



“Extremely Near & Incredibly Close” | Rev. Josh Keller | January 5, 2020

**John 1: 10-18**

**10** He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. **11** He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. **12** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

**14** And 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. **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.’”) **16** For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. **17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known

**Introductory References:**

- W.A. Auden’s Christmas Poem, “For the Time Being”, a selection of which may be read here: <https://www.plough.com/en/topics/culture/holidays/christmas-readings/from-for-the-time-being>
- Joan Osborne’s Song, “One of Us.”, the lyrics of which may be found here: <https://genius.com/Joan-osborne-one-of-us-lyrics>
- Josh suggested Auden’s poem asks a familiar question many ask themselves this time of year: “What does Christmas mean in our present lives?” Looking back, what has it meant to you thus far?
- Josh pointed out the cynicism of Osborne’s song - essentially that God doesn’t feel near to us at all. Do you identify or not? How so?
- What do the Old Testament Scriptures remind/show us about God’s own answer to that question? Discuss the stories and passages with which you are familiar and what they say about God’s proximity to us. Consider specifically the image of God’s tabernacle within the nation of Israel. What answers does the Old Testament provide to Ms. Osborne and those of us who ask questions like her?
- Moving forward into the New Testament and reading the passage at left, what is its message? Is it new, different? How so?
- Look up some alternate translations of vs 14. How do they shed light on God’s proximity to us: his intent, and his plan to fulfill that intent, and whether or not he succeeded.
- What stands as the chief barrier(s) to our experience of God’s “Extremely Near & Incredibly Close” proximity? How have these barriers manifest themselves in your life? Discuss.
- Josh put forth two essential truths that are established by God becoming flesh and “moving into the neighborhood.” What were they? How do they impact you?
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- What is one practical step you can take this week, daily, to experience and acknowledge the reality of God’s incarnation?

