

## **The Word Incarnate**

John 1:14-18

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If you would, open in your Bibles with me this morning again to John chapter 1. John 1, as we come to verses 14 through 18 this morning.

This week I was reading of the James Webb Space Telescope, which is considered to be the most advanced and powerful telescope currently in use. And with it, scientists have been able to observe the star Arendelle, which is considered today to be the star furthest away from Earth that we have yet to see.

It's estimated to be 28 billion light years away from Earth. To give us just some idea of the scope of those numbers, one light year is estimated to be about 6 trillion miles away. And so this star is 28 billion times 6 trillion to come up with the number of miles away it would be. An almost unfathomable distance. My high school didn't deal with those kinds of numbers. I'm not able to give you that calculation.

What's interesting though is that every time we create a new telescope that's better than the last, and that's able to peer further into the darkness of space than the last, we find that there's more there. Every time we think we've found the limit, we find we are wrong.

Now, the night sky is impressive and overwhelming when simply viewed with the naked eye. There's enough there to marvel at for a lifetime. And yet with the invention of telescopes, the vastness of the night sky, the layers of the beauty and complexity of the universe are revealed layer by layer with each technological advancement.

In a similar way, our Lord has chosen to reveal Himself to us progressively throughout human history. Paul reminds us in Romans 1, for example, that we see God revealed to us even in creation and in our conscience, and that there's enough revelation of God in creation in our conscience even that we are without excuse. In fact, that there's so much there that we ought to recognize God and give thanks to God and give Him the worship that He's due.

We might say that our conscience and creation is like observing the night sky with just the naked eye. More than enough there to marvel at, to see the beauty and the glory, and yet God in His grace goes beyond just creation and conscience. He gives us His special revelation in His Word, through His Word. It's like a telescope that peers through what our naked eye can see. All of a sudden, not only do we see things we saw before with greater clarity, but we see beyond the things that we could see just through creation and our conscience that were unrevealed. New things about God, new things about ourselves. Salvation, for example.

And, of course, Peter tells us that in the Word we have everything we need for life and godliness. Paul tells Timothy that every word of Scripture is inspired by God, breathed out by God, therefore it's profitable for teaching, instruction, reproof, correction, training, and righteousness that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. So the

Scriptures give us everything we need for life and godliness, and yet God wasn't done even with the Scriptures because, as we saw in Hebrews, in these last days He has spoken to us in His Son.

That He gives us God in the flesh, God incarnate, that we can see God in all His beauty and glory in even a more intimate and deeper way. It is that reality of the incarnation that John turns our attention to today in one of the most famous passages in the Gospel of John in verse 14.

As we've seen, the theme of John is **Jesus is the Son of God**. That has been already demonstrated in each of the passages we've studied thus far. Again, we will see it today. We're finishing the prologue, the opening introduction to the Gospel. As I've told you, it's really a summary of what is to come. So we're moving through the prologue fairly quickly because these are all things we will dive into more as we get into the Gospel later.

The first 18 verses make up the prologue, so today we finish the prologue, and we come to this section, John 1:14 to 18. Let's read together:

*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. 15 John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" 16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*

In these verses, John's going to call us **to Worship Jesus who has revealed His glory, bestowed His grace, and explained His Father**. Worship Jesus who has revealed His glory, bestowed His grace, and explained His Father. To unpack verses 14 to 18, what we'll see are four closing remarks in the prologue section of chapter one. Remark number one will take up the bulk of our time, and then we will look briefly at the other three, but **Remark number one is Glory Revealed** in verse 14. Glory revealed.

Look back at verse 14 as it begins, *and the Word became flesh*. Here John returns to this mysterious and yet wonderful title that he's used of Jesus in the opening verses of the prologue, but since then he's transitioned to call Jesus the Life and Light. Most recently we've been looking at Jesus as Light, but now he returns to this title of Jesus as the Word, which is a clue that what he's about to say is an implication drawn out of what he already told us about the Word in the opening verses of chapter one.

So let me just remind you quickly of the key highlights that we learned of the Word back in the first three verses of the chapter. We learned there that **the Word is eternal**. In the beginning was the Word, eternally existing before creation. We learned that the **Word was with God, and at the same time the Word was God**, meaning that Jesus Christ is an individual person, and yet He's one with the Father and the Spirit, sharing the same divine essence, and therefore this is a biblical understanding of the Trinity. We saw that He is unique in His personhood, and yet sharing the same divine essence.

This is a mind-boggling reality, the weight of which we are to feel and have in mind as we come to these words in the opening of verse 14. The intention is all that we learned about the person of the Word should be here in our hearts and minds as we read, *the Word became flesh*. That Word, the Word back in verses 1 to 3, that Word became flesh.

Now to understand the magnitude of what's been said, we need to remember that it's actually impossible for God in His divine nature to become anything. God simply is. He is who He has always been. He is eternal, the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is immutable in that sense. This is why God's proper name is perfectly fitting, Yahweh, the great I Am, meaning He is who He is. He always has been, and He always will be. He cannot change, eternal, immutable.

And yet the Word here, who has already been clearly identified to be God, is now said to have become something, *and the Word became flesh*. Flesh, of course, refers to true humanity. The Word became a human being, a real, living, breathing human being. Remember, God is described as spirit throughout the Scriptures, meaning He has no physical form.

Jesus Himself will describe God the Father this way in John 4, in speaking to the woman at the well. He will say *24 God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*"

He's spirit in the sense that He has no physical form. This is why, by the way, for example, in the Ten Commandments, when we're commanded to make no graven image of God, the reason that's so offensive and so blasphemous to God to make a graven image is because God is an eternal, uncreated being. So to use created, finite substances to try and represent an eternal, uncreated being will always be unworthy of Him. As soon as you make that thing, it is unworthy of God, it is blasphemous, it is idolatrous, because God has no physical form that we can copy.

So you see how shocking it is, then, to read, *and the Word became flesh*. The Word became also indicates another key truth about the doctrine of the incarnation, because He doesn't say that the Word indwelt flesh. He says the Word became flesh, meaning this is one person, not two. One person with two natures. The Word became flesh, not the Word inhabited flesh.

So here's the great conundrum of the incarnation, and it's a conundrum that requires us to use our words very carefully, just as the Trinity requires us to use our words very carefully to make sure we say exactly what the Bible says about God.

Jesus Christ, then, is one person with two natures, a divine nature and a human nature coming together in the one person of Jesus Christ. Theologically, we call this the hypostatic union, the union of the two natures of Christ in the one person of Christ. And what's so mind-boggling about this reality of the second person of the Trinity is that when He took on flesh, this was not a temporary reality that He only did for a short, limited period of time, but in taking on flesh, He would forever be the God-man from that point forward.

Today, He is the God-man, glorified, ascended to the right hand of the Father, but nonetheless, fully God, fully man in the one person of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we doubt the true humanity of Jesus, remember Hebrews chapter 2. It speaks to this clearly, verses 14 and 15:

*14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same (That is the same kind of humanity), that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.*

The only thing that separates the humanity of Jesus from you and I today is the fact that He was sinless. But outside of sinless perfection, He is everything that you and I are in our humanness, in His human nature.

Hebrews reminds us of this, Hebrews 4:15, *for we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.*

So John's intention is for us to understand how wonderful, how awe-inspiring it is that our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, took on human flesh. It's a description of Jesus and His person, who He is, but it's also a call to worship Jesus for who He is. Not only to have faith, but to, because of that faith, worship Him as He is rightly due. Let me say, Christian, never, ever, ever get over the incarnation, ever. Don't allow, for example, our annual celebration of Christmas and the sentimentalism that can be attached to that holiday to dumb down our appreciation for what we are celebrating.

This is marvelous. It's mind-blowing. It's beyond anything that a human being can comprehend. God became flesh, and He did it on purpose for a very specific reason that would benefit you and I, His children, that we might come to know Him so that He could live in our place, die in our place, and rise again from the grave. Our hearts should leap for joy at the thought, at the mention of the phrase, the Word became flesh. Worship should ensue. Gratitude should ensue.

And just as a side note, by the way, what this means, one of the implications of the fact that the Word became flesh is that if you're a believer this morning, when the Lord brings you to glory, you will not merely see a bright light or a swirling cloud, but you will see the Lord Jesus Christ staring back at you face-to-face, still the God-man. You will see the person of Jesus Christ, and you will know Him forever.

Is this not wonderful? Does this not bring us to worship and to marvel? But not only did He become a man and sort of make an appearance and then leave, but John goes on to say *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*. The word dwelt actually is a verb that literally brings the idea of to pitch a tent in a certain place. The Word "pitched His tent among us".

The reason that's significant is because it's the same word used in the Septuagint, that is the Greek translation of the Old Testament Hebrew Bible, it's the same word used of pitching the tent of the tabernacle in the wilderness. It's likely that particularly for a Jewish reader reading this, it would have brought imagery of that pitching of the tent in the wilderness. Remember that tabernacle during the wilderness wanderings was a representation of the

physical place in which God would dwell among His people, sort of an address, if you will, at that time for the physical manifestation of God's presence.

It's where Moses would go and meet with God face to face. It's where the glory of God would come up and down upon that tabernacle. That imagery now is brought in with this word that God Himself in the person of Christ takes up residence among us. He pitched His tent among us.

This was not God manifesting Himself in some far-off place, but He came near. He rubbed shoulders with the people. They saw His face. They knew His smile. He was there in the flesh. And the result of such a personal encounter with the God-man, John says, is this, *and we saw His glory*. We saw His glory. Now that's interesting when you stop and think about it, because when we think about the glory of God, what is the imagery that normally comes to mind for most of us? Usually when we think about the glory of God, we envision a bright light, some kind of shining manifestation that's overwhelming, awe-inspiring, and that's because throughout the Scriptures that does take place.

At times God manifests His glory in such a way that it's overwhelming, light, and the magnitude of His holiness is put on display, and people fall down and worship as they should. We also know that in Matthew 17, for example, Jesus in the transfiguration showed His glory, a physical manifestation of His glory to Peter, James, and John. But what does John mean here when he says *we saw His glory*? To answer that, I think we just need to keep going, because he talks about the glory in more detail in the rest of the verse.

He says, *we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father*, So he's describing the glory of Jesus Christ further, and he uses another important key term to describe this glory of great theological significance. If you've been a Christian for any length of time, you have probably heard Jesus referred to as the only begotten Son of God. It's a very common reference to Jesus. But what exactly does that mean, that He's the only begotten Son?

Well, the Greek word itself can be translated in a couple of different ways. It can just simply mean a father's only son. It can mean the firstborn son, among other sons. But it can also be used in another way, which is the way it's used here, and every time it's used of Jesus in this way. The Greek definition of the word is simply this, pertaining to being the only one of its kind or class. It is to be unique in kind.

Kittel describes it this way: "as applied to Jesus, μονογενής (monogenes), the word, clearly is used to mark Him out uniquely above all earthly and heavenly beings." So he's bringing out the preeminence of the Lord Jesus Christ. He's exalted above all others.

Obviously, we know already here in John, in chapter 1, he's told us that God has other sons and daughters because we have been adopted by Him. This was mentioned earlier, that all those who believe were granted the right of adoption. But that's not what it's saying about Jesus here. What it's referring to is the unique status of Jesus. He is the unique, one-of-a-kind, special Son of God. There is none like Him. He's in a class of His own. He is preeminent above all heaven and earth. He's in His own category.

Now don't forget, we're still talking about the glory of the Word. John says we saw His glory, and the kind of glory we saw in Him was glory that was the unique glory of the Son of God, the preeminent One, the One who is God Himself.

Again, there may be imagery here intended of that tabernacle in the wilderness. Remember the glory would come down and rest on that tabernacle in the wilderness, the visible imagery of God's presence. What John says is when the Word became flesh, we saw in Him the glory of God.

The very glory of God shining through the Lord Jesus Christ, but not in this physical way. We understand the vast majority of Jesus' earthly life outside of the transfiguration, He looked like you and I. There was nothing about His physical form that would have drawn attention. So that's not what John is saying here, but rather something else.

And I believe to understand the glory that John saw in Him, we have to think about the word glory itself for just a moment. First of all, I want to talk about glory as it's used in the Old Testament, because that meaning informs how it's used by the New Testament writers. The word glory is used, Kittel says, "in relation to God, it denotes that which makes God impressive. Since God is invisible, it necessarily carries a reference to His self-manifestation."

Then he goes on to say this about the New Testament usage of the word. He says: "preeminently, however, δόξα (doxa) is used in the New Testament as it is in the Old Testament to describe God's transcendent being and majesty."

Let me put all this together. This is going somewhere, I promise. How does this inform our understanding of the glory of Christ that John is describing? When we talk about the revelation of the glory of God, we're talking about the nature and power of God being made visible in some way, some visible demonstration so that we can apprehend at least in part His nature, who He is, the attributes of God, the power and beauty of God, His holiness, His grace, His wisdom, His sovereignty.

So all of this ties in then to this revelation of the glory of God in Jesus Christ because He describes it finally at the end of the verse as a glory that was *full of grace and truth*, full of grace and truth. The glory of Christ in His earthly ministry was permeated with divine grace and divine truth.

While Jesus looked like a normal human being to the naked eye as He walked around on the earth, in His words and in His character and in His works, He constantly demonstrated the glory of God. That is, the nature of God was set on display through the works, words, and character of Jesus Christ. That's what He means. In that way, the glory of God shined forth through Jesus Christ.

When His disciples saw Jesus, they understood by faith, that's the glory of God. This man does the works of God. He speaks the words of God. We see in Him the grace of God. We see in Him the glory of God.

But not everyone saw the glory of the Word for what it was. As John has already told us last week, it was only those who received Him by believing in His name. So to see the glory of Jesus Christ rightly does demand faith. And this again gets to the heart of what it means to believe in the name of Jesus.

I want you to see the connection point between our faith in Jesus' name and understanding the glory of God that is revealed in Jesus. And to see this, I want you to see an example of how God the Father reveals His glory to Moses in one of the most famous passages in the Scripture, in Exodus 34, in which He declares His name to Moses. Remember, the name of God refers to His character, His attributes, who He is by nature.

And He's going to reveal that to us through this passage in which He demonstrates it to Moses. Exodus 34, beginning in verse 5:

*<sup>5</sup> The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. (So this is God's sermon on His own name.) <sup>6</sup> The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."*

What I want you to see is that when God the Father speaks of His own name and reveals His own glory, what is happening is He's describing and demonstrating to Moses and to us His nature, who He is, that we might know Him, which helps us get at the idea of what it means for us to believe in the name of Jesus and the connection between believing in His name and seeing in Jesus the glory of God.

In a real sense, to believe in the name of Jesus is to agree with John that when we see His words, His works, His character, what we're beholding is the glory of God. God made manifest to us through His Son.

Remember, we sang about this this morning in the third song that we sang. One of the key convictions that separated the true disciples who stayed with Jesus and those who professed Him for a time but then abandoned Him came down to understanding who Jesus really was. This is John 6:66 through 69:

*<sup>66</sup> After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. <sup>67</sup> So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, <sup>69</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."*

So, you see, in Exodus 34, God reveals to Moses by declaring His name that He's a compassionate and gracious God and a just God. John says that Jesus the Word did the same thing through His incarnation. He spoke the truth. He revealed the character of God to the point that those who saw Him for who He was said, where else can we go? You have the divine words of eternal life, and You, in fact, are the Holy One of God.

And so John says, we saw His glory. We saw in Him the very glory of God. MacArthur notes: "The disciples saw Jesus manifest God's holy nature primarily by displaying divine attributes such as truth, wisdom, love, grace, knowledge, power, and holiness."

And what I want us to understand is that saving faith, believing in the name of Jesus, is understanding and believing wholeheartedly and trusting that Jesus really is who He says He is, the very Son of God, God in human flesh. It is to see the glory of God when you look at the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me ask you, is that true of you this morning? Do you see in the character and the works and the words of Jesus the glory of God? When you read of Him on the pages of Scripture, and you hear His sermons, and you see His works and His character, do you say, that is God incarnate? This is at the heart of the gospel, to understand who Jesus really is and what He came to do. Because when we understand who He is, then we understand what He was accomplishing for us to live in our place and die as a sacrifice for our sins and rise again from the grave.

If you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ, I urge you, I plead with you, repent of your sins and put your faith in Jesus Christ. Declare with the disciples and say, you have the words of eternal life. Indeed, you are the Holy One of God, and I need what you have done on the cross for my sins, that I may be made right with God.

So you can see verse 14 really is the ultimate implication of the first five verses of the chapter. The eternal God has taken to Himself humanity, and it has changed absolutely everything.

This brings us to a second closing remark of the prologue here, **Remark number two, Divinity Affirmed** in verse 15.

What I want you to see is that verse 14 was connected to those first five verses. Verse 15 connects back to verses 6 to 13 that we saw last week that talk about John the Baptist, as if each of those verses gives a short implication from those longer sections. He says here in verse 15:

*15 John \*testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"*

So here's what's happening in verse 14. We have the eyewitness testimony of John the Apostle. He says we saw the glory of God in Him, and now he points to the eyewitness testimony of John the Baptist, who is going to also point out Jesus. Remember we mentioned last week the point of John's ministry was to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of Messiah, and then to identify the Messiah clearly that they might believe in Him.

Now listen to the specific statement that he quotes from John the Baptist here in verse 15. This is what John the Baptist says:

*"This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"*



So prior to the coming of Jesus, that is prior to the start of His earthly ministry, John the Baptist was prophesying that the Messiah was coming. He's coming, He's coming, one after me is coming who's higher than I. But when Jesus comes, He clearly identifies that this is the One. This is the One I've been prophesying. But what's interesting here is that John's argument is that this One has a higher rank than me because He existed before me. But you may understand John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins, and actually John the Baptist was born before Jesus was born.

So chronologically when it comes to their birth, Jesus wasn't before John, John was before Jesus, and John clearly knew this, and yet he says He existed before me. What is he getting at? And that this existence somehow plays into his preeminence. Why is he to be exalted and John is to decrease while Christ increases? The apostle John is quoting this statement from John the Baptist as an argument to prove what he's been saying the whole time: Jesus is eternal God.

He's pointing to the eternal existence of Jesus, that He is preeminent, He is over me because He existed before me, meaning this is the God-man, this is the Holy One of God in human flesh. And so you see it's used here in verse 15 to make really the same affirmation and point that the apostle made back in verse 14.

This is the on- of-a-kind, unique Son of God whose glory has been witnessed now by John the Apostle and John the Baptist. Now next week in verse 19, John the Baptist comes into center stage, so we'll leave his ministry there for today and move to **Remark number three** found in verses 16 and 17, **Grace Realized**, grace realized. Look back at verse 16, he says: *16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.*

Here in verse 16, John begins to help us understand some of the implications for us, how this applies to us, all that he's said about Jesus. How is it that the incarnation of Jesus Christ has affected us as believers today? And the answer ties back into what he said about the glory that was inherent to Jesus Christ because he says, from *His fullness we have all received*. Well, what fullness? Well, remember His glory was full of grace and truth. That is the fullness referred to here. We have become recipients of that grace and truth of which Christ was full. He has imparted that, dispensed that to us through His sacrificial life, death, and resurrection by grace through faith.

That grace and truth, that fullness now is shared with us, and it's shared in exceedingly great measure. Look at what he says, verse 16:

*For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.*

The idea of the repetition there is in abundant measure, almost like wave after wave. It just keeps coming. This is eternal grace that has been given to us through our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that He has accomplished for us, and it is abundant. It is never ending.

He bases this argument by referring to the fact that the new covenant in Christ has now come and replaced the Old Covenant given through Moses, verse 17:

*For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.*

Now if you were with us as we studied the book of Hebrews, this ties in directly to many of the things that we learned there in that study. Remember that the law, the Mosaic law, defined life for the Jewish people before the coming of Christ, and that law was given directly to Moses on the mountain. You remember it was covered in the cloud and the trumpet sounds, all the things that accompanied that great display. He goes up.

He receives that law. That's why it's often referred to as the law of Moses because Moses received it and also is the author of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. So in that sense, Moses was the face of the Old Covenant.

But John then says that grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. That's not to indicate, by the way, that grace and truth were not a part of the law. The law was a gift from God. It's God's law. He's the one that wrote it and gave it. It is holy in that sense.

Instead, he's making a different point here when he says *it was realized through Jesus Christ*. Now, I want you to see a couple of important things. First of all, notice that in verse 17, this is the first time that the identity of the Word is revealed because now he doesn't say the grace and truth were realized through the Word. He says were realized through Jesus Christ, clearly indicating that Jesus is the Word. And just to make sure that we're all clear, Christ is not his last name. It is a title. It is Messiah. It is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word Messiah, Jesus the Messiah.

Secondly, let's talk about what does it mean that grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ? Well, Jesus did what no one else was ever able to do. And here's, I believe, where the connection of the law of Moses and the grace given through Christ come into play. Because remember, what was the purpose of the law? Well, Paul gets to that in Galatians 3. Listen to what Paul says in Galatians 3. I'm going to skip down to verse 23 for the sake of time. He says:

*23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

There's a connection here, I believe, between the law of Moses, as he mentions here in verse 17, and the realization of grace and truth. The function of the law was to lead us to Christ, Paul says. How? How does that happen? The law reveals the sinfulness of sin, and it reveals how sinful we are. It acts like a mirror that we hold up to the face, and now we see ourselves rightly. We see the standard of God's perfect holy law, and we see our lives, and they don't meet.

That leads us to Christ because grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ, in that on the cross, Christ actually accomplished taking the wrath of God for sin on Himself so that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ. Because of what He did, we have true and real salvation by grace. This is the idea. This is the point he's making between the law of Moses and the grace and truth realized through Jesus Christ, and we are recipients of that if we are those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as John describes.

Now, that brings us then to a crescendo really here at the end of the prologue in verse 18 and a **fourth** and final **remark, God Explained**. God explained. This honestly is a verse, all of these are, that we could spend weeks unpacking, but he says here in verse 18:

*No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*

So because God the Father is spirit, like we talked about earlier, and because He's perfect in holiness, sinful man cannot behold Him. We can't see him. That's not to say that God hasn't manifested His presence in visible ways.

Of course He has. We talked about His meeting with Moses, but there even in Exodus 33:20, God's very clear. You don't get to see my face, He says:

*But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"*

Paul says to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:16, speaking of God,  
*who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.*

However, while it's true that no one can see God on the one hand, it's also true that God has revealed Himself perfectly to us in the person of Jesus Christ, so that the Father in a sense can be seen through His Son. If you want to know what the Father is like, look at the Son is the idea. The Son has explained Him, and remember who this Son is. This is the unique, one-of-a-kind Son.

He's described here as being in the bosom of the Father. That's a reference to the closeness and the intimacy that they share in their oneness that has been their fellowship eternally. This One who is the monogynist, the one and only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, He has explained the Father.

This is the crescendo. We have the Word is God, verses 1 to 3. Verse 14, the Word becomes flesh. Verse 18, and in becoming flesh, He explains to us the Father. The Greek word for explained means exactly what we would think it would mean. It means "to set forth in great detail." I love what D.A. Carson says about this word in his commentary. He says: "from this Greek term for explained, we derive 'exegesis' (It's the same Greek word that that word is built off of): we might almost say that Jesus is the exegesis of God. Elsewhere in the New Testament, the verb means 'to tell a narrative or to narrate'. In that sense, we might say that Jesus is the narration of God."

What all this means is that because Jesus is the God-man, He has bestowed on us the great privilege of seeing the Father in and through Him. He has explained what was inexplicable. Though we may not see the Father with the physical eye, we have seen Him in a sense because we have seen His Son, His unique and special Son.

This is what we studied together in Hebrews 1, in those opening verses. I love these verses that speak of Jesus. He says:

*God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. (Now listen to verse 3) 3 And He (that is Jesus) is the*

*radiance of His glory (that is of the Father's glory) and the exact representation of His nature,*

This is the idea. This is how the Son explains the Father. He is God in human flesh, therefore when we behold the Son, we come to know the Father. This is why Jesus will say over and over again, we'll see it in John, if you know Me, you know the Father. If you know the Father, you know Me. If you listen to My words, you're listening to the Father's words. If you listen to the Father's words, you'll listen to Mine. Why? He explains Him. He is God in human flesh. This is your Savior, Christian.

This is just the intro to the gospel. This is just the summarization of what John will say about your Savior. The response is to worship. **Worship the Son Incarnate.** This passage is written, yes, that we may all believe as we've seen, but not just ending at believing, but that we would be enthralled with the Lord Jesus Christ, that we would worship Him, that we would meditate on His glory.

And what is amazing about the glory of Christ is that it is demonstrated in its most magnificent way through the cross. Now I say it that way because we're used to hearing that, but remember historically how people felt about the cross. To say at the time, as a contemporary of Jesus, that we see God's glory through Jesus hanging on the cross would have been to an unbeliever a confusing statement.

What do you mean? The cross? You mean that shameful thing, that thing that we don't even speak of? What do you mean that the glory of God is most demonstrated through that man hanging on a cross?

And yet for the believer, we understand that when God raised the Son up on the cross, that He was demonstrating His character in the most magnificent way. The glory of who God is by nature has never been displayed so clearly as it was on that day. So that for the believer, when we see Jesus high and lifted up on the cross, and in our mind's eye we go back to that place, what we hear ringing in our ears is this, the Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness and truth, who keeps loving kindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin.

When we see Jesus on the cross, we say yes and amen. This is the grace and truth of God demonstrated in its highest, most magnificent form. That God would become a man, and that He would submit Himself not only to live as a man, but to die as a man, and to die in the most shameful way on the cross.

Why? That He might take your place, Christian. That He might die the death that you should have died. What is John's point? Worship your Savior. This is Him. This is Him in whom you have believed. Stand in awe of Him.

And this morning, we get to celebrate our Savior in the way that He told us to do so through communion. And so, would you pray with me as we turn our hearts towards the taking of the Lord's table?

Lord God, we delight in Christ. It is not possible to adequately describe in human words with the English language or any other human language what ultimately You have done. It is beyond us, and yet it's also very clear that You have given Yourself in our place. The Son has died as a sacrifice to pay for the sins of Your people, those who would be adopted as sons and daughters, because they believe in His name, and we give You thanks. Help us now as we take communion to remember truly who You are and what You've done for us and to give You the thanks and the worship that You are due. It's in Christ's name we pray, amen.