

THE WORD MADE FLESH

Implications of the Incarnation

(Part Two of a 2 Part Series)

I. The Christmas Story In Two Verses

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

John 1:1, 14

A. God Becoming Man

1. The Christian teaching that God became a man is known as the “Incarnation”.

If you understand the word incarnation, you’ll understand what Christmas is about.

Tim Keller

2. The dictionary says:

“Incarnation”

Literally means ‘embodied in flesh’ or ‘taking on flesh’.

Dictionary.com

3. Easter is usually considered the highest holy day of the Church; but let’s remember that without the miracle of the incarnation there could be no resurrection.

a. As the great C.S. Lewis...

“The central miracle asserted by Christians is the incarnation. We say that God became man.”

C.S. Lewis

b. Lewis’ dear friend Dorothy Sayers said...

“The incarnation is the most dramatic thing about Christianity; and indeed, the most dramatic thing that ever entered the mind of man.”

Dorothy Sayers

5. Our problem is we lose the drama inside all the commercialization of Christmas; we fail to stop and consider the implications of the incarnation.

“As soon as we take the enfleshment of God, the incarnation which for Christians is represented by the Person of Jesus Christ, *then* we start taking things seriously.”

Mother Teresa

B. Incarnation Is About Identification!

1. When we really connect with the feelings or experiences of someone else, we say “I can identify with that!”

2. In the incarnation God chose to become fully identified with man so that man could become fully identified with God!

3. Up until the birth of Christ, God was: invisible, untouchable, unidentified with our weaknesses...

a. Invisible-no one could see Him; now He can be seen! But Paul says....

For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Colossians 2:9

b. God is Spirit; so He had been untouchable! But John says...

We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning,* whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life. 2 This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him.

1 John 1:1-2 NLT

c. Until the incarnation, God was unidentified with our weaknesses! God knew man; but He had not actually experienced BEING man...but His love compelled Him to “become flesh”...

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same...

Hebrews 2:14

4. As a man, God submitted Himself to experience our weaknesses!

- In Mark 11, He was hungry
- In John 4, He was thirsty
- In the boat on the lake, He was sleeping
- In the cleansing of the temple, He was angry
- At the tomb of Lazarus, He wept

5. **And He did all this so He could become our Great High Priest, who can be “touched with the feelings of our weaknesses”! (Hebrews 4:15)**

6. Incarnation is about identification: He became like us so we could become like Him!

C. Power To Become The Sons of God

1. Back to John 1, where the Word became flesh, only to be rejected by those who would not receive Him...

12 But as many as received him, to them gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:12-13

2. All who believe are born again, and are given power to become the sons of God!

“The Son of God became man to enable men to become the sons of God.”

C.S. Lewis

3. He becomes the “Model Son” to us all!

“ because as He is, so are we in this world.”

1 John 4:17

4. Let us look at 3 things Jesus modeled in the incarnation: **Humility-Obedience-Service**

III. 3 Things Jesus Modeled in the Incarnation

A. Humility

When he appeared in human form,* he humbled himself...

Philippians 2:7-8

1. Imagine the humility it took for the Son of the highest to be born among the lowest. The Lion of Judah became the Lamb of God...

a. **He is the Lamb of God...so He comes to us born in a manger**

a. He who wore the crown of heaven now in swaddling clothes in a crib!

b. He who has walked among the stars now must be carried about by others

c. The all-powerful God now needs someone to change His diaper!

#2. Imagine the humility it took for the one who built the universe to now become the lowly son of a carpenter!

He is the Builder of the universe...so He is the son of a carpenter

a. The one who created the heavens now repairs roofs

b. The one who can open the windows of heaven is carving out window sashes; the one who IS the door is now just making doors

#3. He modeled humility in submitting to His parents!

a. Are you a young Christian still living at home? Here's your model!

4. And when He went missing, His parents found Him consulting with the wise men in the Temple...because He must "always be about His father's business..."

5. But the most amazing thing about the humility of Jesus was how He was willing to endure *30 years* of preparation before He entered into His ministry!

6. Imagine what it was like to spend 30 years...

a. He who was the Healer healing no one

b. **Imagine what He was thinking as the one who created man and gave him life as He carved out coffins!**

Jesus spent 30 years preparing for a 3 year ministry; but we want to prepare 3 years for a 30 year ministry!

7. And when the time finally DID come to leave the carpentry shop, He had to be willing to humble Himself and submit to a lesser ministry to be baptized!

PRACTICAL LESSON OF HUMILITY

- Are you “low born”? Have no pedigree? No titles? Consider how Jesus arrived on earth! Remember....So that we will be humble and not boast before God!

26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, 29 that no man should boast before God.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 NASB

- Are we willing to be rejected by your brethren? To wait on the timing of God? To submit to another ministry for a season?

B. Obedience

1. The writer of Hebrews speaks of the incarnation as a fulfilment of an Old Testament prophecy from Psalms...

Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "*Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me....Then I said, 'Behold, I have come To do Your will, O God.'*"*

Hebrews 10:5-7

2. God gave Jesus a body so that He could model obedience to the will of God as a *man*!

3. He said “I only do what I see the Father doing”; “I only speak what I hear the Father saying”.

4. He kept the Law of God perfectly!

a. During His ministry...

"Which one of you convicts Me of sin?"

John 8:46

b. At His trial, Pilate said...

I find no fault in Him.

John 19:4

5. The Father prepared a body for Jesus so that He could obey God as a man; so that the Father's will might be done in earth as it is in heaven!

PRACTICAL LESSON OF OBEDIENCE

Have we realized God has given Jesus ANOTHER “body”?

Now you are the Body of Christ and members in particular.

1 Corinthians 12:27

The risen Christ is the Head of the church, which is the “body of Christ”! Have we seriously considered ourselves to be the ongoing incarnation of Christ???

And God has set in the body every member as pleases Him.

1 Corinthians 12:28

Are you obedient to your placement? Are you functioning in obedience?

C. Service

1. The heart of the incarnational purpose was service, modeled in the foot washing...

Philippians 2:5-7 NCV

In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus. Christ himself was like God in everything. But he did not think that being equal with God was something to be used for his own benefit. But he gave up his place with God

and made himself nothing. He was born to be a man and became like a servant.

2. When His disciples argued about who was the greatest, Jesus reminded them that He had come not to be served, but to serve.

3. Jesus used the body God gave Him to serve others; and He gave Jesus the Body of Christ for the same purpose!

4. What a mistake we make to think we are really serving God if we are not serving others!

“The incarnation is the ultimate reason why the service of God cannot be divorced from the service of man.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

5. This was the great lesson I learned from my mentor in the business world:

“The only we can really serve God is by serving others.”

Ted L. Snider

III. Conclusion: Review And Communion

A. Implications of the Incarnation

The Son of God became the Son of man so that the sons of men might become the sons of God.

1. Jesus never ceased to be God: but He was born, grew up, lived His life, and died...as a man.

a. His favorite title for Himself was “Son of man”.

2. God gave Him a body as a model of humility, obedience, and servanthood.

3. When He ascended to heaven, God gave Him the church as His body, the ongoing incarnation of Himself. This is our destiny and purpose.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

1 John 3:1

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

1 John 3:2-3

Communion

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