

The Word Became Flesh

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[0:00] Amen. So, our sermon series on John's Gospel begins, or continues, rather, this week with the second half of the prologue of the book.

In this week's sermon, I'm going to be talking about amazing eternal truths that, quite honestly, should cause us to drop to our knees in wonder and adoration before our amazing God.

Preparing for this particular sermon was very difficult for me, because I feel insufficient to do justice to the glory that we see in our text.

That being said, here is a starter question for us this morning. Does anyone remember that song from the 90s that asked the question, What If God Was One of Us?

Anyone? Anyone? Man, for a while, that song was everywhere. I remember a lot of people had one of two reactions to that song.

[1:34] They were either like, yeah, what if that happened, right? Wouldn't that be crazy? Or people were like, man, that is a really irreverent thing to suggest. And the astounding thing is that in our passage for this morning, John is saying that God really did become one of us.

It's not some kind of hypothetical. The song I referenced just a second ago asked this question, too. If God had a name, what would it be?

Well, John is answering some questions this morning. God became one of us. And this God who became one of us, the Word, has a name. It's Jesus.

The name at which every knee will bow. Praise God. So, like last week, we're going to go through our text verse by verse because there is a lot to unpack here.

And then we'll think about how all of this is pertinent to our lives. Let's look together at John chapter 1, starting at verse 10.

[2:38] So, we read there of Christ that he was in the world and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

Christ was in the world and the world was made through him, we read in our text. As we'll get to in a minute, the Word was made flesh. And what happened? The world didn't know him.

The world didn't recognize him. The world did not acknowledge him for who he is. God became one of us.

And most people failed to recognize the fact. Keep in mind, when John is talking about the world, he ordinarily uses the term in a negative way in his gospel.

He means the world in opposition to the truth. Broken and sinful. Jesus came to a fallen, broken, sinful world as Savior.

[3:41] And the world did not know him. Verse 11 elaborates on this startling reality even more fully. We read there, He came to his own.

And his own people did not receive him. He became not just a man, He became a Jewish man. And with the exception of the believing remnant that Paul talks about in Romans, His own people rejected Him.

These were the very people who were looking for the coming Messiah. And they didn't recognize Him as the one they were looking for, and they didn't receive Him. It should be said that this verse should not be taken as an attack on the Jewish people.

Jesus Himself is Jewish, after all. And we have every indication that the book that we are studying was written by a Jewish follower of Jesus. No, what we see here is simply an example of the universal human tendency to reject Christ and oppose the truth.

And of course, indeed, the scriptures are clear that the Messiah had to be rejected and had to suffer. So far, we've seen that the world in general, and even His own people, didn't know Christ, didn't recognize Christ, didn't receive Christ.

[5:04] But to stop there would not be fitting. We read in verse 12, But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

The world didn't know Him. His own people didn't receive Him. But some people did. Some people did receive Him. Some people did believe in His name.

And He gave them the right to become the children of God. Let that sink in for a minute. We might be tempted to think, Well, what's the big deal about becoming the children of God?

Culturally, we kind of tend to think, Well, we're all God's children. But that's not the biblical view. We are all God's creatures.

God cares for all of us as His creation. We are created in His image. But let's be clear here. We are in our fallen nature.

[6:19] In rebellion against God. And we are God's enemies by our own choice. If we forget that, Then we forget how amazing the gospel really is.

Because Jesus came to live among and die for enemies of God. In order to make them children of God. Through belief in His name.

So if we are in Christ, We have gone from being enemies of God To children of God.

Praise the Lord. And that's not our own doing. Look at what verse 13 says of those Who became children of God through belief in the name of Christ.

Who were born, Not of blood, Nor of the will of the flesh, Nor of the will of man, But of God. So if we are children of God, It's not because we were born into the right family.

[7:33] It's not because we're the product of good breeding. It's not because we're the good people Who made all the right decisions. No. It's because if we were born again, And this was God's doing.

It's because we were born again, And this was God's doing. Not our own. No. We cannot make ourselves born again. Only God can do that.

And this is what God has done for us In His only Son. We see that spelled out in even more detail In verse 14, Where we read, The Word became flesh and dwelt among us And we have seen His glory.

Glory as of the only Son from the Father, Full of grace and truth. There is a whole lot to unpack in this one verse, But we will do our best.

This word that John has been talking about, Who was with the Father, And who was God from all eternity, Took on our humanity. We might say from the text, That He pitched His tent with us.

[8:50] He became one of us, Out of love, To rescue us. He is truly Emmanuel, God with us, And in Jesus we find the fullness of grace and truth.

And we have seen His glory. What does our text mean by that? Well, we're going to have to dig into the Old Testament To find the answer.

So this is probably a reference to what we find In the book of Exodus in chapter 33. So if you would, Please look there with me. I'll give you a second to turn to the Old Testament.

Amen. Starting in verse 18, We pick up on a conversation between Moses and God.

Moses said, Please show me your glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before you, And will proclaim before you my name, the Lord.

[10:12] And I will be gracious, To whom I will be gracious, And will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But he said, You cannot see my face, For man shall not see me, And live.

And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me Where you shall stand on the rock. While my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock. And I will cover you with my hand Until I have passed by.

Then I will take away my hand, And you shall see my back, But my face shall not be seen. And what we see here, Is that Moses, Asked to see God's glory, The response he gets, Is that God, Will proclaim his name before Moses, God tells him, Of his graciousness and his mercy.

He reveals himself, To Moses, But with the understanding, That Moses, Cannot see his face and live. More on that last bit in a minute.

But back in John chapter 1, What John is getting at here, Is that the glory of God, That Moses has encountered, Is the same glory that has been revealed In Jesus Christ.

[11:34] The glory of God is revealed, In the face of Jesus Christ, The word made flesh. That is good news for us, And the word becoming flesh, Is good news for us, Even beyond that.

Because only one, Who is both God and man, Can be our savior. Only one, Who is both God and man, Can be the mediator, Between God and man. Only one, Who is both God and man, Can pay the debt, For our sins.

Verse 15 moves on, To a reference to John the Baptist. Remember, First we'll see the ministry, The ministry of John the Baptist, Is really where John's account, Picks up. And we read in verse 15, John bore witness about him, And cried out, This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me, Ranks before me, Because he was before me.

When John the Baptist said, That Jesus was before him, We could take, Take it in a couple of senses, We could take it to mean, That Jesus existed before John, And that Jesus is of greater importance, Than John the Baptist.

And both, Of these things, Are true. And this kind of parenthetical aside, Underscores, What John's gospel, Has been saying, Up to this point, That is that the word, Who was with God, And was God, From all eternity, Became flesh.

[13:08] Continuing on to verse 16, We read, For from his fullness, We have all received, Grace upon grace. So what is his fullness?

We read just a couple of verses ago, That Jesus is full of grace and truth, Did we not? In Jesus, We receive, From his fullness, Of grace, And his fullness of truth.

What do we make of the expression, Grace upon grace? At first glance, And I have to be honest, I think I probably thought this, For a while, For a while, A really long time.

We might think, Grace upon grace, Wow, That's a whole lot of grace. But there's more to it than that. Because God was gracious, In giving Israel his law.

God was gracious, To his people, In sending the Old Testament prophets. That was God's undeserved kindness. But in sending his only son, He has given us nothing less, Than grace upon grace.

[14:22] Verse 18 expands on why we should consider it, Grace upon grace. No one has ever seen God, The only God, Who was at the Father's side.

He has made him known. Think back to Exodus 33 for a second. Moses is told, That he cannot see God, And live.

But in Christ, What happens? That barrier, Is broken down. The one who was with God, And was God, From all eternity, Changes everything, In taking on flesh.

Moses could not, See the fullness of God's glory, And live. But now, In Jesus, Human beings really can, See God and live.

We can now, Draw near to God, In a way that we never could, Before. Isn't that amazing?

[15:28] In Jesus, That distance, That existed between God, And human beings, Is bridged. And now, We can draw near to God, And see his glory, And live.

And I think that's a great thing. Because there is nothing, In the whole world, I want more, Than to see the Lord, In his glory. What about you?

Amen. So what should we take away, From this text, For this morning? Like last week, The second half, Of the prologue, We can, Simply think of it, As lofty, Theologizing.

But I think, It's a lot more than that. There are a few things, I want us to consider, This morning. The first is this. I touched on this, A little bit, As we went through the text.

We are not, And cannot be, Children of God, If we do not believe, In the name of Jesus Christ.

There is only one way, Into God's family, And that is through the son, Jesus.

[16:42] But if we have received Christ, We can be assured, That we are beloved children, Of God.

Isn't that awesome? It doesn't matter, It doesn't matter who you are, It doesn't matter who your parents are, It doesn't matter where you're from, It doesn't matter how many times you've failed, How many times you've stumbled, How badly you've sinned, It doesn't matter how much money, Or prestige you have, It doesn't matter how important you are, In the eyes of the world, No matter what, If you come to Christ, You become a beloved child of God, A treasured member of God's family, Forever.

That is the greatest thing imaginable. And our text makes it clear, That the offer is open, To anyone who will come. The next thing I want us to think about, Is how clear John is here, That being born, Again, Being born of God, Is not our own accomplishment, It is the work of God.

Now you can apply that, In all kinds of ways, I think, I could probably preach several sermons, On what that means, And how we live that out.

But you know, As I was preparing for this sermon, Something really jumped out at me. In the past week, On the internet, Uh oh, I've noticed, Been reminded, I didn't notice this for the first time, That we are living in a time, When people are tempted to hate, And rage against people, Who aren't like them, Or who don't agree with them.

[18 : 33] I've noticed, That we as Christians, Are tempted, To take that attitude, Towards unbelievers. But from what we have seen, In our text, That kind of attitude, Has no place, In the Christian life, Looking down on others, And hating them.

If we are born of God, It is not because we are awesome, It's because God is awesome, And because he has been gracious to us. There is no place for pride, In the Christian life. Everything that we have, Is a gift of sheer grace, And that's certainly true, Of the gift of eternal life, And reconciliation with God, That we have in Jesus Christ.

We are saved, By God's grace alone, And that means, That we are called, To be a people, Who are known for humility. Finally, I want us to consider, What it means for our everyday lives, That the word became flesh.

I don't know if you've noticed, But light includes, Quite a bit of suffering. We deal with illness, Pain, grief, frustration, Betrayal, sorrow, death.

[19 : 51] I could go on, But I think you get the point. But here's the thing, In that phrase, The word became flesh, And dwelt among us.

We find, That as we face, The struggles of life, We have something, That atheists don't have. We have something, That Buddhists don't have.

We have something, That Muslims don't have. We have a God, Who loved us enough, To become one of us, And share in our suffering, That we might have life.

Not a God, Who watches from the distance, But a God, Who came right into the mess, With us to save us, Out of love for us. That is the God, That I know and trust.

What about you? That is the God, I count on when things get tough. What about you? That is the God, That I know, That I can always rely on.

[20 : 56] What about you? Praise Him. Final thing I want us to consider, This morning, Is that the word becoming flesh, His death for our sins, On the cross, His glorious resurrection, The fact that we become, Children of God, Through faith in His name, It means this, We can draw near to God, We need to remember, As Christians, That we are called, Into relationship, With God.

Let me be clear, It's not the case, That now that we're saved, We're just biding our time, Until we're beamed up to heaven. First of all, The church has a mission, And we need to be about it, While we are here.

But in addition to that, We are called to find joy, In our relationship with God, Right here and right now. We are called to enjoy Him, Right here and right now.

That is where we are supposed, To find our highest joy, In life. I think that so often, As Christians, We're still tempted, To find our ultimate joy, In the wrong places.

In material things, Or in our professional achievements, Or in other people, Or in any number of things. But the reality is that, In this life, Nothing is for certain, And we could lose any of that, At any moment.

[22 : 25] And when the rug gets pulled out, From under our feet, What are we left with? Well, Even if we lose, Everything that we have, In this world, We still have our Father.

Our eternity, Will be spent, Seeing God's glory, Enjoying Him, As His children, Because of the word, Who became flesh.

And we have every reason, To start enjoying Him, Above all else, Right now. As I close this morning, I really want to emphasize, What a privilege we have, To see the glory of God, In the face of Jesus Christ.

I want to emphasize, What a privilege we have, To know that God, Became one of us. And I want to emphasize, What a privilege, That we have, That through faith in Christ, We have become, The children of God.

The word became flesh. It's not some abstract, Philosophical idea. It's not some, Historical curiosity, That happened a long time ago.

[23:56] No. It has changed, Everything. It has changed, The world. It has changed, The course of human history. It has changed, My life.

And I pray, That it has changed, Yours too. For from his fullness, We have, All received, Grace upon grace.

Praise the name of the Lord, In the name of the Father, And of the Son, And of the Holy Spirit. Amen.