

Father, we thank you so much for Jesus Christ our Lord. I cannot imagine where would we be without Christ. We thank you for what you have done for us, and I pray that your spirit will speak to each of us as we look into your word. For your honor and glory, we pray in Jesus name, amen.

*John 1:1-3 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) Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

*John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Matthew's gospel presents the genealogy of Christ on Joseph, his stepfather's side, and in Luke we have the genealogy, of Mary, his mother's side. In John, we have the genealogy of Jesus Christ on God the Father's side. *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Jesus Christ is God! Then it says *the **Word became flesh.*** Have you thought about what it means when it says he became flesh? We know that he was a little baby in a manger, but what does that really mean? How much flesh was he? How much of a man was he? When did Christ know that he was not just a baby? When did he realize that he was God who had come in the flesh? Jesus Christ has never been anything but God, ***in the beginning was the Word the Word was with God, and the Word was God.***

Matthew and Luke show Jesus as a baby in a manger, then later, a child in a house with the wise man giving gifts and paying homage to him. John looks at Jesus from the spiritual side, the way God sees him. Paul in Philippians 2:5 is teaching that we should have the same attitude of humility as Christ had.

*Philippians 2:5-7 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, (7) but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

Jesus was willing to let go of all the attributes of deity. He was willing to turn loose of things that he didn't have to turn loose of, but he was okay with

doing it in submission to the Father. Verse 7 in the Greek literally says he emptied himself. Jesus Christ decided to empty himself of all of the privileges of being God. He emptied Himself taking the form of a bondservant. While he was on this earth, he was limited to doing things that human beings do.

Remember the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4? When Jesus was walking by, he sat down by the well because he was tired. If he had kept the attributes of God, he wouldn't have become tired. In Matthew 24:36, talking to his disciples about his second coming, he talks to his disciples, and he said: *No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.* Christ didn't know when he was coming back to earth because he had replaced the attributes of deity with the attributes of man. His knowledge was not infinite at that point.

Jesus Christ did not function on earth as God, but as a man. The world had never seen a perfect man, so no one knew what a perfect man looked like. Jesus Christ came to be that perfect man on earth. Someone might ask how could he have performed all the miracles if he did not have the attributes of God? The answer is he did because he was in tune with God the Father.

The apostles performed similar miracles because they were doing what God told them to do. An example is in Acts 20 where Paul was preaching past midnight and a young man fell sound asleep and fell to his death out of a third-floor window. Paul put his arms around him and brought him back to life. Paul was just a man, but he did what God had instructed him to do. Some of the other disciples healed so many crippled people that the people wanted to worship them, but they were just men doing what God told them to do. In the same way Jesus Christ went through his entire life on this earth, functioning as someone totally in tune with God the Father doing one miracle after another. When Jews wanted to kill Christ, because he had healed on the Sabbath, Jesus gave them this answer:

*John 5:19-20 --- "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. (20) For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.*

Jesus again states that his works come from the Father in *John 5:30* *By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.*

Jesus Christ walked this earth as a man, a perfect man, the only perfect man who has ever lived.

*Philippians 2:7* but [Christ Jesus] emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men.

The word "form" comes from the Greek *Morphe*, the word we get metamorphosis from. It means that he changed. His humanity was as real as his deity. It is as a caterpillar turning into a butterfly. He took the form of a servant because he chose to take that form. He further explains the nature of a servant in Mark 10.

James and John had gone to Christ with their mother, and asked (Jim Henderson paraphrase): *Jesus, when you come into your kingdom, we'd kind of like to sit on your right and left, you know. We would like to be up there with the powerful if it's okay with you.* The other disciples heard about what James and John had tried to do and were angry.

Jesus addressed them as follows: *Mark 10:42-45* ---- *"You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. (43) Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, (44) and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. (45) For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Here's the problem with people who don't want to believe in Jesus Christ and think that living a good life is somehow equivalent to receiving Jesus Christ as Savior. The non-believer says: *I'm 'gonna' live life in such a way that God has 'gotta' accept me.* Meanwhile God says: *Man is destitute and has no hope."*

God's Son morphed himself to become a servant with the form of a human being and lived on earth as a human for 33 years. Then he went to the cross and paid the penalty for all your sins. Many non-believers stand back and say: *I don't need that. I'll just live a good life the best I know how.* That is not good enough. That is blasphemy, because if that is all salvation requires, then Jesus Christ wouldn't have gone to all the trouble of coming to this earth. That's why he So said, ***For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."***

*Philippians 2:7-8* but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. (8) And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

When it says he was made in *human likeness* it means that Jesus came as a human being. How human was Jesus Christ? He was one hundred per cent human. That is hard for us to understand. While he gave up the rights, privileges, and assets of being God, he never gave up being God. While he was one hundred per cent man, he was also one hundred per cent God which is known as the hypostatic union, God and man together as one.

The word *appearance* in verse 8 is the same word that *scheme* comes from. If you decide to paint your house a certain scheme of colors that would be a configuration. In other words, Jesus Christ was configured as a man. That means he had the same feelings that you and I have, except he was perfect. He was tempted, he became tired, he hurt, and he became hungry. All the sins you have been tempted with, he was tempted with, except he never did sin. This is a wonderful thing. He understands you like no one else can. If he had never become a man, he could have understood you intellectually, but he could not have put himself in your spot. But he can put himself in your spot because he was a man.

*Hebrews 4:15* For we do not have a high priest [Jesus is our high priest] who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.

You say Jesus didn't know what it is to lust? He knew what it was to be tempted with lust. He knew what it was to be tempted with theft. He knew what it was to be tempted with murder, but he didn't succumb to any temptations. He was perfect. So we have someone who walked on this earth and throughout his life as a man, lived as a man who never sinned. You can't go to Jesus and say, *you don't know what it's like down here*, because absolutely he knows.

*Hebrews 4:16* Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Jesus never sinned when he was tempted, but he didn't live as God, he lived as man.

*Matthew 4:1-4* Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. (2) After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. (3) The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." (4) Jesus answered, *"It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

Some wonder why it would have been wrong for Jesus to turn some stones into bread. Jesus had been in the desert for 40 days without eating and certainly had to be hungry. Why didn't Jesus do it? It was because God the Father did not tell him to do it. In other words, Satan told him to do it and it would have been sin if Jesus had done what Satan wanted him to do. Satan was telling Jesus not to live as a perfect man, but to live for himself. Jesus only did what the Father wanted him to do, and nothing else. God did not tell him to turn those stones into bread, Jesus was living to please his Father.

We tend to think that avoiding sin is not doing the big things like murder, stealing or immorality. I want to tell you that the most common sin of all is living for yourself. Doing what you want to do, not what God wants you to do. Frank Sinatra made the song *MY WAY* famous. He brags that everything he did was his way. Every minute that he did it his way, was sin. If you are doing it your way, it is sin.

*John 1:14* The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

*Made his dwelling among us*, literally means, he tabernacled among us, as if he pitched his tent with us. This refers to the Old Testament when the tabernacle was built. What was the purpose of the tabernacle? Well, let us read and see if we can find the answer.

*Exodus 25:1-9* The LORD said to Moses, (2) "Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give. (3) These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; (4) blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; (5) ram skins dyed red and hides of sea cows; acacia wood; (6) olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; (7) and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece. (8) **"Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.**

(9) *Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.*

*Exodus 40:34-35* Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. (35) *Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and **the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.***

When Moses finished the tabernacle as designed for God's dwelling, God took possession of it. He tabernacled among the Israelites; His presence was with them. Jesus came to dwell (tabernacle) among men in the form of a man.

By the way, why was Christ baptized? He wasn't baptized for the remission of sin, or the repentance of sins. The word baptize is the Greek word transliterated *baptisma*, which has the meaning of dipping or immersing. Since the object dipped or immersed becomes totally identified with the substance in which it is placed, the idea of identification is central to the meaning of baptism. Jesus' baptism identified him who was sinless with the sinful human race as their substitute sin-bearer.

Jesus came as a man. The New Testament reveals God the Father, through God the Son.

*John 10:30 I and the Father are one."*

You cannot understand this verse if you don't understand that Jesus Christ dwelt in all the fullness of the Godhead in human form when he says *I and the Father are one*. These are amazingly simple monosyllable Greek words with tremendous meaning.

*John 14:8-10 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." (9) Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? (10) Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.*

Jesus Christ was a perfect representation of God. He was the tabernacle that God dwelt in. John 1:14 - ***The Lord became flesh and made his dwelling (tabernacle) among us. We beheld his glory.***

The word *beheld*, is the word, we get our word theater from. When you go to a theater, you sit down, and you watch a movie or a play. It's to sit and view something with contemplation. This may refer to the transfiguration (see Matthew 17:1-9) where they contemplated who Jesus was, but it also refers to

Jesus' glory as revealed in his miracles and ultimately in the cross.

So, what kind of glory is John talking about? John is not talking about the Shekinah glory of God, which describes God's presence with His people. The Shekinah glory of God was the glory that Moses wanted to see when he asked God to show him his glory. God said: "*You cannot see my face because no man can see me and live. So, I will hide you behind a rock, and I'll cover your eyes and pass by. After I have passed you can see the afterglow of where I have been in my glory, my Shekinah glory.*" When Moses came down from the mountain, his whole face glowed because of what he had seen. He had not seen God directly, but he'd seen where God had been in his Shekinah glory. We cannot stand in the presence of God in our present state and live because we are not ready for heaven.

That's why 1 Corinthians 15 says that which is corruptible must be made incorruptible. In other words, heaven would be no fun for us today. The moment we got there we would die because we would be in God's presence with all his glory. So we will have to be changed. That which is mortal must put on immortality.

The kind of glory John's talking about is the *glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father*. The one and only comes from two words. It means there has never been anyone like Jesus Christ and there will never be anyone else like Jesus Christ. From eternity past to eternity future, there has never been nor there ever will be any one like Jesus Christ. He was God come in the flesh, a perfect man. It's talking about him being a man, it's not talking about Christ up in heaven. *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* It is not talking about that. It's talking about that little baby that was born in a manger. The baby that was born in a manger is the very one who spoke this world into existence. The baby grew up to a man and he lived as a perfect man. There has never been anyone like him. Not in other worlds, other planets, other galaxies, or at any point in time. He is the one and only, there is no other, and he is full of grace and truth.

*John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*Full of Grace* means that God loves us. Jesus Christ was a personification of the love of God. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.* God loves you with all of the love that exists in all of creation. But, be very

careful and understand that God's love will never save a single soul. God's love has never saved anyone. He will love you all the way to hell. It takes more than love to save us.

*Romans 5:6-8* You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. (7) Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. (8) But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

It isn't his love that saves you. Your salvation will be adhering to the death of Jesus Christ in your place. When someone comes along and says, *Well, I know God loves me, God's a God of love. I know he loves me, so that is enough to save me.* Yes, he came full of grace, but he also came full of truth. Truth is just as much a part of who God is as grace is. What is truth? Truth is God's justice, God's righteousness, God's holiness. God is a God of justice. He can't stand the presence of sin. Sin cannot stand in His presence. God is a God of justice. If you sin, you will pay.

*Matthew 25:31-34* "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. (32) All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. (33) He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. (34) "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'

Scripture is very clear that everyone, even believers, will be judged.

*2Corinthians 5:10* For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us. We have beheld and studied his glory, the glory, that only he has, the only the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace, and full of truth. God loves you with all of his being. But if you have not given yourself to Jesus Christ, He will love you all the way to hell, because no one is saved by His love. We are saved by his son and the finished work of His son on the cross. The story of Christmas is all about Christ coming to redeem us, a lost people. At a set point in time, while we were yet sinners, Christ came to die for the ungodly. Read what Paul wrote to

Timothy about his own life as a lost sinner.

*1Timothy 1:15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.*

That's what Christmas is all about. Christmas isn't about you, or about me. It is not about all the presents we get or the presents we give. It isn't about good feelings. It isn't about the holidays. Those things are nice and there's nothing wrong with them as long as they don't replace the fact that *Christ came into the world to save sinners.*

Paul was saying, if he could be saved, you can be saved. It does not matter what you've done. It doesn't matter what your background is. Christ came into the world to redeem you. It is of utmost importance for you to accept that redemption, because if you turn that redemption down, there's absolutely nothing left even though God loves you.

I hope and pray that not a soul will leave this morning without a closer relationship with Christ. If you're here this morning, and he's not your savior, please don't leave that way. Don't count on the church to save you. Do not count on baptism to save you. Do not count on a preacher to save you. Count on nothing less than Christ and Christ alone to save you.

For those of us who are already believers, for what are you living? If God became man, (he did) and if he went to the cross, (he did) and if he rose again three days later, (he did) what in life is more valuable than living for him? The answer is not a thing. If you have been living for yourself instead of Christ, I encourage you to stop that today. John was talking to believers when he said in 1 John 1:9, *If we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* There is not a person in this room that needs to leave any other way than pure and white and clean before God, because of the finished work of his son.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you so much for the Christmas season. It reminds us again that your son became human for us, lived an obedient life and went to the cross for us. For your honor and glory, I pray, Father, that your holy spirit will speak to each of us about our relationship with you. For your honor and glory we praise you forever and ever, in Jesus name, Amen.