

God With Us – John 1:1-18

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel” **Matthew 1:23**

As we begin our time together this morning, I want to go ahead and lay it out there – the purpose for this morning’s message is not to entertain, or educate, or even put you to sleep. No, the purpose for this morning’s message is two-fold: first, it is intended to introduce you to Immanuel, **God with us**, and then once you have been introduced to Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, Christ Incarnate, you will be asked to respond to His invitation to join Him.

Look with me now at the beginning of John’s Gospel. **Read John 1:1-18.** The Word of God - just shared with you, is one of the most important and profound messages from God - to us - about who His Son Jesus truly is, and it describes for us what is to be gained when we accept Him and enter into a proper relationship with Him. At the heart of this passage is verse 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.*” When you consider its words, you soon discover the purpose for this time of year, the Christmas season, is to celebrate the birth of Jesus – the God who chose to enter His own creation, who revealed Himself and all His glory to His creation, and then offers salvation through grace and truth for every fallen sinner, again through His Son, Jesus.

John begins this verse as a summation for the wonderful things said about Jesus in the preceding verses. He simply states; “*And the Word* (which is Jesus, God’s only Son) *became flesh.*” John’s usage of “Word” throughout this passage, which in Greek is Logos (λόγος) would have been familiar to the original audience as a rational principle where a non-personal deity of some type was governing the universe. Many of the Greek’s and Jew’s would have accepted this explanation, but John, under the power and guidance of God, used his opportunity to redefine their understanding for logos and shift their thinking to the Word, to the Logos, who was not some impersonal, unknowable force, but was instead a personal and knowable God, Jesus the Christ, who was both with God and was also God. (John 1:1) What John is describing for us in this passage is the miraculous incarnation, the necessary doctrinal truth where the eternal Son of God, entered His world, as man, for the purpose of rescuing us from the punishment due us for our sin. Jesus was born with the purpose of dying for the salvation of all who would believe in Him. Do you believe in Him this morning? Have you trusted your heart with Him? Do you see Jesus as much more than a babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes? Is He more to you today, than some unreachable, unknowable, un-personal God?

Jesus did not cease to be God at any point. Instead, he added humanity as part of His deity, by becoming truly God and truly man. Think of the humility required for such a task. The God of the universe, born to lowly people, in a lowly stable, placed in a lowly manger, which is a food trough for animals, veiled no longer in God’s glory but in human flesh, subjected to human

limitations and human forms of abuse, for as Jesus Himself says, *“Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.”* (**John 12:44-47**) Without the “Word” becoming flesh, all humanity would remain lost, separated from God, with no hope of an eternal salvation.

I love too how John doesn’t stop with this description, even though this should be enough. John goes on to inform that Jesus dwells with us. John wanted to draw a picture in their minds of the tabernacle, where the presence of God resided. Where the Ark of the Covenant’s mercy seat was found. A seat of mercy where the high priest sprinkled blood for the purpose of atonement. Only the high priest, once a year, could enter, through the veil, into the holy of holies, to sprinkle this sacrificial blood. John, in drawing their attention to this image of God by layer upon layer of separation wanted to declare that Jesus Christ now stands as the fulfillment of this tabernacle system. It is through Jesus that God’s presence is no longer veiled and unreachable but is fully attainable. Through Christ, every person can approach God directly, without fear or separation. Jesus is not only the greater High Priest who offers Himself as the perfect sacrifice, but he is also the greater tabernacle granting access to the Father for all who believe. This is the wonder and thrilling truth of the birth of Jesus that is celebrated at Christmas. Because now, God is with Us!

The truth of Jesus Incarnate also reveals the glory of God in a way that man can now see, hear, feel, and touch. Scripture depicts God’s glory as overwhelming and unapproachable. God’s presence was so terrifying that the Israelites trembled in fear. (See Exodus 19) When Moses asked to see God’s glory, he was only permitted a partial glimpse, for no one could see God and live. (See Exodus 33:20) In the tabernacle and later the temple, God’s glory filled the sanctuary, yet it remained hidden behind the veil. In Jesus, the veil is removed, and the glory of God is fully revealed. Matthew tells us, *“And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.”* (**Matthew 27:51**) This is God’s glory being poured out on us through His Son, Jesus. Throughout Jesus’ earthly ministry, bursts of glory and demonstrations of His power are observed in his powerful miracles. Yet, the greatest display of His glory was seen in His humility and suffering. On the cross, Jesus bore the wrath of God for sinners, displaying the glory of divine love and justice and the vindication of it all was his glorious resurrection. John reminds us in verse 14 that *“we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.”*

Finally, today, John declares for us that Jesus is *“full of grace and truth.”* Have no doubts this morning. Salvation only comes through God’s grace delivered through belief in His Son. Saving grace is God’s unmerited favor for every sinner. Jesus personifies this gift and extends it to us. **Ephesians 2:8-9** says, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

Jesus also embodies truth. He stands as the perfect example of truth. He is the standard for truth. He declared of Himself for us to know, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (See John 14:6). It is through Jesus, the Logos, the Word, that the truth of God is revealed, the truth of a depraved humanity is revealed, and the truth of salvation is made available for all who accept and believe. Let me ask you again this morning: Do you believe in Him? Have you trusted your heart with Him? Do you see Jesus as much more than a babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes? Is He more to you today, than some unreachable, unknowable, un-personal God? If the answer to these questions is NO, may I ask you to change your mind and your heart today? Will you be willing to come forward during our time of invitation and accept Jesus as your Savior and Lord? Will you let him extend His grace to you today?

Invitation

Closing Words

As we celebrate Christmas, let us marvel at Jesus, the eternal Word who became flesh, who dwells among us, who reveals God's glory for us, and who brings grace and truth into a lost and dying world. Let us also live with hope and anticipation of the day when He returns and will dwell with His people forever. Revelation 21:3 says, "*Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*"

Closing Prayer