

When God Put on Flesh

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This profound truth from John's Gospel takes us far beyond the manger scene we celebrate each December. It transports us to eternity past, to a reality that existed before time itself began.

Many people celebrate Christmas without fully grasping the magnitude of what actually happened. They know the story of a baby born in Bethlehem, but they miss the staggering truth: the God who created everything—every star, every atom, every dimension we can see and cannot see—put on flesh and blood and entered His own creation.

This wasn't just any person being born. This was the Creator becoming part of His creation.

The Problem That Required the Ultimate Solution

For centuries, God's people offered animal sacrifices to atone for their sins. Bulls, goats, and lambs were slaughtered on altars, their blood shed as a covering for human wrongdoing. But here's the reality that many miss: it was never possible for the blood of animals to actually take away human sin.

Think about it logically. If a human commits a crime worthy of death, how could an animal's death satisfy that debt? It's like trying to pay for a house with Monopoly money. The currency doesn't match the cost.

Those animal sacrifices were essentially a credit system—a temporary covering that pointed forward to something greater. Every sacrifice said, "Someone else will pay this debt." The bills kept accumulating, and eventually, someone had to settle the account. That someone could only be another human being. But not just any human—it had to be a perfect, sinless human whose blood could actually cleanse and justify those who believe.

The Body Prepared for Our Redemption

When Jesus came into the world, He said, "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for me." God took pleasure not in the blood of animals, but in the sacrifice of His Son—because that sacrifice could actually accomplish what needed to be done.

Isaiah prophesied about this hundreds of years before it happened: "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows... He was wounded for our transgressions, He was

bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."

Read that again slowly. Everything that happened to Jesus was so it wouldn't have to happen to you. He was oppressed so you could be blessed. He carried sickness so you could walk in health. He bore grief and sorrow so you could experience joy. He took your sin so you could walk in righteousness.

This is the exchange that took place at the cross. Jesus didn't just die physically—He experienced the full penalty of sin, including spiritual death and separation from God. "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" He cried. He went where you were headed—to the place of judgment—so you wouldn't have to go there.

But death, hell, and the grave couldn't hold Him. After three days, He rose victorious, and now He offers you everything He accomplished. It's as though you died, paid for your sins, and rose to new life—because when you put your faith in Him, His experience becomes your experience.

The Power of Honor and Faith

Here's where many people miss out on experiencing the fullness of what Christ has provided. In His own hometown, Jesus "could do no mighty work there" because of their unbelief. The people who knew Him as the carpenter's son couldn't honor Him as the Son of God, and their dishonor limited what He could do.

This principle still operates today. Where there is no honor, God's power is restricted. Where there is unbelief, mighty works become scarce.

We live in a profoundly dishonorable generation. Respect for authority, appreciation for sacred things, and esteem for God's gifts have eroded. And with that erosion comes a limitation on what God can manifest in our lives.

If you don't highly esteem what God has already done for you, you won't see Him do much more. If you treat the gift of salvation lightly, you won't extract much power from it. But when you truly honor and appreciate the price Jesus paid, when you meditate on it, praise God for it, and let it fill your heart with gratitude—that's when faith rises and mighty works become possible.

Living in the Reality of What He Accomplished

Because Jesus took your sin, you are not a sinner—you are the righteousness of God in Christ. That's not just positive thinking; that's your identity according to Scripture. And if you're righteous, then doing righteous things should be natural for you.

Because Jesus bore your sicknesses, you don't have to accept illness. When symptoms come, you can resist them in His name, knowing He already took that affliction on Himself. Because Jesus was oppressed, you can be free from oppression—whether it's demonic harassment, depression, or circumstances trying to dominate your life.

The key is this: whatever you tolerate, you will experience. Whatever you resist in faith, you can overcome. Jesus didn't take your pain in vain. He didn't endure the cross so you could continue living in bondage.

Fighting the Good Fight

This doesn't mean every battle is won in the first round. Some fights require endurance. By faith and patience we possess the promises. You may need to go the distance, standing firm round after round, refusing to quit or back down.

But here's your advantage: when you're tempted to feel discouraged, come back to the cross. Come back to what Jesus accomplished. No matter what you're going through, He went through far worse so you could get through your situation. That perspective will lift you every time.

The Greatest Gift of All

As we celebrate Christmas, let's not take a single blessing for granted. Every good thing in your life cost Jesus something. He was oppressed that you might be blessed. He paid an awful price for you to live in freedom, health, peace, and joy.

This is the greatest gift ever given—not just forgiveness, but complete deliverance. Not just mercy, but total transformation. Not just heaven someday, but abundant life right now.

Esteem this gift. Honor it. Let gratitude fill your heart. And watch as the power of what Jesus accomplished begins to manifest in every area of your life.

That's the real meaning of Christmas—God with us, God for us, God in us, making all things new.

Scripture References from the Sermon

Explicitly Mentioned References:

1. **John 1:1-5, 14** - The Word was God, became flesh, and dwelt among us
2. **Genesis 1:1** - In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth
3. **Hebrews 10:4** - The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins
4. **Isaiah 53:1-10** - Prophecy of the suffering servant
5. **Matthew 8:17** - He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses
6. **Matthew 18:18** - Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven
7. **Mark 6:1-6** - Jesus could do no mighty work in his hometown due to unbelief
8. **Acts 10** - Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil (reference to verse 38)
9. **Hebrews 3:12-13** - Beware lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; exhort one another daily

Alluded to or Paraphrased References:

10. **2 Corinthians 5:21** - We are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus
11. **James 4:7** - Resist the devil and he will flee from you
12. **Hebrews 6:12** - By faith and patience we inherit the promises
13. **Matthew 26:39** - Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane ("if it be possible, let this cup pass from me")
14. **Hebrews 6:18** - It is impossible for God to lie
15. **John 8:12** - Jesus as the light of the world
16. **John 14:9** - If you've seen me, you've seen the Father
17. **Nehemiah 8:10** - The joy of the Lord is your strength
18. **Romans 5:17** - Reign in life through Christ Jesus
19. **2 Corinthians 5:17** - New creation in Christ
20. **Matthew 12:40** - Three days in the heart of the earth
21. **Ephesians 4:8** - He descended into the lower parts of the earth (implied)

Supporting Verses for Main Themes:

Christmas/Incarnation Theme:

- **Luke 2:1-20** - The nativity story
- **Philippians 2:5-8** - Christ emptied himself, taking the form of a servant

Redemption/Atonement Theme:

- **1 Peter 2:24** - He bore our sins in his own body on the tree
- **Colossians 2:14-15** - Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements

Faith and Honor Theme:

- **Hebrews 11:6** - Without faith it is impossible to please God
- **Romans 10:17** - Faith comes by hearing the word of God

Victory Over Sin Theme:

- **Romans 6:6-14** - Dead to sin, alive to God
- **1 John 3:8** - The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil

Quotes

1. **God Almighty**, the Creator of all things, clothed Himself in flesh and blood.
2. The infinite, all-powerful, awe-inspiring God stepped into humanity in the person of **Jesus Christ**.
3. It was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to remove sin. Only the blood of a human being could pay the price for humanity's sin.
4. Jesus did not suffer only physically—He also suffered spiritually.
5. Jesus descended into hell itself and bore the full judgment for sin, taking upon Himself what was meant for us.
6. He was oppressed so that we might be blessed.
7. Jesus endured oppression so that we could live blessed lives, free from oppression.
8. Jesus did not take our pain in vain.
9. If we choose to remain afflicted, oppressed, and depressed—simply accepting it—then we are treating His sacrifice as though it were meaningless.
10. Where God is not honored, His work is limited.
11. Unbelief and dishonor always go hand in hand.
12. If we fail to value and esteem what God has already done for us, we will limit what He can do for us in the days ahead.

13. We must become people who truly understand and practice honor.

14. What you tolerate is what you allow to remain in your life.

15. In many ways, your future will be shaped by what you are willing—or unwilling—to tolerate.

Summary

This message takes us on a profound journey into one of Christianity's most astonishing truths: God Almighty, the Creator of all things visible and invisible, put on flesh and blood to rescue us. Drawing from John 1 and Isaiah 53, we discover that Jesus wasn't just a good teacher born 2,000 years ago—He existed from eternity past, creating everything that exists. The Word that was with God and was God became flesh and dwelt among us. What makes this even more remarkable is understanding why this had to happen. The blood of animals under the Old Covenant could never truly pay for human sin—it was essentially a credit card system that required ultimate payment. Only a sinless human could legally satisfy the debt we owed. Jesus didn't just forgive our sins casually; He justified us by paying the full price Himself. He bore our griefs, carried our sorrows, took our sicknesses, our infirmities, our depression, and our oppression so we wouldn't have to. When we grasp that Jesus was oppressed so we could be blessed, wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, everything changes. We're called to resist accepting in our lives what Jesus already took upon Himself. This isn't about entitlement—it's about honoring the incredible price paid for our freedom and refusing to let Jesus take our pain in vain.