a great wedge, between us and God, that we cannot breach. It doesn't matter, how many times, we come to church.

It doesn't matter, how many times, we read through our Bible. It doesn't matter, how long, we spend on our knees, in prayer. We cannot, atone for our sin.

not one bit. I often use the illustration, that if we, have gone through the speed limit, 40 miles an hour, and, all our lives, we've driven, at 40 miles an hour, and we've never broken the law.

But one day, we're in a hurry, for some reason, and we've gone through at 50, and there's been a policeman, at the end, with his camera. And he stops you, and asks the silly question, what speed were you doing?

[ 25 : 48 ] And you have to admit, 50. It's no use saying, to the policeman, well, all my driving life, I've kept to the 40 mile an hour limit.

Let me off. The law says, if you fail, but once, you are guilty. You have broken the speed limit.

And you must pay the penalty. And that's true of us, with regard to God. Not one of us, can say that we have, never sinned.

We all know, that we have, not just sinned once, but many times. And there is nothing, we can do about it, except pay the penalty.

Except that Christ, has come to pay the penalty himself, with his own death, upon the cross. And if we come to him, if we trust him, then we are made right, with God.

[ 27 : 10 ] But there's no other way. Jesus himself said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, but by me.

There's no other way, but Jesus Christ, and our trust of him. Have you come to him?

Do you know him? I'm not asking you, if you were brought up, in a Christian home. I'm not asking you, even if you're a member, of the church. I'm asking you, do you trust Jesus Christ, as your savior?

is he your only hope, for your salvation? If you're relying on anything else, it will fail you.

You cannot be saved by it. It must be by Jesus Christ alone. Did you notice that Jesus was born of Mary?

[ 28 : 23 ] When Adam and Eve sinned, God said, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel, to quote the King James.

Eve thought she was the woman, but that woman was to come many centuries later. It was Mary. It was her seed, from which Christ came, but not a human male seed.

The succession of our fallen condition, our sinful condition, was not passed to Christ. He's a new human, if you like, a new race of human beings, a new creature.

He's the new Adam, the last Adam, because he has succeeded where the first failed. And we must be born into his family, into his likeness.

We must be born from the Spirit, born from above, in order that we might be accepted by God.

[ 29 : 47 ] have you been born again? Have you got two birthdays? One when you were first born, the second when you were second born, born from above.

God came into the world to give you new life, a new humanity, to take you away from the old corruption, to make you pure.

He paid the price for sin. But the second way that I suggest this whole thing affects us is that we ourselves are to put flesh to the Word of God, to the Gospel.

What do I mean by that? I simply mean that we must be those who communicate the Gospel to those around us.

We have been commissioned as the Church and as members together of Christ to be witnesses to the truth.

[ 31 : 11 ] It's not so popular these days to speak of spiritual things, of Christian things.

But speak we must and live out Christ among our neighbours and those with whom we have to do that Christ may speak through us because He has changed us.

We are to be His witnesses. We are to testify to others what He has done for us. And at this season and at this time where there's a lot of frivolity surrounding Christmas, we need to remind people or inform people because sadly they don't know any longer that Christmas is about Jesus Christ becoming flesh.

and this is the most amazing, most wonderful, most significant event in the whole history of this planet that God came among us and people need to know that and we need to show that He means everything to us.

that He's ours by grace and our sins are pardoned and forgiven because He's died for us and that others who trust Him can also be pardoned and forgiven and have new life.

[ 33 : 04 ] Well, may God grant to us then that we live out Jesus Christ in our day and in our generation and that many under His grace would come to know Him and to love Him.

Let us pray. God bless■■■■. God bless you. Everybody