

John 1:14-18

The Word Became Flesh

Image Church // Behold: Week 3

Introduction

What's up Image Family! I hope you're doing well...

Announcements: 2 important things to make you aware of...

First: We are going to be making a slight shift given the climate of things as it relates to the climb of COVID cases and the recent release of new CDC guidelines...

- In light of that we're going to be shifting to phase 2 **for next weekend** where we will be offering live stream only at 9 and 10:30...
- We are in a very unique time and we want to make sure that we are loving our neighbor well and what we are seeing is a massive spike here in our city, our medical workers are out man and under gunned as cases continue to climb so we want to love well during this time...

Second: **We are not gathering the Weekend of Christmas the 26th and 27th**... Every year we **Sabbath** (or rest) as a church on this weekend we do this for a couple reasons...

- Is to allow all our people that are involved every week to be able to have a weekend of rest...
- Doing this the weekend after Christmas tethers our hearts to the fact that Jesus is our ultimate rest, He was the fulfillment of the Sabbath...
- We also do this as a tangible expression of the reality that **the church isn't an event, it is a group of people**- the church

doesn't stop just because we don't gather in the way we normally do...

- It is vital that we gather regularly, but taking one week out of the year to step back and rest doesn't create a big irregularity swing to negate that...
 - In addition, we will be streaming discipleship content that weekend for our people and any others that choose to participate. You can find that at **imageatl.com**

Then the goal is at the turn of the year we will make the move to back to Sundays!

- We will keep you looped in via our weekly updates, member emails, website and social media as to what that will look like as we get closer to the new year so make sure you're staying looped in!

Ok, well we're continuing our **Behold** series this morning as we take a deep dive into **John Chapter 1** with the goal of looking at **who Jesus is**, and the implications surrounding who He was and what that means for us as a fresh reminder as we build toward Christmas...

My hope in this series is that you would be encouraged and refreshed in your belief of Jesus, and that you will walk away with a better grasp and understanding of the scope of who Jesus is that leads you into a greater worship of Him...

I also hope that this study of **John 1** will be helpful to you as you share Jesus- there are massive foundational truths here- *that provide answers to the question that so many people want to know- mainly, how they can be right with God, how they can get to God...*

Which is fitting because John says that he wrote this gospel in **John 20:31 so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

By the way Christian, you never get past this- **believing in Jesus is a lifelong journey, not just a one-time prayer...**

And if you're tuning in and you're not a Christian, this is something great for you to jump in on!

OK, so if you haven't already done so go ahead and turn to John 1...

As you're getting there, we kicked off this series by starting in the middle of **John 1** where Jesus was identified as the **Lamb of God**- and we looked at the implications and importance of what this meant...

And we're spending the rest of this series looking at the surrounding content of **John 1** and unpacking **how** Jesus is able to be the Lamb of God, **who is He**, and **what it all means for us...**

Last week we looked at **John 1:1-13**, this week we're going to be picking back up in verse 14... Let's walk through it together...

- **Observations**, and then **application...**

John 1:14-18

14 The Word became **flesh** and **dwelt** among us.

OK let's stop right here and talk about this... A lot here... John speaks with shocking clarity...

Here's what we got...

- Remember: **John 1:1-3** **1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2 He was with God in the beginning.** **3 All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.**

Well now in verse 14 we see that **the Word becomes flesh...**The eternally existing Word, the creator, comes to creation... This is what we need to see: **A. God becomes man without ceasing to be God...**

- **How?** We talked about this last week but: The God of the Bible is **1 God, 3 persons**- Father, Son, Spirit... Together

co-equal, and coexisting in perfect community together as the Godhead...¹

- The way that **the Word** is able to be **with** God and at the same time **is God**, and is able to come down is because of the trinity... **1 God 3 Persons**- Father, Son, Holy Spirit...

So, God becomes man without ceasing to be God...

- **Term: Hypostatic Union**- *Fully God and fully man fused together...*

The Word became flesh... Let me just step into this space for a minute I want you to grasp the implications of this...

- God is not a distant being that is absent of the struggles that you face...
- He has experienced them...
- He entered into the hurt and pain that exists in this world...
 - Experienced poverty, experienced work with his hands...
 - *Annoying brother and nagging mom- JK?*
 - Experienced rejection... had people treat Him bad, experienced death, had people betray Him...
 - He was murdered!
- He came from a jacked-up family- see **Matthew 1:1-17**
- He faced the temptations that you and I experienced...

I want you just to sit in that for a minuet... Christianity is the only religion where the reality is that God came down, where the creator lived among creation... Experiencing everything that you experienced

I want to help drive this home even more... The text says that He **Dwelt** among us, literally **tabernacled among us... Pitched a tent among us...**

This could very well be an allusion to the tabernacle or to the tent of meeting from the OT which was how God would temporarily interact with only certain representatives of his people...

¹ Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:13-23; Heb. 1:1-4

- There was very limited accessibility and only every so often... But now because God came down, He's accessible to everyone...

But here's the important thing to see here: **B. God chose to dwell amongst his people in the most personal way possible...**²

I think this idea of God pitching a tent is pointing to the personal interaction that He desires... **Revelation 21:3** uses the same language for how God will dwell with us in this same way forever...

Example³: Think about it like this... If I came and lived in a tent in your backyard for a while...

- I would use your trash can
- Use your bathroom
- Mow around my tent
- Wave at me on your way in and out
- If I got cold, I would come get some blankets
- If I needed an egg or sugar...
- We would probably eat together...
- You would come sit by the fire with me

Me having a tent in your backyard would create a lot of real life interaction where you could watch me and where we could engage in life together...

This is what God wanted with humanity, He wanted us to know Him and to interact with Him, to watch Him and to engage with Him...

Powerful when you think about it like that...

Then John gives an eye-witness testimony of credibility of what he's just said on the back half of **verse 14**...

14 The Word became **flesh** and **dwelt** among us. We [John and the other believers] observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of **grace** and **truth**.

John says that they observed His glory... **What does John mean that we observe His glory?**

- He means that he and his buddies that believed saw Jesus signs and they witness His death and resurrection... They bore witness to the glory bestowed on Jesus as God... They tangibly witnessed the *visible manifestation of God's self-disclosure* through the person and work of Jesus.⁴

John's directing his readers to Exodus 33-34: Moses asks God to show me your glory... God says I will let my goodness pass in front of you... But for that to happen you need to be in the cleft of the rock and I will need to cover you with my hand until I have passed by...

- In **Exodus 34:6** we see that God passes by and He declares...
- *The Lord—the Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in **faithful love** and **truth**, **7** maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin.*
 - o **faithful love** and **truth** = full of **grace** and **truth**.

John is showing off the incredible nature of what's happened here in the Word becoming flesh...

*The glory revealed to Moses when the Lord passed in front of him and sounded his name, displaying that divine goodness characterized by ineffable grace and truth, was the very same glory John and his friends saw in the Word-made-flesh.*⁵

You have to see how incredible it is! I think we miss this in our context... It's why we need to be reminded of these truths!!

² Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 127).

³ Example drawn from John Piper.

⁴ Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 128).

⁵ Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 129).

Herman Ridderbos, who wrote a massive commentary on the Gospel of John, said, “By means of incarnation God has visibly appeared among humankind. And—we may immediately add—the entire Gospel of John is proof of it: proof of that abundant glory, a glory manifested before the eyes of all”⁶ (*The Gospel of John*, p. 49).

This is why the gospel of John is such a great tool- it was written as proof of the glory of Christ for you!! Use it, read it yourself!! See and believe!

Alright, verse 15: John gives a quick aside to make sure that we’re tracking, showing *John the Baptist* living out his role and that his proclamation is about the Word that has become flesh- the glory of the Son of God who has come to earth... **He writes:**

15 (John testified concerning him and exclaimed, “This was the one of whom I said, ‘The one coming after me ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.’ ”)

He keeps going look at **verse 16**, he’s tethering this back to **verse 14**, he says...

16 Indeed, we have all received **grace upon grace** from his **fullness**, **17** for the law was given through Moses; **grace** and **truth** came through Jesus Christ.

OK so John continues his reference with Moses...

C. Moses pointed to grace and truth, Jesus was grace and truth...

What the law did... revealed sin, revealed our hearts, showed the separation between us and God- **that’s the truth** that Moses pointed to, and **the grace** is that God didn’t wipe everyone off the face of the earth but that He created a temporary sacrificial system of atonement...

- All of this kept them oriented around the faithfulness of God...

What Jesus did...

- Jesus is truth, He is God’s self-disclosure and revelation to humanity... He narrates God (DA Carson)... He is God which means that he embodies truth...

It also means that He’s true to himself... He is perfect in every way and he lives perfectly in every way which means that when it comes to us and Him justice has to be perfectly served...

GOSPEL

Example: Progress report each week- have a bad one, bring it to God and He gives you a new one...

Jesus didn’t just die to forgive you of your sins... He doesn’t just give you a new progress report each week; He puts His name on your place...

Lastly, before we apply all this let’s read **verse 18**

18 No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father’s side—he has revealed him.

Here’s what you need to see right here:

D. The way that we see God is Jesus

God chooses to be seen and known through Jesus⁷

What to know what God is like? Look at Jesus! What to know how God wants His followers to live, look at Jesus... What to see about how God feels about things- look at Jesus!!

OK, what does the incarnation- The Word became flesh- this mean for us?? How does this impact our lives?

Ok, so let’s close out by applying all of it...

⁶ Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, p. 49

⁷ John piper

We covered a lot of theology this morning, but here's the thing...
Right Theology should always lead to right activity with our heart and our hands...

If right theology or right doctrine doesn't lead to right worship and right action, then it is doctrine and theology conceived in pride which isn't helpful...

Ok so here's the application, here's what it means for us that the Word became flesh... That Jesus, who was fully God, was born also becoming fully human...

1. Jesus' humanity shows that God's intimate compassion

God is not a distant far off impersonal God... He is not removed from your pain... He entered it...

God is the epitome of empathy... Empathy is putting yourself in the shoes of someone else...

Hebrews 4:15 would say it like this...

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin.

Christianity is the only religion that works like this...

I don't know where you are or what you're going through, what uncertainties lie ahead... You need to know God has deep compassion for you... He has entered into your pain and took the worst of it...

Would you see the compassion of God...

2. Jesus' humanity puts the love of God on display

Grace is used 4 times in 4 verses... God's grace came as a result of God's love...

Romans 5:8-9 would say it like this:

8 But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** How much more then, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from wrath.

Do you understand the exchange here?!?

- Son of God taking on your sin... *I wouldn't let my son take a pop or a timeout for your kid...*

Appeal to people looking for:

- Love – relationship... won't work...
- looking for acceptance
- looking for identity...

3. Jesus' humanity shows us how to live

Philippians 2:3-7

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. **4** Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others.

5 Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus,

6 who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited.

7 Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity

Jesus is our model...

- Humility is the start of it all...
- Humility will lead to service and consideration of others...

How do we do it?? Very hard- *even in our humility we can be prideful!*

You have to see the benefit in true authentic humility... You identify with Jesus, share in the joy of Jesus!

Conclusion [VAMP]

4. Jesus' humanity models missional intentionality for us

God came to us...

and talk about a missional gap... God came to people who were radically different than Him...

If God went to the great lengths to come to us, should we not also do the same for others???

Matthew 28:18-20

"All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. **19** Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Close with this: Challenge during Christmas time...

How is your Christmas going to look different in light of who Jesus is???

Considering others above yourself... Needs and interests of others...

- Practical... generosity, gift giving, serving...

Considering the mission... how are you building bridges for the sake of the gospel mission??

- Practical relational

How are you setting up your home to orient around Christmas??