



The Word Became Flesh

Message Notes, February 21, 2016

The first disciples were passionately consumed with proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus everywhere they went. They were not preaching theology and doctrine; they were proclaiming JESUS – His identity, His ministry and most of all, His work of redemption through the cross and the resurrection. It was Good News!

Consider: What does the American church actually proclaim these days? Is it this Good News?

There are four gospel books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. While they tell the same story of Jesus, they each have their own unique angle, style and primary audience. Matthew, Mark and Luke share much of the same material and focus more on “reporting” the Jesus story. John’s gospel is the most unique – he goes beyond what happened to delve more into the meaning of things Jesus said and did. The Gospel of John gives us more of the “whys” and the “so whats”.

John 1:1-4 is a prologue for the whole book. It highlights the central message and themes, paving the way for the rest of the book.

Key themes John expresses in the introductory verses (1-5):

- “In the beginning” – hearkening to Genesis 1:1. This story begins in eternity! Jesus has always been.
- “Light” – this strong image of Jesus. He has come to shine in and overcome the darkness.
- “The Word became flesh.” God’s expression and revelation, not on parchment, but *in* Christ – up close and personal.

This prologue gives us: 1) Who Jesus is; 2) How He came; and 3) How people responded to Him.

WHO JESUS IS

The Word – Capturing several meanings

- Like words – Jesus communicates God’s heart and mind; He reveals God’s character and purpose.
- To the Jews, “Word” embodied the power of Yahweh – i.e., God spoke creation into existence.
- To the Greeks, “Word” was Logos – the permanent substance of the universe (the foundation of the universe, if you will). The power behind the cosmos and the revelation of *all* mysteries.
- John uses a meaningful progression to develop this “Word” expression for Jesus: - “In the beginning.” Jesus has always been. He is eternal; - “with God.” He is separate (revealing the Trinity) but also towards God (revealing intimacy); - “was God.” Again revealing the Trinity and Jesus’ divine nature.



Creator. “All things made through Him /nothing made without Him.” Jesus partnered with the Father in creation.

- What does this mean for us? ... that He knows creation through and through. He knows us. He knows how we are made, how we are created to live, and exactly what we need.

Life. “in Him was life ...” (in Him *is* life!) Jesus is the source of physical life, spiritual life (redemption) and eternal life (quality and duration)

Light – “[He] was the light of men, shining in the darkness ... giving light to every human.

- Light exposes the things hidden and broken in the darkness. (revelation, conviction, repentance)
- Light comes against darkness, even “overcomes” it. (transformation and healing)
- Light reveals the true and life-giving things. (revelation, guidance, hope)

HOW HE CAME

Incarnation – “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory.”

- God came to us in Jesus, up close and personal
- Revealing the heart and nature of God
- Taking on our nature, Identifying with our humanity (but without sin)

HOW PEOPLE RESPONDED

Rejected Him

- “the world” – so ironic (and sad) that creatures made by Him would reject Him (v. 10)
- “His own” (Jewish people) – “a prophet is not welcome in His hometown.” Again, so ironic and sad that the nation God called to be a light to the nations and the lineage for the coming Messiah would not receive Him. Why? They had become blinded by religion!
- Are we in danger of this same blindness in the church today?

Received Him

- How? By “believing in His name” – believing in Who He is and trusting in His saving work. His name? **Jesus** (Savior), the **Christ** (Anointed one or King)
- “as many as received Him.” *All* are invited to believe. *All* can be “given the right to be called children of God.”
- We cannot earn this right. It is a gift, given by God, on the basis of faith alone (not by works).



Reflection Questions

1) Do the first five verses stir any questions in your mind, esp. this idea of “with God” and “was God”?

2) How would you rate your spiritual temperature, on a scale of 1 (Going through the motions of church) to 10 (Enthralled with Jesus)?

3) Which expression of Jesus is most meaningful to you personally? Why?

- The Word
- Light
- Life
- “with God/was God”
- Creator
- “become flesh”

4) How are you responding to Him of late? Distracted by the world? Blinded by religion? Believing deeply “in His name”? Receiving His presence and walking by His grace?

5) Take some time to be still and ponder – write your prayerful response (a letter) to Jesus