

That You May Believe in the Word

John 1

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, June 10, 2018

Before we get started in the sermon this morning, I want to let you know I learned something new about Chilliwack this week. I looked it up and the name Chilliwack means “valley of many streams”. Did you guys know that? You're not impressed, come on. Let me try to impress you with a few other things I learned. It was originally called Centerville due to its location. But they changed the name to Chilliwack because of all the water around here. I was curious about it because I thought it might mean a “valley of many allergies” or a “valley of many sneezes,” with all the sickness going around. But it means “valley of many streams”.

I also found that it started as a mining town. Is that correct? Did I read that correctly? In the 1800s, about 40,000 miners came through here on their way to dig for gold. They didn't dig here, they kind of went through and kept going. But a few stayed. They started farming, and eventually a town was built, and they called it Chilliwack.

In the providence of God, the Lord brought you here. The Lord brought me here as well. All the towns, if you think about all the places you could have ended up, all the towns you could have lived in, the Lord brought you to this one; to the “valley of many streams”. And He brought you to this church this morning to drink from the living stream which is the Word of God.

And if you would, open your Bibles with me to the Gospel of John, to the living stream. Open it to the living water that's found in the Gospel of John. And as you're doing that, last week we started a brand-new series here at Grace Fellowship Church called the “That You Many Believe” series. Kind of an unusual title, but the “That You Many Believe” series is taken from John 20:31. I'll just read that to you.

John 20:31 says, “These things have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.” John wrote this gospel so that you would believe. That was the point of it; to put your faith in Jesus Christ. Many of the books in the Bible were written for that purpose, but no one talked about this topic as much as John did.

In fact, the word “believe” I told you last time occurs 96 times in John's Gospel. You see it 96 times, almost five times per chapter. And it's always a verb, from what I can tell anyway. Every time the word “believe” is used, it's always active. In other words, John is not writing to give you something to think about, he's writing to give you something to do; believe in Jesus Christ, trust in Jesus Christ, put your faith in Christ.

I think so many times we read a book like this and we say, “That's a nice story, let me go home and think about it.” John says, “I don't want you to go home and think about it, I want you to believe it now. Right now.” Or we read it and say, “That was a great book. It was very moving. I was inspired.” John says, “I don't want you to be inspired, I want you to be saved today. This is a call to action. He wants you to do something right now with what you read in this book.

You know, many of us like to pass out gospel tracts to our friends and to strangers. And if you're

familiar with gospel tracks, at the end, there's always a call to action, right? There's always a plea to do something; repent or pray or get right with God. Well, the Gospel of John is like a long gospel track with this call to action: believe. You see it in every page, you see it in every corner of this book. Which is so characteristic of John because he was always doing things like this. John was always asking people to believe in Jesus.

We didn't have time to talk about the author last week, but just to give you some background here about the Apostle John and who he was. Apart from Paul and Luke, no one wrote more of the New Testament than the Apostle John. He wrote about one fifth of the New Testament. One out of every five books comes from John. He wrote the Gospel of John here, which is rather lengthy. And then he wrote First, Second and Third John; the letters.

We could also say it this way, 90% of the material in the Gospel of John is completely original, it's found nowhere else in the Bible. Because John saw things that no one else saw. In the life of Jesus, he saw things that no one else observed, which makes sense because he was one of Jesus' closest disciples. Along with Peter and James, he was one of the inner three, the three disciples that Jesus took with Him everywhere.

So, for instance, John saw the Transfiguration and he saw the Garden of Gethsemane and no one else saw that. They were the only ones there. He was also the only disciple at the crucifixion. If you remember when Jesus was arrested, everyone else fled, they all ran away. And John ran away too but he came back, and he was at the cross. In fact, he was close enough to the cross for Jesus to talk to. And while he was standing there at the cross, Jesus said to him, "Behold your mother," and He said to Mary, "Behold your son." And John in a sense adopted her as his mom at the cross, and he took her home. And you can imagine the two of them, John and Mary, sitting by the fireplace talking about Jesus.

I mean if you had Mary in your home, you would do that, right? You would want to know, "Hey, what was Jesus like as a baby? Or what was His childhood like? Did He do miracles just to do them, you know, as a kid? Tell me about His teenage years. What would a sinless teenager look like? What was His relationship to Joseph like?" You would ask all those things, and John did that and learned about Jesus that way.

He also saw the empty tomb. Along with Peter, he was the only disciple that we know of that was at the empty tomb when Jesus raised from the dead. So, John saw things that no one else saw in His ministry. He saw just about everything Jesus did as far as we know, which qualified him to write a book like this. That gave him a unique perspective on Jesus.

It also gave him a unique perspective on himself. We could say that John failed a lot in this gospel. Like the other disciples, he messed up a lot.

So, for instance, in John nine, it tells us that John and his brother James tried to kill some Samaritans who rejected Jesus. They tried to murder them. The passage says Jesus was ministering in Samaria. He was preaching the gospel there; the gospel of peace, the gospel of love. And the Samaritans rejected it, they turned it away. And so, John with his brother, offers to kill them. You talk about missing the message, you talk about missing the point. They said, "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from the sky to consume them?" And Jesus rebukes

them. And from that point on, He calls them Sons of Thunder or Sons of Fire as a joke.

If you also remember this story, John and his brother were the two men whose mother came to Jesus and said, “Command that these two sons of mine sit at your right hand and your left hand in the kingdom. In other words, let them rule over the others. Put them in charge of everyone else,” and Jesus declined that too. John fell asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane when he was supposed to be watching and praying. He ran away when Jesus was arrested.

But the point in all of this, is that Jesus forgave him of all that. Through all his failures and mistakes, Jesus still loved Him. And it had a huge impact on the Apostle John. You don't see this in the New Testament, this comes later in church history, but church history tells us that John became such a loving man that he was called the Apostle of Love. His name was changed as time went on from the Son of Thunder, the Son of Violence to the Apostle of Love.

Let me just give you a few stories of this in church history. (Thanks for letting me walk you through this). I think this is helpful because it gives us a perspective on John. But there's a few stories that have come down to us in history about him. They're not in the Bible, so they're not inerrant. But this is the kind of reputation he had.

So for instance, the first story says that as an old man, John led someone to the Lord and the man abandoned the faith. He became a thief and a murderer; a terrible person. And when John heard about it, he found out where the man was hiding and he marched into his den of thieves, in front of all the other robbers, and he called out the man's name and the man ran away. He just bolted out the door, and John went after him.

As an old man, 90 years of age, John ran after him and he shouted at him, “Have mercy on me young man, for I will have to give an account for you. Please repent, come back to Christ,” and the man did. He broke down and wept and came back to the Lord. He actually reached out his right hand and he said, “I've killed people with this hand. I've committed murder,” and John took his hand, kissed it, and said, “I forgive you friend and Jesus will forgive you too, come back to Him.” What an amazing story, amen? What a testament to God's grace. It's the kind of man John became.

Another story tells us that when he was ministering in Ephesus, he was at a bath house taking a bath, because that was the only place you could take a bath back then. You didn't have baths in your home. So, John was doing that at a bath house when the heretic Cerinthus walked in. Cerinthus was a heretic in the first century who said that Jesus was not God, He was just a man. And so, He can't save you, you have to save yourself. And when John saw him, out of love for his friends who were there, he grabbed them all and said, “Let us fly from this place, for if we don't, the roof will cave in and kill us.” And he rescued them from destruction. Now, you may question his methods in that, but you can't question his heart. He wanted to save his friends from disaster.

There's one more story that sums up the life of John. At his last church, John was so old and feeble that he couldn't walk, and he had to be carried into the building. By the way, if any of you get to that place, we'll carry you in. But John did that. The men of the church had to literally lift him up and bring him in on a bed. And as they did that, he would say every week as he was

coming through the door, “My little children love one another, my little children love one another, my little children love one another.” And finally, someone asked him, “John, why do you say that every week? Why do you tell us that every week?” And John said, “Because if you do that, it's enough. If you do that, it's enough.”

That was John in a nutshell. He wanted people to love each other. He wanted them to forgive and show grace as they had been shown grace. And he wanted them to believe because he loved them. He wanted them to know Jesus because he cared about them. Friends, did you know that the most loving thing you can do this morning, is tell someone about Jesus Christ? The most loving thing you can do is help them to believe.

I was talking with a family member one time who told me that the most loving thing you can do is never offend someone, never make them angry. I want to tell you that's not true. The most loving thing you can do is tell someone about Jesus Christ, whether it offends them or not. Jonathan Edwards said,

Some talk of it as an unreasonable or unloving thing to scare people into heaven, but I think it's a loving thing to scare them away from hell. They stand upon its brink, and are just ready to fall into it, and are senseless of their danger. Is it not a loving thing to scare a person out of a house on fire?

I don't know about you, but when I counsel people, I often tell them, “Just do this and just do that.” And they come to me with a problem, they come to me with a sin or some kind of issue in their life, and I say, “Just fix this and just fix that,” or “Change this over here and change that over there,” you know, it's not a very loving thing to do. You know why? Because that doesn't get them out of a house on fire. Because if they don't know Christ, they don't have the power to change.

Or I do this when I evangelize, maybe you do too. I see someone swearing and I say, “Don't do that, stop it.” Or I see them partying or sleeping around, and I say, “That doesn't please God.” Well, it doesn't please God, but if they're lost, they can't cut it out. You know, it doesn't honour Him, but if they're lost, they're dead in their sins, then that's what you have to talk about. And to do that, you need to take them to Jesus Christ. That's the most loving thing you can do.

Let's say it this way, because I think this is important. This is another lesson we learn from John's life. (And this is all just by way of introduction). The most loving thing you can do is never give up on people. We give up on people way too easily, don't we? Am I the only one? You know, we say, “Fix this or fix that,” and when they don't do it right away, what do we say? “Well, they're hopeless,” right?

John never said anybody was hopeless. The young man abandoned the faith; most of us if we would have known someone who did that, he became a robber and a murderer, we would have washed our hands of him. John chases after him at 90 years old. I would have paid money to watch that. Maybe that was one of the miracles he did. Was running at 90 years old to catch up with this young man. You know, his friends get caught up in false teaching, he pulls them away. The church in Ephesus needs leadership, he provides it when he's too old to walk.

In fact, this seems to be what drew John to Jesus. Four times in the Gospel of John, John refers to

himself as the Apostle whom Jesus loved. That was his name. He never gives us his name. Along with Matthew, Mark, and Luke (they never gave their names either), John never gives his name. He was simply the Apostle whom Jesus loved, to remind us that Jesus never gave up on him. He loved him until the end.

And that leads us to our passage for this morning or to our study of the book of John. Because in John one, John tells us what the love of God looks like. And what the love of Christ look like. He describes it in vivid detail from a very deep theological perspective.

Like I told you before, the series is going to be an overview of the Gospel of John. We're going to look at it one chapter at a time to get a broad sweep of the book. And this morning, we're starting in John one where he describes the love of God. And we're going to focus our attention on verse 14, because it sums up the chapter. (Quentin read that a moment ago).

But if you look in John 1:14 (this is John one in a nutshell, this is a summary of the chapter), he says, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." I can just read that to you and you can tell that's some deep stuff, amen? I mean these phrases in here that are hard to understand like "Word" and "flesh" and "glory" and "only begotten," I mean those are the kind of things you got to pull out a commentary to figure out, right? You have to do your homework.

One author said it this way, he said, "Nowhere in the Bible do we find such a clear statement about Jesus' deity, and yet no where do we find such deep statements about it." He says, "The ancients used to say that this deserves to be written in letters of gold." Another commentator said, "When you approach this passage, you need to take off your shoes. For the place you're standing is holy ground."

But you can also notice that the point of this passage is very clear; I mean God loves us. The Word did all of this because He loves us. There's no other reason. He became flesh, dwelt among us, showed us His glory, because He never gave up on us.

You would think if someone (remember this is the beginning of the New Testament, at least the beginning of John's Gospel) had sinned as much as Israel had (this is the carry over from the Old Testament here)...if someone had sinned as much as the Jews, a thousand years of history, a thousand years of evil, you would have given up on them, right? I mean you would have said, "That's it. You can't come back from that." God doesn't say that.

In fact, the Old Testament ends on this note. This is one of the verses in the book of Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament. It says, "Oh that there were one among you who would shut the temple gates, that you might not uselessly light fires on My altar." That's one of the last verses in the Old Testament telling Israel, "You need to change your attitude or give it up." And the New Testament starts like this, here in John, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," because God was not giving up on Israel and God was not giving up on us.

And to see this, if you're taking notes this morning, let me just give you our outline. In John 1:14, I want you to see four ways that God loves us through Jesus. Simple outline this morning. These were all taken from John 1:14. (And we'll go through the rest of the chapter as well to put it together). But four ways that God loves us through Jesus, to help you to believe, to help you to

wake up and take action on this, to put your faith in Him, to see the kind of Saviour you have, John gives you four ways that God loves us.

The first one is this: He sent us the Word. God loved us by sending us the Word. Not a Word from God, but the Word from God. Not a message from heaven, but the message from heaven. The only one you needed to hear.

If you look in verse 14, it starts out this way. It says, “And the Word became flesh.” “The Word” there is used several times in chapter one. As a matter of fact, you see it three times in verse one. You see it once here in verse 14. It's also used in the letter of first John as well. So, this was a title of Jesus that John enjoyed. And it's the Greek word *logos*. *Logos*. If you're taking notes it's L-O-G-O-S, that's how you spell that - *logos*.

It was used in the Old Testament to refer to the Bible or, the Word of God. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, *logos* is the word that's used there. It refers to the Word of God, the breath of God, the air that comes out of God's mouth is the idea.

So, just a few chapters in the Old Testament that use this: Psalm 33:6 says, “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.” And you can just read that and tell there's more going on than just air there, right? I mean this Word made the heavens and it made the host of heaven. So, this is a reference to God Himself.

Isaiah 55:11 says, “So will My Word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.” Again, that refers to more than just the Bible because it accomplishes everything God desires. It's a reference to the Bible, it's a reference to the one who wrote the Bible; the Old Testament. So, it's an extension of God Himself. It's part of His character. That's the Old Testament.

The *logos* was also used in Greek philosophy to refer to the reason or cause of everything. So, it was the *logos* in Greek philosophy, was the thing that held the universe together. And the philosophers weren't really sure of what that was, so they took a lot of guesses about it. In the sixth century BC, a philosopher named Heraclitus thought it might be fire or water. He thought that held the universe together. That was the controlling element, was the *logos*.

A few centuries later, the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle thought it was truth and reason. They thought that was the *logos*. And between those guys (this is my favourite one), a guy named Demosthenes said it was a tiny little particle called “atoms”. Now, ain't that interesting? He said that in the fourth century BC. He came up with the idea that the universe was held together by a tiny invisible substance called atoms.

John says here in John chapter one none of that really gets at it, because the *logos* is Jesus Christ. None of that gets to the bottom of this, because the *logos*, the Word of God, is Christ. He's the fulfillment of those statements in the Old Testament, and He's the one who controls the universe.

And to see this, if you want to look in the beginning of John chapter one, he kind of lays out the Word here. In verse one of the chapter, it starts out this way. It says,

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

There's a lot in here, a lot in this entire chapter, as a matter of fact. But you can tell that this is all a reference to Jesus.

Just to point out a few things, he says, "In the beginning." That means in the beginning of the world, in the beginning of the universe, in the beginning of everything, the Word, Jesus, was there. And Genesis 1:1 starts out, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," right? Well, John picks up on that, and he says, "In the beginning Jesus was there." While the other gospels start in time (Matthew, Mark and Luke, they start with the virgin birth, they start with the genealogy of Jesus, they start with the ministry of John the Baptist), John starts in eternity before all that, before everything. And he says, "In eternity, when God made the world, Jesus was there." In fact, verse three says, "All things came into being through Him." In other words, Jesus was part of the creating process.

He then says, "Jesus was the life and the Light of men." As we saw last time, those were two titles in this Gospel to refer to Jesus. In John 9:5 Jesus says, "I am the Light of the world." If you remember the context for that, Jesus just healed a blind man, and He says, "I am the Light of the world. I'm the one who will make everyone see." In John 11:25, He says, "I am the resurrection and the life."

And just to walk you through the rest of this passage, verses six through eight say that John the Baptist testified to Him. He was a witness to the Light, He made Him known. And then verses nine through 13, say that the world rejected Him. Jesus "came to His own and His own did not receive Him." Instead, they put Him on a cross. Verse 17 is the first time you see Jesus' name in the passage. It says, "For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." That's the first time His name is mentioned here. But this is all a reference to Him, this is all a reference to Christ. He is the *logos*, He is the Word of God.

In fact, if you notice, "the Word" is repeated in verse one and then again down in verse 14 to show you that this is what became flesh. This is what became a human being. The one who was with God in the beginning. Which means this (if you want an application, here's one), you don't have a wimpy Saviour. Amen? You don't have a sissy Lord. There's nothing He can't do, there's nothing He can't deliver you from. A Saviour this big can take care of everything.

The old Nintendo gaming system ... I don't know if any of you guys have ever played the old Nintendo gaming system. But it used to have a message that came across your screen that said, "Whatever isn't saved, is lost." There's theology in that, you know. As a young man I was like, "Well, that's profound. I got to write that ..." I didn't actually.

Well, a Saviour this big won't lose anything. A Saviour this big will save it all. Again, there's a lot of mystery here, there's a lot of heavy stuff in this passage. But this much is clear, God sent you His very best. Do you see that? Does that make sense? He didn't send you the junior varsity.

He didn't send you the B-Team. He didn't send you a Saviour who was just kind of...can save you from a few little sins over here but not the really bad ones. There are some Christian groups that put sin into categories, and they basically say, "Christ can save these and He can't save those. You've got to work on those to save yourself." John says here, "This Saviour can save them all."

You know, a little girl was baking cookies with her grandmother who was a great student of the Bible. She loved to dig into the Scriptures and see what it means. And she was reading John one right before they started baking the cookies, and this was on her mind. And so, she asked the little girl, she says, "Honey, what does this mean? Why is Jesus called The Word here?" To which the little girl replied without even looking up, she said, "Because He's all God wanted to say to us." She's right. Jesus is all God wanted to say to us. He didn't want to say anymore.

If you have Christ, you have everything. If you know Christ, you know all that you need to know. I meet so many people today who feel like they don't have enough in the Christian life. They're not satisfied. They're always looking for something more. More experience, more fulfillment, more something. They're always going to the latest conference or the latest camp. They're always going to the latest mission trip or the latest class hoping it will change them and make their life better. But can you see in this passage friends, you can't get any better than this. You can't get any more than this. Nothing can change you like this can. Nothing can make your life better like this can. John says, "What do you need that you don't have? What do you want that He can't give you?"

If you noticed, just a passage we haven't looked at yet, verse 16 says, "For of His fullness, we've all received and grace upon grace." This passage says that Jesus was full of God, He was God, and He was full of grace. He's overflowing with it. At the end of that verse where it says, "Grace upon grace," that could translate "grace instead of grace" or "grace in exchange for grace". And the idea is that as soon as Jesus gives you one grace, another one takes its place. As soon as He takes care of one problem in your life, He has grace to take care of another one. He never runs out of it.

Which means that if you want to go on the latest mission trip, do it. We love missions here as a church. And I want to encourage you to do it and serve and evangelize, but don't go thinking it's going to change you. Don't go thinking it's going to make your life better, you need Jesus Christ for that, amen? Or go to the latest conference and go to the latest camp and be blessed. We're going to have youth camp here in a couple weeks and it's going to be great. Last year, I backed into a tree. I am praying this year that tree won't be there. Squamish, they keep moving those trees around. But you don't go to that looking for something more, you have all you need here. Christ has all you need.

A famous pastor came home one day after a long day of ministry and he was very discouraged. He wanted to quit or give up on people like we talked about. Until he meditated on this passage and he meditated on Second Corinthians 12:9, which says, "My grace is sufficient for you." And he said that, "I thought of myself as a little fish swimming in the Mississippi River, and I said, 'Lord I am thirsty, I need something to drink.' And the Lord said, 'Just open your mouth, there is water all around you.' And then I thought of myself," this pastor says, "as a little mouse in the granaries of Egypt. And I said, 'Lord, I'm hungry, I need something to eat.' And the Lord said,

‘Just open your mouth, there's food all around you.’”

And he said, “Then I thought of myself as a hiker climbing to the top of Mount Everest to a huge mountain. And I said, ‘Lord, I need some air, I need to breathe.’ And the Lord said, ‘Just open your lungs, there's air all around you.’” Friends, I want to tell you, if you're struggling with something this morning, just open your eyes, there is grace all around you. Just open your Bible, open your heart, you have more than enough. You don't need another Saviour, you don't need another something, Jesus Christ is sufficient for you.

And that leads to the next way God shows His love for us through Jesus. Not only did He send the Word to us, the sufficient Word, the complete Word; the next thing he says is this: The Word became flesh for us. If we just jumped into the realm of mystery before, we're really going to get into it now. But the Word became flesh for us. That's the next way God showed His love.

And if you think about it, you did not become flesh, did you? You didn't become a human being in a sense, you always were a human being. And what I mean is, from the moment you were born, from the moment you existed, you were human, right? From the moment you were here. It wasn't that way with Jesus. I won't say too much about this, because we'll talk about it in a moment. But if you look in verse 14, it was different with Him because it says, “And the Word became flesh.”

And just a few thoughts on this, but the word “became” is the Greek word for “genesis” or “creation”. It means “the Word was created in the flesh” or “it received its genesis in the flesh.” Which is hard to explain because we just read that, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.” In other words, in one sense, the Word, Jesus did not have a genesis. He did not have a creation. In another sense, this passage is saying He did. And what it means is, that His flesh had to be created, His body had to be formed. His spirit always existed, His spirit was always there.

Colossians 1:17 says, “He was before all things.” Revelation 22:13 says He is “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the end.” There was never a time when Jesus was not, there never will be a time when He is not. But there was a time when He didn't have a body yet. And to save us, to show His love for us, God put His Son in a body. Which is what the word “flesh” means. It means “skin and bones,” it means “the human frame”. God put His son in that. And we don't know what it look like when God did that. I mean we know the virgin birth story and those things, but all the ins and outs, it's a mystery to us.

But, let me give you some big terms here because it kind of helps look at it from different angles. Theologians call this the incarnation, which means “God in flesh,” “incarnate,” “carnal flesh”. They call it the hypostatic union. Which means the union of being. *Hypostasis* is the Greek word for being. In Jesus Christ, the beings of God and man were fully united, they became one. In other words, Jesus was 100% God and 100% man. He was not 50% both. He wasn't half this and half that. He was fully both.

And just a few quotes on this. You know, it's interesting a lot of songs that we sing in our church reflect on this doctrine. So, for instance, the song “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”. We like that one around Christmastime. Isaac Watts said, “Veiled in flesh the Godhead see. Hail the incarnate

deity.” That's what he's talking about there. That's what happened at Christmastime. The song “And Can It Be” by Charles Wesley says, “He left His Father's throne above, so free so infinite His grace, and emptied Himself of all but love, and died for Adam's helpless race.”

We could also quote, just one more quote for you here from the Council of Chalcedon. So, in the first couple centuries of church history, the church fought a lot about this doctrine; the deity of Christ and Him being Man and God. It was interesting. A lot of the people in the early centuries of church history, they believed Jesus was God, they just didn't believe He was man. They couldn't understand how somebody who could do all this could be a man. And so, those with correct doctrine stood up and said, “Look, He couldn't die for our sins if He wasn't a man.” And they had several councils on this...the Council of Nicaea, the Council of Chalcedon was another one.

And it said that Jesus had two natures: God and man. And it said they were inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly and inseparably united in one. And I'd like to say more about that, but let me go on to this next phrase, because it really explains it better. Let me give you a third way God showed His love for us in Jesus.

He dwelt among us. That's the third way God showed His love. Third phrase in this passage, “He dwelt among us.” Not only was He the Word sent to us and He became flesh, but He dwelt among us. Which is another way of saying He stayed around for a while. He didn't just pop in and pop out. He wasn't just beamed down from heaven and he stayed for three minutes and then He beamed back up.

And verse 14 goes on to say, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” And that's one of the many interesting phrases John uses in this chapter, because this phrase literally means “He tabernacled among us” in the Greek. “The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us.” That's very interesting. It's *skéné* from which we get the word “tent” or “tabernacle”. Some of you like to throw up tents around this time of year, right? Go on vacation, on holiday. And Jesus threw up a tent.

If you remember your Old Testament history, in fact, the Tabernacle was the portable sanctuary that the Jews used to worship in before the temple was built. It travelled around with them in their journeys in the wilderness. And they could tear it down and set it up whenever they needed to. And it was there that the Ark of the Covenant was kept and the gold lamp stand. It was there that the priest made sacrifices and the people offered prayer and they had the Day of Atonement and that kind of thing.

And it was also there at the Tabernacle, that the Lord revealed Himself as a cloud by day and a fire by night. The Book of Exodus says when the Lord wanted Israel to move in the wilderness, the cloud would set out from the Tabernacle, and they would follow it. And then when the Lord wanted them to stop somewhere in the desert, it would hang over the Tabernacle. It would stay over the Tabernacle, and they would stop and set up camp. It was like a divine compass for them.

And in a similar way, John reflecting on that says in verse 14 that the Lord did that in Jesus. He tabernacled among us. He travelled with us, He walked a mile in our shoes.

In the words of A. M. Ramsey, he said, "The place of God's dwelling is in the flesh of Jesus." In the Old Testament, God dwelled in the Tabernacle. In the New Testament, God dwelled in His Son. Wherever Jesus went, God went. Whatever Jesus did, God did. He was a mobile, physical manifestation of God. And Jesus told Philip, if you remember this in John 14, He said, "He who has seen Me, has seen the Father." Or He told some Jews in John ten who were about to stone Him, He said, "I and the Father are one."

Colossians 2:9 says, "For in Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form." There you see the word "fullness" again. And Paul in Colossians says, "All the fullness of God is in Him". Not a little bit, not some, all of it.

And let me tell you what this means for us (just another application here). Let me tell you what the word "becoming flesh and dwelling among us" means. It means, as we've said before, that God loves us; deeply, profoundly. It means that He hasn't given up on the human race. Quite the contrary, He sent His Son to die for the human race.

You know, if you think about it for a minute, Jesus didn't do this for angels. Angels fell, they sinned. And Jesus did not come in the flesh of an angel, whatever that might mean. As a matter of fact, first Peter says the angels peer over the banister of heaven looking at the salvation of men going, "what is that like?"

Jesus didn't do this for the whales or the birds, not that they sin. I don't want to get into the theology of that. He didn't become an ant or a caterpillar, He became a human being. Because He loved us. By the way, that shows you the dignity of man, doesn't it? God coming and being a man. That shows you the dignity of human beings, human life.

Jerry Bridges says, "If you want proof of God's love for you, then you must first look at the cross and the incarnation. It is the objective, absolute, irrefutable proof that God loves you."

I played tennis in College, in University. And it was quite the experience for me because I was the only American on my team. Canada is not my first international experience. That was actually my first international experience. I went 15 miles down the road and I got to play with guys from Brazil and South Africa and England. And there were girls on the team from Mexico and Ireland and Croatia. It was the neatest thing. I learned how to eat with a knife. Did you know you're supposed to eat with a fork and a knife? I learned that in college. And they also told me that "ain't" is not a word. Just learned all kinds of stuff there. Ain't, yeah.

But, people would often ask them all the time, I remember this, "What are you doing here? Why are you in West Tennessee?" And they would say, "Of all the places you could end up from Brazil and England, why are you here?" And they would always say this, they would say, "Because it's America." They said, "We don't really care what town it is, just the United States."

Friends, let me tell you, I've heard people say Jesus was humbled to be born in a manger. Can I tell you something? Jesus was humble to be born at all. It was earth. It was flesh. If Jesus was born in Caesar's Palace, that would be humiliating for Him. If Jesus was born in the richest house in Rome, it would be embarrassing almost, to come from heaven to that. But he did it because He loves us.

And I mention that because I'm sure some of you this morning are wondering if God loves you. You're wondering if He cares about you. You know, your life is not turning out the way you'd hoped. Your job is not turning out like you wanted. Maybe your family's not turning out that way, and you think it's because God has abandoned you.

But let me ask you, has anyone else ever done this for you? Has anyone else ever become flesh? Has anyone else ever left Heaven and come down, way down, way, way, way down for you? Has anyone else ever given up paradise? So, how could you say that God doesn't love you? I mean how could you say that He doesn't care?

Some of you might be saying this morning that "God loves me, but I'm not worthy of it." You know, "God cares about me, sure, but I'm no good, I don't deserve this, I've sinned too much." Well, let me ask you this question, is that what you read in here? Is that what your Bible says? Because my Bible doesn't say that. My Bible says yes, you're no good and you don't deserve it but you're not in here, this is not about you. Yes, you've sinned too much, but your name is not in here. His name is in here, because it's all about Him.

If you look in verse 12, that's exactly what it says. As John is telling us what Christ has done, he says this, he says, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." If you're a Christian this morning, you were born not of the will of man, but of the will of God. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you are saved by the mercy and the grace of God and not by yourself.

So, where do you get the idea that you can't have this? Where do you get the idea that this doesn't apply to you? This applies to everyone who will believe. You know, I have a coffee mug in my office with a picture of Charles Spurgeon on it.

When Richard Caldwell was with us, he showed me a pair of Charles Spurgeon cufflinks that he had on his shirt. And I had to tell him that was taking it too far. This whole Protestant memorabilia thing's got to stop somewhere. But I have a coffee mug with Spurgeon on it, and on the back of the coffee mug it quotes him as saying, "My entire theology can be summed up into four words: Jesus died for me." It's what John is saying here. Jesus died for me and that sums it all up. The Son of God went to the cross for me and I'm saved not by the will of man, but by the will of God.

Another theologian was asked to summarize his theology into one sentence, and he said, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so." I mean that's it. That's all I need to know to be saved. And that leads us to a final way that God showed His love for us in Jesus. He sent the Word to us, He sent the *logos*, and He became flesh and dwelt among us. And that leads to a fourth way God shows His love. And we'll finish the chapter with this one: He displayed His glory.

God showed His love for us in Jesus by displaying His glory. Which means that even when Jesus was covered in flesh, He still displayed the glory of God. Even when He dwelt among us as one of us, He could not hide His majesty. And if you read all the verse, it says in verse 14, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten

from the Father full of grace and truth.” John says that, “Jesus dwelt among us and we saw His glory.”

The Old Testament says that the glory of the Lord appeared at the Tabernacle and Israel saw it, and it was called the Shekinah glory. And in a similar way, John says the glory of the Lord appeared in Jesus, and we saw that. The disciples saw it. The people in the first century saw it. Now, John doesn't tell us what this glory looked like, but we know from Isaiah that Jesus was not very handsome man. He wasn't very glorious to look at. Isaiah 53:2 says, “For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot...and He had no stately form or majesty that we would be attracted to Him.” Which means that Jesus was very plain looking. So, the glory doesn't refer to His physical appearance.

In fact, I heard one author say that if you saw Jesus in a photograph, you wouldn't even know who He was, because He was just so ordinary looking. And we see those Jesus films, right? He's always the tallest guy. Why does everybody like the leader to be tall? You know, I take a little offense to that. Maybe He was short. Or He's always the most handsome, that kind of thing. Isaiah says that wasn't true. So, it had to be referring to something else like His hidden virtues, His inner qualities. Verse 14, the end of it says, “He was full of grace and truth.” That's the idea here. He was the most gracious and truthful man who ever lived. Other passages talk about His loving nature and His kindness.

And just before that in verse 14, John says, “We saw His glory, glory of the only begotten from the Father.” That phrase “only begotten” means “only one born of God”. It's *monogenes* which comes from “mono” which means “one in genesis, creation”. He was the only one created of God like this. Born as God. And John says we saw that, and it was glorious.

And he goes on in that chapter to say we're not the only ones who saw it because John the Baptist saw it too. If you look in verses 19-34, it tells a story of some priests and Levites coming to John the Baptist as he's preaching in the wilderness. And John tells them about the glory of Christ, or he tells His disciples about the glory of Christ. In verse 29 he says, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” “That's the glory we saw,” John says. He says in verse 34, John the Baptist says, “I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

Then if you want to look at the end of the chapter, Jesus testifies about His own glory this way; the very last verse in the chapter. He calls His first disciples. He calls Andrew and Peter and Philip and Nathaniel to follow Him, and then He sums up the conversation with them this way in verse 51. He says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” In other words, Jesus says, “I will open up heaven for you. I will be the ladder whereby you can climb to God.” “That's the glory we saw,” John says. That's the splendour. Jesus made a way for us to get into heaven. He provided a ladder, or rather you could say it this way, He was the ladder.

Augustine said that man's maker was made man so that He, the ruler of the stars might come down and save us. Which raises the question, is this how you look at Jesus this morning? Do you see Him as the ruler of the stars and man's maker? Is He this glorious to you? Is He this big or do you have a small view of Jesus this morning? Do you have a wimpy Saviour?

It's interesting how many wimpy Saviour statements are out there today. You know, you see bumper stickers that say things like, "Jesus is my co-pilot" and "Jesus is my homeboy." I had one guy say, "You know, if Jesus is your co-pilot, then one or two of you has got to get out of the cockpit." Or one of them says, "Jesus is my airbag." Well, is that all Jesus is to you? Just an airbag. Let me tell you, you're going to need more than an airbag to get into heaven. You're going to need more than that to be saved.

We could say it this way, you know, people talk a lot today about having a personal relationship with Jesus. And they ask, "Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus or do you know Him personally?" Which is not a bad question if you go on and explain it. But in and of itself, it's a confusing statement. Because did you know that the devil has a personal relationship with Jesus? Did you know that demons have a personal relationship with Jesus? It's just a bad one. They're on His bad side because they don't submit to Him. They don't see Him like this and bow down.

You need to bow down to Jesus Christ this morning. That's what John wants you to do. You need to believe in Him as your Saviour and your Lord, and the Lord of the universe. If you do that, you can be saved.

You know, four years after the Titanic sank, a young man stood up in a church in Scotland, and he said, "I'm a survivor of the Titanic." He said, "When I was drifting along in the water, the preacher John Harper came floating by on a piece of driftwood, and he said, 'Are you saved? To believe in...'" floating, he said, 'Are you saved?' He said, 'And believe in the Lord Jesus and you'll be saved.'"

He says, "A few minutes later, you know, we're all just out there in the water," he said, "The preacher came back floating again, and he said, 'Are you saved now? No?' He said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus and you'll be saved,' and he just floated on by." Then he came back. Somehow, miraculously, a few minutes later, the man was saying, "The current brought him back, and he said, 'What about now? Are you saved now?' He said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus now and you will be saved.'" And the man says, "Shortly afterwards, he drowned. John Harper, the preacher drowned." He said, "I never saw him again." But he said, "I'll tell you this morning, that night I became the last convert John Harper ever had. I believed and I was saved."

My friends, I don't know where you're at with Jesus Christ this morning. I don't know where everyone's at in this whole issue of salvation, the Son of God, the ladder to heaven. But can I just grab a piece of driftwood and float on by here for a minute. Are you saved? Are you going to heaven? What about now? What about now? Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. And that means this Lord, this God, this Word right here in John chapter one. Believe in Him and you will go to heaven. And let me pray that you would do that today if you haven't. And if you have, that you would be blessed and encouraged by the Word of God today.

Father, we thank You Lord for Your Son, Your all sufficient, perfect, omnipotent, Almighty Son. We thank You Lord that we do have a sufficient Saviour. I don't think there's any man, woman or child here this morning, who would say that they are good enough to get into heaven; at least I pray there is not. We need someone to take care of everything, and that's what You've sent in Jesus. And Lord, we thank You for that. We rejoice in that and we worship You for it.

Father, I do pray this morning for any who are here who do not know this Saviour. Lord, I pray that they would read this and their hearts would break for their need of salvation. Lord, I pray they would know that they are in a house on fire. I pray they would know that they have no hope of eternal life apart from Him. But I also pray Lord, they would be encouraged to know that He can take care of everything.

For those who are here who are in Christ, Lord, may they rejoice at the fullness of their salvation. Father, help us to be a people who don't go around wanting more than what we have in Him. Maybe another way to say that Father, can I pray that any time we do want more, we would turn to Christ to satisfy it? We thank You Lord that we have a full God, a full Saviour like Him. And may you be honoured and glorified as we take the Lord's Supper and remember Him this morning. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.