

Hurst Green
8th Dec 19
The Word Becomes Flesh
John 1:1-18

This is another famous passage for this time of year and on Thursday I was looking at it with a group of pastors and so today you receive the wisdom of 8 pastors rather than just one. (Actually in all the time I have been here you have been benefiting from the wisdom of many pastors and preachers thanks to the Internet).

So as we continue to get excited about Christmas I thought we would turn from looking at the Light – we have covered both you letting your light shine and the source of that light. Jesus. His coming in that miracle that we are celebrating in this Christmas season.

So today we are turning to another well-known passage this time from the beginning of John's Gospel. We hear it every year.

Now John is very clear why his gospel is written

John 20:30-31 (ANIV)

³⁰ Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

And we need to remember that even in the four gospels not all that Jesus did is recorded – they are only examples.

John finishes his gospel

John 21:25 (ANIV)

²⁵ Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

John writes these words of our reading in a lovely clear style that resonates over the years and survives the translation into English. When you read John 1 the familiar words can flow over you and that is good but John is giving you the spiritual meat here not spiritual milk.

He is describing the indescribable – trying to put into words something that should be experienced but if you get your head around this short reading you will have a solid grasp what a difference having Christ in your life really makes.

He is describing the glory of God.

This has been made known to us through Jesus who shows God's glory to the world and in turn gives God's Glory to all who believe in him.

You are the refecation of God's glory!!

Now today I would like us to consider the last part of that reading verses 14-18. And keep your minds in gear because I am not doing this for my benefit, although I get great benefit from studying scripture like this, this is all being done to stir your grey cells into action and to get you to focus on the things that should be the most important things in your life.

This should be your priority each and every day because then your faith will have an impact on you and on the world and you will take your place in the Army of the Lord and together we will fulfil the great commission.

Every time your priorities mean that God is not at the front you are saying to the world around you that your other Gods are more important. Not Good!!

So let's start at verse 14

John 1:14 (ANIV)

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

There is enough in that one verse to keep us going until lunch time – and probably I mean lunch time on Tuesday!!

So why “*the Word*”? The idea is used through verse 1

John 1:1 (ANIV)

¹ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

John is going to explain all sorts of things in these 21 chapters so that we may believe that Jesus is the Son of God. As the Son of God he is bring the final message from God to complete the revelation of God to man that starts right back in Genesis.

The Word comes from Jesus who is only doing what he has seen the Father doing.

He came full of grace and truth (v14).

Jesus says that he is the truth in John 14:6

John 14:6 (ANIV)

⁶ *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.*

And he says in 18:37 that he came to testify to the truth and furthermore he says

John 18:37 (ANIV)

³⁷ *~~"You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."~~*

There is another test of whether or not you are on the side of Truth – do you listen to God; do you listen to Jesus?

In John 15:7 he says that we should remain in him – We should remain in him who is full of grace and truth who tells us

John 8:31-32 (ANIV)

³¹ ~~To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.~~ ³² ~~Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."~~

So Jesus comes as the word of God and if we hold to his teaching, that is his words, then we are really his disciples. From that we shall know the truth – the truth that Jesus brought from God when he revealed himself to man at Christmas.

And most importantly knowing that truth will set us free. Free from the law which binds us and condemns us through sin and free in Christ to obey his commands.

So that is the first two words of the verses I want us to focus on this week!

And then the fourteenth verse says

John 1:14 (ANIV)

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

So this is a statement that the Word, that is Jesus, was born and lived among men.

But it says more than he was born. *He became flesh.* And this is an important statement of our beliefs. He did not come down as God and swanned through 33 years because he was God and could do all things. Jesus became flesh – he took on our humanity. He lived as a man among us.

From this he has faced all that we face and probably more because I have not had the devil sweeping me up to the top of the temple – and I don't want to experience that!

This is a game changer from all other faiths. That God walked among us as Jesus of Nazareth.

Are you seeing how crucial these verses are in keeping us on the narrow path?

And then that verse ends with these incredible words

John 1:14 (ANIV)

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

For the message that John has for us, and remember all this is written that we might believe, this is the key.

God's glory had been in the original temple when he made his dwelling with his people but now his glory has come down in the person of Jesus Christ and John was a witness of that for he had known Christ as a man.

God's glory shown to us in his Son our Lord Jesus Christ who came to us full of grace and truth.

Truth we have touched on already but He brought grace for us as well.

As our version of the NIV puts it

John 1:16 (NIV)

Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of the grace already given.

That verse has caused academics to scratch their heads but I like to see things simply.

The grace already given was the Law of Moses. The grace in that was that it allowed you to identify and know your sin and so sacrifice and change your ways. If you did not know it was sin then you would not be able to ask forgiveness through the sacrificial system.

This grace had proved too hard as man took it upon himself to add more instructions and made the burden too great for anyone to bear as Jesus kept pointing out to the Pharisees.

The new grace is of course the forgiveness of sins through our belief in Christ and what a grace that is.

Romans 3:22 (ANIV)

²² *This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,*

That alone should have us singing in the streets but strangely it does not.

It should have us overflowing with joy but strangely it does not.

Perhaps we need to consider these verses more closely in this advent season and let the word of God run deeply in our lives?

And always remember the end of that verse “*There is no difference*” there are not some who are more righteous or better than the others. You are just as righteous as DL Moody, John Piper, Billy Graham, Benny Hinn, Joyce Meyer, Joel Osteen or whoever your favourite preacher or teacher is. They may have other gifts but they are no more righteous!!

And that righteousness alone sets you apart from the world and should fuel your desire to share our gospel of hope particularly at this Christmas season.

And our final verse

John 1:18 (ANIV)

¹⁸ *No-one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father's, has made him known.*

Jesus came as man to make all of this known to us so that our joy may be complete and the doors of heaven may be open wide to welcome us in.

So in these verses today we have some key points about Jesus which will be useful in any conversation about Jesus and our faith.

Time

Verse one starts “*In the beginning was the word*” and matches the start of genesis 1 “*In the beginning*” because the first thing we need to know is that Jesus did not come alive when he was born here in Bethlehem. Jesus was there at the beginning of the world when the Spirit brooded over the waters and God spoke out “*Let there be light*”.

And that light is not only the Sun but also the light we have thought about over the last few weeks. The light that comes from God and the light we are to shine into the world.

Essence

At the end of verse one it says it all “*The word was God*”

It gets no simpler than that and no weightier than that – Jesus is God! We can tie ourselves up with theological arguments about the trinity but in the end we must, with Thomas the Apostle, fall before Jesus and say “My Lord and my God”.

Relationship with God

The middle of verse 1 says “*the word was with God*” and that is at the beginning of time. We have the word with God and the Word was God.

This is the heart of the trinity and why people who deny it get it so wrong.

We see in mirror dimly and so do not understand it all – we take it on faith but do not through it away.

Jesus existed at the start of the world, became human at Bethlehem, dies at Calvary, was resurrected and awaits us in heaven.

Relationship with us.

John 1:3 (ANIV)

³ *Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

Having been there at the beginning he had a part in all things that were made. He was part of creating this amazing world in which we live.

Having created it he came to teach us and so to save those who would listen. He gave us the commands to follow that we might show the world that we believe and that our God exists and saves people today.

And finally

He was not made

This is an essential part of the creed that we sometimes use.

The Naysayers and those that want to diminish our faith try and say that God created Jesus and the Jesus helped create all the other things.

The bible says it clearly “*in the beginning*”

So we have a tremendous passage that we can trot out at Christmas time, enjoy the words rolling over us and then get back to the turkey or whatever.

Life should not be like that – these verses are here to change our lives and we should read and reflect on the awesome truths these verses give us.

I ask you not to forget them this Christmas but to let God speak into your heart to change you from one degree of glory to the next as you meditate on his word and show your love for him.

