

“Jesus, The God-Man”

Summary

What does it truly mean that God became a man? That is the question at the heart of this message, and the answer is more personal and more staggering than we might expect. Drawing from 1 John 1:1-4, we are confronted with the eyewitness testimony of those who heard, saw, and physically touched Jesus. This was not a spiritual apparition or a symbolic figure. He was real, tangible, and present. The ancient heresy that Jesus could not have taken on human flesh is dismantled by the very intentionality of the Incarnation. He became a man on purpose. He stepped into human skin not by accident but as part of an eternal plan laid before the foundation of the world. The mystery of godliness, as Scripture calls it, is that the Creator of the universe willingly laid aside the fullness of divine fellowship to pursue us. That truth alone deserves our full attention. The gospel does not begin with our effort or our worthiness. It begins with who Jesus eternally is and what he chose to do on our behalf. As we sit with that reality, it reshapes everything about how we understand grace, identity, and our place in God's story.

Small Group Study Guide – Jesus, the God-Man

Context and Overview

In this message, pastor Zach walks through the opening verses of 1 John, explaining why the apostle John was so insistent on affirming that Jesus was both fully God and fully man. The Gnostic heresy of John's day taught that Jesus could not have taken on human flesh, but John pushes back forcefully. The sermon covers the eternal nature of Jesus, the necessity of the incarnation, the meaning of the cross, and the goal of it all -- fellowship with God through Jesus Christ.

Key Takeaways

- Jesus existed eternally before his birth in Bethlehem. The gospel does not begin in a manger -- it begins before the foundation of the world.
- The incarnation was not an accident or a backup plan. Jesus purposefully and willingly took on human flesh to accomplish what no animal sacrifice ever could.

- According to Philippians 2, Jesus did not count his divine fellowship with the Father as his supreme prize. You are his supreme prize.
- The blood of bulls and goats could only cover sin temporarily. Jesus offered his own body as the final, perfect, and accepted sacrifice (Hebrews 10:4-5).
- The resurrection is proof that God accepted the offering of Jesus on our behalf.
- Righteousness before God is imputed -- meaning it is credited to us through faith in Jesus, not earned through our own efforts.
- The entire purpose of the gospel is fellowship. Fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3).

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. Before this sermon, how would you have explained in your own words why Jesus had to become a man? Has your understanding shifted or deepened at all after hearing this message?
2. The Gnostics believed that anything physical or material was corrupt and evil. Where do you see similar thinking show up in culture today -- the idea that the spiritual and the physical do not belong together?

Going Deeper

3. Pastor Zach points out that John, in his gospel, is the only writer who records Thomas touching Jesus after the resurrection, and the only one who records Jesus eating fish with the disciples. Why do you think John was so intentional about including those details? What does that tell us about how seriously we should take the physical, bodily resurrection?
4. Philippians 2 describes Jesus not counting his fellowship with the Father as his supreme prize. Pastor Zach said, "You are his supreme prize." How does that truth land with you personally? Is it easy or difficult to receive that? Why?
5. The sermon describes the Old Testament sacrificial system -- year after year, animal after animal, with the high priest entering the most holy place hoping the offering would be accepted. What does that repeated, never-quite-enough system reveal about the human condition? How does Jesus as the final sacrifice change that picture?
6. Pastor Zach explains that the resurrection is God's confirmation that the sacrifice of Jesus was accepted. How does that reframe the way you think about the resurrection -- not just as a miracle, but as a verdict?
7. The concept of imputed righteousness means that we stand before God in Christ's righteousness, not our own. How does that challenge the way we sometimes think about earning God's approval through behavior, church attendance, or personal effort?
8. Pastor Zach says the goal of the gospel is not primarily heaven, a mansion, or blessings -- it is fellowship with God. How does making fellowship the goal change the way you think about your daily walk with God?

Personal Reflection

9. Romans 10:9-10 says that believing in your heart and confessing with your mouth are the two components of salvation. Is there a gap between what you believe internally and what you are willing to say out loud about your faith? What creates that gap?
 10. Pastor Zach shared that before he was born again in 11th grade, he could see the anger in his own eyes looking back at an old ID photo. He described the change that came from the inside out. What is one area of your life where you are still waiting on that kind of transformation? Have you brought it before the Lord?
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Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One:

- **Read 1 John chapters 1 and 2 in full.** Pay attention to how John balances the identity of Jesus as both God and man, and notice how many times he ties the gospel to the theme of fellowship.
 - **Meditate on Philippians 2:5-11.** Read it slowly each day this week. Ask the Lord to give you a fresh understanding of what it cost Jesus to take on human flesh, and let that shape how you treat others around you.
 - **Have a gospel conversation.** Pastor Zach closed by saying the reason we proclaim Jesus crucified is so that others can have fellowship with the Father. Identify one person in your life who needs to hear the gospel and pray specifically for an opportunity to share it this week.
 - **Examine where you are trying to earn what has already been given.** Spend some time in honest prayer asking God to show you any area where you are operating out of performance rather than out of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.
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Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together over these three things:

1. Gratitude -- that Jesus willingly left divine fellowship to pursue us as his supreme prize.
2. Clarity -- that your group would understand and hold firmly to the true gospel, resisting anything that adds to or takes away from Jesus crucified.
3. Boldness -- that each member would be willing to proclaim this gospel to someone in their sphere of influence before the group meets again.

Main Points – Jesus Brings Us Near

Title: The God-Man: Why Jesus Had to Become Flesh

Sermon Summary:

Drawing from 1 John 1:1-4, the Pastor Zach proclaims the foundational gospel truth that Jesus Christ is both eternal God and fully human man. Addressing the ancient Gnostic heresy that denied Christ's physical incarnation, the sermon establishes that Jesus existed from before creation, willingly took on human flesh, and lived a sinless life as the perfect sacrifice to atone for sin. Pastor Zach emphasizes that Jesus did not consider his divine fellowship with the Father as his supreme prize, but rather chose humanity as his supreme prize. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus accomplished what no animal sacrifice or human effort could achieve: the complete removal of sin and the opening of true fellowship between God and mankind. The gospel, is not earned through righteousness, wisdom, or effort, but received through faith in the crucified and risen Jesus, whose righteousness is imputed to all who believe.

Key Points:

- Jesus is eternal God who existed before creation, not merely a historical figure who appeared at birth
- The Gnostic heresy that Jesus could not have taken on physical flesh is directly contradicted by eyewitness testimony, particularly that of John
- Jesus willingly became a man not by accident but by eternal design, as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world
- The first Adam's sin brought condemnation and surrendered dominion, but Jesus as the last Adam obeyed perfectly and reversed what the first Adam caused
- Animal sacrifices under the old covenant could only cover sin temporarily; only the perfect, sinless body of Jesus could permanently take sin away
- The resurrection of Jesus is proof that God accepted his sacrifice on humanity's behalf
- Righteousness before God is imputed, meaning it is credited to the believer through Jesus, not earned through personal merit
- The purpose of the gospel and of Jesus' atoning work is fellowship with God, not merely future reward
- Salvation is received by confessing with the mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in the heart that God raised him from the dead, as described in Romans 10:9-10

Scripture Reference:

- 1 John 1:1-4, which serves as the primary text, establishing Christ's eternal nature and physical incarnation as the foundation of the gospel proclamation
- Supporting passages referenced include Micah 5:2, John 1:1 and 1:14, Titus 2:13, John 10:30, John 17:5, Isaiah 9:6, Philippians 2, Hebrews 10:4, 1 Peter 1:18 and 2:24, Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 1, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 5:2, and Romans 10:9-10

Discussion Questions – Jesus Brings Us Near

Pastor Zach describes Jesus choosing to take on human flesh as a purposeful and willing act -- what does it mean to you personally that God did not consider divine fellowship with the Father as his supreme prize, but instead counted you as worth that sacrifice?

The Gnostics believed that physical matter was corrupt and therefore Jesus could not have truly become human -- in what ways do people today, perhaps without realizing it, hold similar beliefs that diminish either the full humanity or full divinity of Jesus, and why does it matter?

John emphasizes that he heard, saw, looked upon, and touched Jesus with his hands -- how does the physical, tangible reality of the incarnation shape the way you understand and relate to God?

Pastor Zach contrasts the first Adam, whose disobedience brought sin into the world, with the last Adam, Jesus, whose perfect obedience undid what the first Adam caused -- how does understanding this parallel deepen your appreciation for what Christ accomplished on the cross?

Romans 5:8 describes God demonstrating his love by sending Jesus while we were still sinners, not waiting for us to get it together -- how does this challenge the way we tend to think about earning or deserving God's love and acceptance?

Pastor Zach explains that imputed righteousness means we have no righteousness of our own apart from Jesus -- how does truly accepting this reality change the way you approach God, and how might it change the way you view other people?

First Corinthians 1 describes the message of the cross as foolishness to those who are perishing but the power of God to those being saved -- why do you think God chose a method of salvation that the world would consider foolish, and what does that reveal about his character?

The message emphasizes that the goal of the gospel is not simply heaven or material blessing, but fellowship with the Father and the Son -- how does framing salvation primarily as restored fellowship change the way you think about your daily walk with God?

The tearing of the temple veil at the moment of Jesus' death is compared to the tearing of his flesh, symbolizing open access to the throne room of God -- what does it mean practically for you to have that kind of direct access, and do you live as though you actually have it?

Pastor Zach shares that his life was visibly transformed after coming to faith in 11th grade, describing a shift from deep anger to genuine peace -- what areas of your own life do you sense God may be inviting you to surrender more fully to that same transforming work?

Scriptures – Jesus Brings Us Near

Here is a list of all scripture references mentioned or alluded to in the sermon:

1. 1 John 1:1-4 1 John 1:6
2. Micah 5:2
3. John 1:1
4. John 1:14
5. John 10:30
6. John 17:5
7. John 20 (Jesus eating fish after the resurrection)
8. Titus 2:13
9. Isaiah 9:6
10. Philippians 2:5-9
11. Ephesians 5:2
12. Ephesians 5:25-32
13. Hebrews 10:4-5
14. Hebrews 10 (the veil and the flesh of Christ)
15. 1 Peter 1:18-21
16. 1 Peter 2:24
17. Romans 5:8
18. Romans 10:9-10
19. 2 Corinthians 5:21
20. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
21. Revelation 4-5 (the worship scene and the opening of the book)
22. Genesis 3 (the fall of Adam and Eve, God clothing them with skins)
23. Luke 4 (the temptation of Jesus, Satan claiming dominion was delivered to him)
24. Hebrews 4:7 (the warning not to harden your heart when you hear his voice)
25. Hebrews 1:1-2 (God speaking through prophets and in these last days through his Son)
26. Revelation 13:8 (the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world)

Devotional – Jesus, the God-Man

Day 1: He Was There From the Beginning

Reading: John 1:1-14

Devotional: Before time began, Jesus existed. He was not created — He was the Creator. John makes clear that the Word who spoke galaxies into existence is the same Word who took on flesh and walked among us. This is not a small truth. It is the foundation of everything. The eternal God did not observe humanity from a distance. He entered it. When you feel forgotten or overlooked, remember that the God who existed before all things chose to step into your world on purpose. His presence in your life is not accidental — it is eternal.

Day 2: You Are His Supreme Prize

Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

Devotional: Philippians 2 describes a voluntary emptying. The one who held all glory willingly set it aside — not because He had to, but because He wanted to. He did not count His divine fellowship with the Father as His supreme prize. You were. That truth should stop you in your tracks. Not angels. Not creation in its grandeur. You. He humbled Himself, took on the form of a servant, and walked toward a cross with your name in mind. Whatever you are facing today, let this anchor you: you were worth it to Him before you ever did a single thing to deserve it.

Day 3: A Body Prepared — The Perfect Offering

Reading: Hebrews 10:1-14

Devotional: For generations, priests offered animal after animal, year after year, and still sin remained. The blood of bulls and goats could cover, but it could not cure. Then Jesus came. God did not prepare a lamb or a dove — He prepared a body. A perfect, sinless body, untouched by the fallen seed of Adam, offered once and for all. When Jesus said "It is finished," He meant it. The endless cycle of striving to earn God's favor was over. You do not have to keep bringing offerings. The offering has been made. Rest today in the finished work of the cross.

Day 4: Imputed Righteousness — His Record, Not Yours

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Devotional: The gospel does not ask you to improve your record. It offers you a completely new one. God made Jesus, who had no sin, to become sin on your behalf, so that in Him you could receive the very righteousness of God. That word "imputed" means credited to your account. You did not earn it. You cannot lose it by failing to maintain it. It belongs to you because it belongs to Him, and you are in Him. Stop measuring your standing before God by your performance. Measure it by the cross. His righteousness is now yours — and that changes everything.

Day 5: Fellowship — The Whole Point

Reading: 1 John 1:1-7

Devotional: John did not write his letter so that readers would simply have correct theology, though truth matters deeply. He wrote so that they could have fellowship — real, living, ongoing communion with the Father and the Son. The veil was torn. The mercy seat was covered in the blood of the perfect sacrifice. The throne room is now open to you. This is not a metaphor for a future experience only. It is an invitation available right now. Draw near today. Not because you have earned access, but because Jesus purchased it. Fellowship with God is not the reward for a good life. It is the gift of a finished cross.