

The Word Became Flesh

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Preacher: Nick Lauer

- [0 : 0 0] All right, friends, we're going to go ahead and get started. Good morning. Thanks for coming out to Adult Sunday School. So if you were expecting this class to be John Hinkson, talking about how to share your faith, that's not what we're going to do this morning.
- So if you want to just slip out and do something else, go get a cup of coffee, that's fine. I know Tyler mentioned he announced that a couple weeks ago as the hospitality class was underway. But we made a little bit of a shift in the schedule.
- So John's actually going to teach that class on how to share your faith starting in the new year. So kind of mid-January when we kick Sunday school back up for the year, he's going to teach that. That will just give him a little more time to do that class.
- So instead, what we're going to do, which seems very fitting this time of year, is that we are going to do a class about the incarnation. We're going to do a class about Jesus Christ and the person of Christ.
- So for those of you, I think I know most of you in the room. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Nick. I'm one of the pastors here. And what we're going to do over the next three weeks is look at what is really the central reality of Christianity.
- [1 : 1 5] The thing that makes Christianity, Christianity. And really, what we're going to look at over the next three weeks is the kind of central and most glorious work that God has done and that we will spend eternity praising God for, which is this, as John says in John chapter 1.
- John writes, he says, And then John goes on to say a few verses later, he says, And that 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. The word became flesh. So we're going to spend three weeks basically just unpacking that half of a verse.
- The word became flesh. So how are we going to do that over these next few weeks? So today, we're going to look at the humanity of Jesus. Jesus. And then next week, we're going to look at the deity of Jesus, his divine nature.
- And then in our third week together, we're going to consider that Jesus is both of those at the same time. So that's a bit of where we're going to go in this class.
- [2 : 4 4] So with that being said, with all the introductory bits out of the way, let me pray for us and then we'll dive in. Father in heaven, we thank you for the opportunity to be together this morning.
- God, thank you that this time of year is a time when we remember the incarnation of your Son. Father, in the way in which you came in the person of your Son, dwelt in our midst, full of grace and truth, and took on our humanity, assumed it in its fullness for us and for our redemption and for the rescue of the whole world.
- God, we pray that you'd be with us in this class. Help our minds to comprehend, as much as our finite minds are able, this great truth of what you've done.

Jesus, we pray in your mighty name. Amen. Okay, so this morning, we're talking about the humanity of Jesus. Now, I think it's the reasonable question to ask.

Isn't Jesus' humanity obvious? Who disputes the fact that Jesus was a real human being? It's kind of interesting that a number of years ago, there were some scholars and then there were some people who kind of like did some half-baked conspiracy theories to say that like, the person of Jesus never existed.

[4 : 03] But all that's been pretty much debunked. Even utterly secular scholars like a guy like Bart Ehrman from North Carolina, if you're familiar with him, who doesn't believe in God in any way, wrote a whole book called Why Jesus Existed.

You know, so the very kind of brute fact of the person of Jesus is sort of obvious. But, however, there was an early danger in the early church.

There were some people who fell into the trap of thinking that maybe Jesus wasn't fully human. Listen to this verse from a book maybe a lot of us are familiar with, a book of 1 John.

John says this, By this you know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.

And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. Did you catch what John's saying there? There are some people who are saying that this person we're looking to, the Christ, that he wasn't in the flesh, right?

[5 : 15] That Jesus was maybe a spirit, maybe a kind of spiritual being, but wasn't a human being. And that kind of error, that kind of thinking, came to be called docetism in the early church.

And you saw this especially as the gospel began to spread into more sort of Gentile areas. And the word docetism comes from a Greek word doceo, which means to appear or to seem.

So this was the kind of thinking that Jesus only appeared to be human. He wasn't really human. Now you think, okay, well, is that really the danger for us today?

Do we only think that Jesus was like, just seemed to be human? Don't we sort of fall into the other trap of thinking that Jesus was only human and not really God? Well, we'll get to that next week, right? We are going to get to that. That probably is more of the danger for us today.

However, I do think that there is maybe some latent docetism in our thinking today. Maybe some latent thinking that maybe Jesus wasn't fully human.

[6 : 19] Think about it this way. Some church traditions, there's a lot of emphasis on mediators between us and the ascended risen Christ.

That we need to sort of to approach God. We need to go through sort of other humans who maybe are a little closer to God so that we can get to them. Right?

Right? In some traditions, even Mary, who is obviously a wonderful figure of the faith, and we're, you know, we love Mary. But some traditions would say you actually have to pray to Mary to get Jesus' sort of attention.

Now, I think what's going on there is an exaltation of Jesus to such a high degree that suddenly he's unattainable. That we need other humans to kind of bend his ear to us.

We're forgetting that Jesus is fully human, just like us. Okay, that's maybe one danger. I think another danger today is maybe the view that sees Jesus sort of just as a myth.

[7 : 26] Now, what do I mean by that? I mean that some people sort of talk about Jesus as if he's important kind of for what he stands for or for what he represents.

Right? And what's underneath this is, I think, on one hand, an attempt to try to consider Jesus as very important today. But sometimes it seems to be an attempt to separate the kind of ongoing meaning of Jesus for today from his historical material existence.

That we can kind of separate ourselves from all the kind of nitty-gritty details of his very material historical existence. And some of the things that maybe historically we find a little uncomfortable.

Like maybe the virgin birth or the bodily resurrection or some of his miracles or some of the things that we're like, oh, I don't know what to do with that. So we can extract from the human Jesus a supposedly kind of timeless Christ.

And that kind of thinking goes all the way back into the early church. It's really kind of a form of Gnosticism, if you're familiar with that. Gnosticism said that, you know, Jesus the human wasn't really what was important, but kind of the spirit of Christ that came upon him.

[8 : 37] And we just have to connect with that spirit of Christ. But you can see how that's kind of a denial or at least a downgrading of Jesus' real human historical personhood. Okay.

It's super easy to point fingers at other people, right? How do we, maybe in some of our circles, kind of downgrade Jesus' humanity? Well, it's very interesting.

When you look at the book of 1 John, where it seems like this issue first starts to crop up in the New Testament, John talks about a lot of things in that book. He talks about Jesus being our assurance of our standing before God.

He talks about Jesus as our future hope. He also talks about Jesus as our present meaning for how to live, right? And let's reflect on our own lives.

Do we live in a deep assurance of God's favor for us? Do we live with a deep sense of robust, anchored hope for the future? Do we live with a robust sense of meaning and purpose now?

[9 : 40] I think if we're all honest, we're from time to time pretty shaky about all that stuff. And what's interesting for 1 John is all those things are rooted in the humanity of Jesus. The fact that the word became flesh.

Now, we're going to unpack that as we go along. But first, before we come back to that kind of deep meaning and the necessity of Jesus' humanity and why it's important for us, why don't we take a step and we're just going to walk through this morning the kind of scriptural support for Jesus' full humanity.

We're just going to walk through and look at how, particularly the Gospels, present Jesus as fully human. So, as we come to the Gospel writers in particular, we see undoubtedly that Jesus had a human body.

So, think about some passages.

Think about the fact that Jesus was born and grew up, right? Think about Luke 2, right? A familiar passage we think about this time of year. Luke 2, 4-7.

[11 : 00] Jesus was born just like everyone in this room, I'm supposing.

Is anyone here not born? Because I guess you're... I can't remember. That's right. Jesus might be the only one who remembers his birth, actually. You know, think about that.

You know, we sing these songs during Christmas time. You know, the little Lord Jesus, no crying he made. Was that true, I wonder? Was Jesus not crying in that moment when he took his first gasp of air upon, you know, leaving the womb of the Virgin Mary?

Yeah? Okay, so Jesus was born. Interesting, Jesus also grew up. We don't have to think about this. There's not a lot in the Gospels about Jesus' early years. But in Luke 2, verse 40, Luke writes, And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.

Jesus knew what it was like to grow up. And then one of the only stories we have about Jesus before his kind of public ministry in his adult years is found in the rest of Luke 2. In Luke 2, verse 42, where we read about Jesus when he was 12 years old.

[12 : 31] When he was 12 years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to custom for the festival. And that was where Jesus went to the temple and was teaching with the religious leaders. And then his parents lost him.

And then they went back and they were really worried. And then Jesus said, okay, I'll come with you. And he obeyed them. Right? Okay. So there's this picture of Jesus, fully human, being born, growing up, navigating life with parents, you know.

Okay. What else do we see about Jesus' human body in the Gospels? He wasn't just born and he grew, but Jesus also got tired. John 4, 6, we see that.

In John 4, we read, Jesus left Judea, departed for Galilee, and he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. Wearied from his journey.

[13 : 31] Jesus was wearied. He knew what it was like to grow tired. Anyone remember what happens in John 4? What happens in John 4? He meets the woman at the well. That's right.

He meets the Samaritan woman at the well. That's right. Another instance of Jesus displaying tiredness. Mark 4. On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, let's go across to the other side.

And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with them. And a great windstorm arose. And the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.

But where was Jesus in that moment? He was in the stern, asleep. Right? Weary. We see not just that Jesus became tired, but that he also experienced hunger.

In Matthew chapter 4, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. We'll come back to Jesus' temptation. And after fasting 40 days and 40 nights, what was true of Jesus?

[14 : 29] He was hungry. Experienced hunger. And then we know in John 19 that Jesus also experienced thirst on the cross. He said, I thirst. So they fed him some sour wine on a hyssop branch.

Right? So there's Jesus experiencing fatigue and hunger and thirst, just like us. Interestingly, Jesus also experienced wounding and weakness.

We see this especially in the narratives of Jesus' passion. Here's one from Mark 15. And the soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is the governor's headquarters.

And they called together the whole battalion and they clothed him in a purple cloak and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him and they began to salute him. Hail, King of the Jews. And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him, obviously mocking him.

And when they mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him. And then interestingly, Mark and some of the other gospel writers say, and they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

[15 : 47] Why would they compel someone to carry Jesus' cross? Because he couldn't do it. Because he was weak. He'd experienced wounding and weakness.

And then, of course, we know from all the gospel writers that Jesus died. He experienced death in his human body. Here's Luke's account of that. It was now the sixth hour and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

And Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. And having said this, he breathed his last. So Jesus had a fully human body.

He was born. He grew. He experienced tiredness, weakness, hunger, thirst, wounding, even death. Now, here's what's very interesting. When we think about Jesus' human body, one of the things that the scriptures teach us is that Jesus is fully God and fully human.

And he will be both for eternity. Because when we continue to follow the gospel story, we see that Jesus, now still thinking about his human body, Jesus was risen.

[17 : 03] He rose in a body, right? This is one of my favorite passages. I think I preached on this last Easter, didn't I? As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, peace to you.

But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? You got to think, in that moment, did Jesus sort of have a smile on his face?

Like, I mean, they'd all watched him die. He came and stood among them. And they're all freaking out. He's like, why are you freaking out? I mean, he probably knew a little bit of why they were freaking out, right?

Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.

And when he said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, have you anything here to eat? They gave him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and ate it before them.

[18 : 03] So Jesus was risen in a body. And then also, what we see as we continue the story of the Gospels, is that Jesus ascended in a body. And thereby, I think the point of the, one of the many points of the Ascension stories, the way they're told to tell us what happened, was that Jesus continues in his body, even in heaven.

So think about Luke 24, 50. And he led them out as far as Bethany and lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

And then in Acts, we see kind of a second account of that same event. When Jesus had said these things as they were looking on, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?

This Jesus, who is taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven. So Jesus continues forever in his human body.

The incarnation, in other words, wasn't just sort of like a temporary flash in the middle of history, but God did something in the incarnation that will have permanent, eternal outcomes.

[19 : 23] Okay. So Jesus had a human body. That much seems clear from the New Testament. But, you know, was Jesus's body just sort of like a shell for his divine nature, right?

Was it just kind of like an earth suit that he put on whereby God the sun could kind of come to earth, right? Think about astronauts in space, right? What do we need to do?

Well, I'm not an astronaut, so I don't need to do it, but I've seen. Astronauts, they have to put on space suits, right? So they can like exist in space without, I don't know what happens if you don't have a space suit on.

According to Guardians of the Galaxy, you like get really cold and you turn into ice. So is that, was that what was happening in the incarnation? Was God just sort of putting on a space suit, an earth suit to come down?

Actually, no. No. We see that Jesus didn't just have a fully human body, but he also had a fully human mind and a fully human will, fully human emotions.

[20 : 29] That Jesus actually had all that part of our human nature as well. So think about Jesus' human mind. So in Luke 2, 52, back in Luke 2, kind of picking up the end of that story when Jesus is 12 years old, we see that Jesus went through a learning process, just like all children.

So thinking about Jesus' mind, his human mind grew. Luke 2, verse 51 through 52. So Jesus' human mind grew in wisdom, right?

And here's one thing, we're going to come back to this verse in a later session, but in Jesus' human nature, Jesus' knowledge was limited, actually.

He knew what it was like in his human nature to not know everything. Mark 13, 32, Jesus says, Now, like I said, we're going to talk about that verse further when we talk about Jesus' divine nature, because that's one of those verses where it's like, wait, how could Jesus be God if he doesn't know something, right?

But I think what we see there is Jesus in his divine nature, or excuse me, in his human nature saying, there are things in my human nature I don't know. Of course, in his divine nature, he was omnipotent. So that's Jesus' mind.

[22 : 16] What about Jesus' emotions? Well, in Jesus' I should probably write some of this stuff down. Forget about it. You guys, my handwriting is so bad, it won't matter if I write it down anyway.

Jesus had human emotions, not just a human mind, but he had human emotions. Think about Mark 1, 41. Where it says Jesus was moved with compassion, moved with pity. And this is what Mark says, he says, And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, If you will, you can make me clean.

And then Mark writes about Jesus, says, Moved with pity, or moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him and said, I will be clean. We also read in the Gospel of Luke that Jesus marveled.

He wasn't just moved with compassion, but he marveled. So this is the story when the centurion comes. Do you remember the story about the centurion? He comes to Jesus. And what does the centurion want?

Do you remember? His servant. Yes, his servant. That's right. His servant. Yeah.

[23 : 25] So come heal my servant. And then, okay, let's pick it up. So Jesus went with him. So actually, the centurion kind of sends some people to tell Jesus his son is sick.

And then they come. And they're like, this centurion is a really good guy, Jesus. You should do this for him. He's been a real friend to us. So Jesus is like, okay, I'll go. And it says, When Jesus was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends saying to him, Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I'm not worthy to have you come under my roof.

Therefore, I did not presume to come to you, but say the word and let my servant be healed. For I, too, am a man set under authority with soldiers under me. And I say to one, go.

And he goes. And another, come. And he comes. And to my servant, do this. And he does it. When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him. He was surprised.

Why? Turning to the crowd that followed him, Jesus said, I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

[24 : 28] So there's Jesus marveling, experiencing that human emotion. But Jesus didn't experience things like compassion or pity or sort of marvel and surprise in his fully human nature.

But he also experienced anger and sorrow. Listen to John 11. Do you remember what happens in John 11? Sort of a little bit of Bible quiz. What happens in John 11?

For those of you who are familiar with John's gospel. It's okay. If you have a Bible, you can cheat. It's an open book exam. What happens in John 11? Yes.

What happens before he was raised, though, John? He dies. Okay. So Lazarus dies. That's right. Thanks. Lazarus dies. Yep. And people come to Jesus and say, well, what happens first is people come to Jesus and say, hey, your friend, our friend, Lazarus, is sick.

And Jesus says, well, let's wait a little bit. And then Lazarus dies and he goes. Right? And then when he goes, he meets with, he sort of sees Mary and Martha, Lazarus' sisters.

[25 : 35] And anyway, we'll pick up the story in verse 33. When Mary saw, sorry, when Jesus, when Jesus saw Mary weeping and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, John says, Jesus was deeply moved in spirit.

Now, that's a very interesting word, deeply moved in spirit. In fact, in other places where that same word is translated, it means Jesus was indignant.

It almost has overtones of being angry. And, of course, the great question is, who's Jesus angry at in John 11? Right? Is he angry at Mary for crying?

No. Is he angry at, you know, the other fellow Jews who were there? No. No. It seemed that Jesus is indignant at death itself, at this invader into God's creation because of sin.

Jesus is indignant in his spirit and greatly troubled. Okay. The rest of the story goes on. Jesus said, where have you laid him? And they said to him, Lord, come and see. In verse 35, Jesus wept.

[26 : 36] So the Jews said, see how he loved him. But some of them said, could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?

And, of course, in the rest of the story, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. But isn't that interesting? Jesus goes from indignation to weeping all in that moment.

And if any of you have lost a loved one, you know what that's like, right? To move from indignation to weeping and back again very quickly. Sort of the natural parts of our human emotional experience. And Jesus himself experienced that.

We also read that Jesus was troubled, which is sort of this word that means, sort of a word that the New Testament writers use when people are kind of suddenly surprised by danger or when they're even anxious.

Like in John 12, when Jesus says, now my soul is troubled. For what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this purpose I have come to this hour.

[27 : 38] Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came from heaven, I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again. Jesus there, of course, looking ahead to his crucifixion. And then in John 13, when he's gathered his disciples, right on the night before he was betrayed and crucified, Jesus was troubled in spirit and said, truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.

And the disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. So there's Jesus experiencing that sense of troubledness, that danger or threats. Matthew 26, we read that Jesus was sorrowful.

This is Matthew 26. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane and said to his disciples, sit here while I go over there and pray. And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled.

Then he said to them, my soul is very sorrowful, even at death. Remain here and watch with me, pray with me. Okay. So Jesus experienced the depths of our human emotional life, too.

From the heights to the lows. Jesus had human emotions. Last then, Jesus had a human will. Now, this is something we don't often think about.

[28 : 58] Yes, Beth, you have a question? Or a comment. One, as a camp counselor, I have two young girls asking a question, which I want you to speak to. If you could. If Jesus was without sin, we experience deep emotional shame and guilt and divorce.

And if he didn't actually come to a place where he personally needed to repent as he was growing. Yeah. What is it like for his human nature to engage with our sin experience?

As human. Is that right? Yeah. Is your question, how can Jesus know what it's like to be fully human if he never sinned? Yeah. Is that your question?

I'm not going to say that. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, that's a really good question. So I think there's two things to think about there. And that's a really good question, actually. I think it's one of the kind of like ways in which we feel maybe a distance from Jesus.

It's like, well, he doesn't know what it's like to veil like I do. So one thing, though, what are we affirming in the incarnation? We're affirming the incarnation that Jesus took on human nature, right?

[30 : 03] Now, what do we know? We know that sin is not an essential part of human nature, right? When God created Adam and Eve, when he created the first humans, they were fully human, right?

But they were without sin. So sin, fallenness, that kind of curving in on ourselves that we kind of all experience as a result of the fall, that's not an essential feature of what it means to be a human being.

Philosophically, you'd say that's accidental to human nature, meaning it's something that comes afterwards, that if you take it away, you're still human. So Jesus' sinlessness, by definition, doesn't mean he doesn't know exactly what it's like to be human.

But I think there's a deeper question you're asking, Beth, which is, how can he really know what it's like to be in my shoes if he's never experienced sin, right? If he never sinned. Now, here's what's interesting, and we'll get to this in a little more detail.

But on the cross, what are we told about what happened to the sinless human Jesus? That's right.

[31 : 17] In 2 Corinthians, Paul says, he became sin for us. And in Galatians 3, 2, 3, 3, it says he became a curse for us.

So even though Jesus himself did not commit a sin, he actually knows what it's like to bear the weight of sin.

And actually, he knows what it's like to bear sin actually to a degree that none of us have experienced. Because what Jesus experienced on the cross wasn't just, like, the weight of some sin, right?

But of complete sin, of all the sin of everyone who would ever believe in Jesus was experienced in that moment. And the full wrath of God against that sin.

So there's a level at which Jesus knows what it's like to be a sinner more than any of us do.

[32 : 26] Does that make sense? Any other questions? Yeah, Franklin. Yeah. When all of these things you're mentioning are experienced in your marriage.

Yeah. And when we get to Matthew, Mark, and John, when he's driving out the money chain, his emotions have now taken him to the next level.

That's one of the few times that that seems to be pointed out in the Gospel. Yeah, yeah, yep. not really a question, but we're, it's a human.

Yeah, I think you see indignation in that moment, similar to Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus. I think what's interesting about that point, though, is that I think sometimes we can look at that and be like, whoa, Jesus lost his cool.

Doesn't Paul say be angry and sin not? Did Jesus just not do that? I actually think that moment, I think Jesus was actually very controlled in that moment, and he knew exactly what he was doing.

[33 : 31] Quite intentional. Very intentional, yep. And you think about it, the temple courts were massive, right? So there was a level at which what Jesus was doing was as much a demonstration as it was a like, actual cleansing of the temple of everything that was wrong with it, right?

To flip a money changer's table and to drive those animals out. It was a prophetic act, much like the...

Yeah, that's right. Yeah, that's right right now. That's right. He knew those consequences. That's right. Yep. Yeah. Very good.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So, um, Jesus as the man of sorrow. Yeah. Yep. Mm-hmm. Yeah, that's right.

That's right. Is it like a cultural maybe improved? Yeah. I don't know if he was very sarcastic. Yeah, that's right. That's right. That's right. Yeah. Yeah, that's a really good question.

[34 : 36] I've thought about that. And, you know, I wonder if there are moments when Jesus is experiencing joy with his disciples and yet they're just not written about in the Gospels.

And I'm not sure why that is. I don't think Jesus was a joyless person. In fact, I think Jesus was probably the most joyful person who ever lived in a sense, right?

Having, experiencing complete communion with his father, knowing exactly why he had come, right? And yet, yeah, you don't see sort of moments where Jesus is sort of like, hamming it up with the disciples, right?

Yeah. And yet, isn't it interesting? Isn't it interesting, though? What is one of the things that Jesus is criticized for by his opponents? Do you remember? What was one of the chief complaints about Jesus early on in his ministry?

Okay, so yeah, eventually, they really didn't like him because it seemed like he was making himself equal with God, right? We'll get to that next week. Ivor? Yeah! There's John the Baptist fasting all the time and there's Jesus partying all the time.

[35 : 47] What's that all about, right? He's a friend of tax collectors and sinners, right? So, I think there's a sense in which, you know, I think Jesus wasn't just sort of a dour, you know, what was it?

Who was it that said that, you know, we have this idea of the Puritans, that they're the people who are really worried that someone somewhere might be having fun, you know? So, that wasn't Jesus.

Yeah, yeah. So, good. Okay, let me mention just a couple more things and then we'll move on. I mean, I think the point is made here, right, of these kind of verses upon verses.

The last thing I just want to point out is that Jesus had a human will, right? He just had a human will, not just a body and a mind and emotions, but he also had a human will like ours. Interestingly, in Hebrews 5, and we see this in those passages from Luke, I pointed out too, but in Hebrews 5, it says it very explicitly.

This is verses 7 and 8 of Hebrews 5. In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death and he was heard because of his reverence.

[36 : 57] Okay, we talked about that. Jesus experienced the depth of human emotion. But then, the writer of Hebrews says this, although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. Interesting, right?

The writer of Hebrews is looking back on the life of Jesus and saying that Jesus learned obedience. His human will was trained over time through what he experienced towards ongoing obedience.

His moral ability as a human actually increased. Not that he ever sinned, but his capacity to obey continued to grow. And then, of course, we also see along the same line of Jesus having a human will, that Jesus was tempted.

Right? We see that in Mark and in Matthew and in Luke. All those moments of Jesus' temptation. And then lastly, we see that Jesus, we see explicitly Jesus submitting his human will to the Father's divine will in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Right? Matthew, this is Matthew's version of that in Matthew 26. Going a little farther, Jesus fell on his face and prayed, saying, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.

[38 : 13] And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, So could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Again, for the second time, Jesus went away and prayed, Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done. So there we see Jesus in his human nature, with his human will, actively submitting it to the Father's will.

Good. Now I want to talk a little bit about the importance of Jesus' humanity. We spent a lot of time just looking at how that's presented in the Gospels. But I want to talk for maybe the next, with the rest of the time that we have together, and I'll pause for some questions about the importance of it.

And these I did write down because I knew we'd probably be running out of time. So when you look across the rest of the New Testament, why is Jesus' humanity so important? Why is it essential to what we believe?

Well, it comes up in so many aspects. In this first column, we might say that it's essential to Jesus being our Redeemer.

[39 : 27] Redeemer. There we go. In 1 Timothy 2.15, Paul says, there is one God, and there's one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given in its proper time.

So the thing that reconciles, the one who reconciles us to God must be a human being. We'll see next week that he must also be fully God as well.

But the humanity of Jesus is essential. Why is that, right? Why is Jesus the one mediator between us and God, right? Well, on the one hand, we see that Jesus' full humanity meant that he could offer up a representative obedience on our behalf.

In other words, Jesus obeyed where Adam failed and disobeyed. Think about this from Romans 5.

Romans 5 is a great passage that captures this. This is just a little snippet of it. Paul writes, Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification in life for all men.

[40 : 51] For as one man, for as, by the one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners. That's Adam, right? In Adam, we've all fallen. So, by the one man's obedience, the many will be made righteous.

You see, God's covenant with Adam and his covenant then with the rest of humanity in Adam was broken by Adam's disobedience. So now all humans are in Adam and we're under sin and death, right?

So, what's going to get us out of that conundrum? Well, there's a new Adam. Jesus is the new Adam and establishes a new covenant and by Jesus' human obedience, we can be reckoned righteous before God and live if we're in him through faith.

So Jesus, as a human, is able to offer up that human obedience to reestablish a new covenant with God. But it's not just representative obedience, it's also Jesus was our substitute to pay for our sins.

Listen to Hebrews 2. It says, since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, that's us, we're humans, we share in flesh and blood, Jesus himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

[42 : 16] Now you think, how does that happen? How does Jesus' death deliver us from slavery to death and the fear of death? Hebrews goes on, for surely it's not angels that he helps, right?

Jesus didn't come to save super spiritual beings. He came to help the offspring of Abraham, humans. Therefore Jesus had to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, and here it is, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

That's how Jesus rescues us from the fear of death and slavery to the fear of death. Because what is the sting of death?

Why is death such a fearsome thing? Because on the other end of death, for sinners, is the very wrath of God against sin. But Jesus went down into death and bore the wrath of God in our place on the cross as a human, dying for humans so that now there's no more penalty for those who trust in him.

That that cup that Jesus talked about in the garden has been taken from us and given to him so that the just demands of God's holy hatred against sin have been satisfied in him.

[43 : 38] So Jesus doesn't just offer up a perfect obedience that's now as ours because our obedience is broken. He also pays for all the things we've done wrong because he's fully human. Okay.

But it's not just that Jesus reconciles us to God in some kind of spiritual way, right? Because if we just stopped there, wouldn't it sort of be like, okay, great. When we die, we're good, right? I have sort of a relationship with God now.

When I die, I won't face condemnation. I'll face life. But here's what's fascinating. Because Jesus was fully human in a fully human body in his resurrection, his resurrection ensures our own resurrection to bodily life, right?

And you see this in 1 Corinthians 15 where Paul talks about Christ being the first fruits of those who will be raised. This is 1 Corinthians 15.

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. The first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, that's Adam, so by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

[44 : 45] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order. Christ, the first fruits. He was the first one to do it.

Then it is coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after putting down every rule and every authority and power.

You see, something ontological has happened in human existence because of what Jesus has done in his death and resurrection. That our very material life has been rescued.

And will be rescued through Jesus' resurrection. There was a late fourth century theologian named Gregory of Nazianzus who said, what Jesus did not assume, he did not redeem.

Speaking about the importance of the incarnation here. And the word assume there doesn't mean like you kind of guess at something. The word assume means to like take something up, to embrace it, to take it on, right?

[45 : 49] Actually, the full quote of what Gregory says is, for that which Jesus has not assumed, he has not healed, but that which is united to his Godhead is also saved.

So you see what Gregory's saying there? Jesus' full humanity is utterly essential because if God is going to save it, he needs to assume it. In all those passages we just spent 45 minutes looking at how Jesus is a body and a mind and a will and emotions, he took all of that into himself.

And so we'll redeem and heal all of it. Our full humanity is being healed because of Jesus' full humanity. Okay, I really got to hurry now because I know we need to clear out the room.

Just a few more things about the importance of Jesus' full humanity. You see also that Jesus doesn't work, just kind of come as our redeemer in his humanity, but he also sort of comes as our king or even better, our pattern.

Because of Jesus' full humanity, the gospel writers will say things like, follow his example in your life. Live like Jesus lived.

[47 : 05] Now here's what's even deeper than that. When you look at why God made humans in the first place, why did he make us? Why did he put us in creation? Well, in Genesis 1 and 2, you see that God put us in creation to be co-regents over creation, to be rulers and stewards of this created order.

And of course, we've made a total mess of that, haven't we? And yet, through Jesus' full humanity, God actually fulfills the purpose for which he made us because Jesus in his full humanity is that perfect ruler and steward of creation.

And in his resurrection and ascension, he's enthroned as that perfect ruler. And now we, as humans, following his lead, are following him in this kingdom life.

It's one of the reasons why you've been sending the Sermon on the Mount on Sundays, right? What does it mean to live in this kingdom that Jesus, our perfect human king, has established and inaugurated?

He shows us. So I think this is profound because when we think of Jesus not as human, we think of him just as God, right? As fully God. We think, well, whatever he did is just out of reach, right? It's this impossible thing I can't do.

[48 : 16] But friends, Jesus came to model a life for us that we're meant to live, right? The truly human life that he lived we're meant to live. Okay.

But we also know we like aren't perfect at that either, right? Who here lives the perfect kingdom-centered life? None of us, right? So here's the last thing we'll say that the New Testament points to.

Jesus in his full humanity. One of the most beautiful things about Jesus in his full and utter humanity is that he is the one who can truly sympathize with us, as Hebrews says, as our great high priest.

Hebrews 2.18 says, for because Jesus himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. And then in Hebrews 4, since then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens.

Jesus, the Son of God, let's hold fast to our confession. For we don't have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

[49 : 27] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Friends, isn't it a wonderful thing that the God who created the universe, the one who upholds everything by his powerful word, became a human, was tempted, suffered, died, knows exactly what it's like in every respect to walk the human road that we've walked.

So when we turn to God, we're not turning to a God who's some far-off, distant deity who knows nothing about us, but one who knows us intimately and deeply and says, I've come to sympathize with you and to give you help, to be with you in that journey.

Okay. The humanity of Jesus. We just scratched the surface. Why don't I close this in prayer and then, Susan, do you have instructions for us to clear the room?

Leave the room. Okay. Yes. Okay, great. Great. We'll pray and we'll leave. Sound good?

Let me pray. Lord Jesus, what a wonderful mystery it is that you, the eternal word, God the Son from all eternity, assumed our human nature.

[50 : 57] Jesus, thank you for this great good news that you've redeemed us, you lead us and you help us. Lord, help our love for you, our wonder at who you are and our deep trust in you to grow as we contemplate these things.

In your mighty name, we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.