

**Livin' the Life**  
**Do you See What John Sees?**  
**John 1:14-18**  
October 22, 2017

We are in our series from the Gospel of John, "Livin' the Life." We have seen that John's purpose in writing is that we *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing we may have *life* in his name. His purpose is to convince those who do not believe to believe in Jesus and to strengthen the faith of those who do believe in Jesus. Today we look at the Word who becomes flesh, "Do You See What John Sees?" looking at 1:14-18.

Big Idea – The Word becoming flesh is glorious because Jesus overflows toward us in grace and truth.

This passage can be divided into two sections, 14-15 describes the glory of the Word becoming flesh and 16-18 describes the grace of the Word becoming flesh.

**The Glory of the Word becoming Flesh (vs. 14-15)**

The Word, the eternal Son of God, became flesh, taking on human nature. He had a human body, a human mind, with human emotions, yet was without sin (Jn 15:10; Heb 4:15). Historically theologians have described Jesus as having two distinct natures in one person which coexist but do not intermingle with one another. God the Son chose to limit himself by taking on human nature to rescue humanity in rebellion against him (Phil 2:6-10). Many of us have heard this so many times that we do not give it a second thought but this was shocking, unthinkable, to Jews at the time. John goes on to say that the Word dwelt among us, literally he tabernacled among us. Here is the context of this mind bending statement. God's presence had been absent from Israel for some four hundred years because they were an apostate nation, in exile and under Roman rule. John wrote to Jews who knew their Old Testament and that God dwelled by his presence with his people in the tabernacle and then in the temple (Ex 40:34-35). God's presence in the tabernacle and temple is now fulfilled in Jesus (2:19). God is once again visiting his people to save them in a New Creation. But this time God's presence comes in a more intimate and personal way in Jesus Christ (John 2:11, 11:40).

The result of the Word becoming flesh is that "we have seen his glory, glory as the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (14)." Remember, we have already seen that most rejected Jesus (1:10-11) so the 'we' are those who have been born of God so they see Jesus' glory (1:12-13; 3:3). As we go through this gospel, we will see glimpses of his glory which climaxes with the cross and his exaltation. God must do a work in us to overcome our spiritual resistance and blindness so that we may see Jesus' glory (Jn 3:3, 11:40; 2 Cor 4:4-6). This is critical for each of us because it is as you apprehend his glory that you experience transformation and this apprehending requires the work of God's Spirit for you to see new and fresh glories of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> This glory is as the only and unique Son of God the Father. Jesus embodies all the ways through which God has always been known, including his presence and manifestation in the tabernacle and temple. He is a one of a kind Son (3:16), full of grace and truth. This is the language used in the Old Testament to describe God's covenantal love and faithfulness to Israel (Ex 34:5-7; Deut 7:9; 2 Sam 7:9; Ps 86:15) which now comes to fullness and fulfillment in Jesus. So, the glory of God is displayed in the Word becoming flesh. So, we see the glory of God in the Word becoming flesh and secondly, we also see the grace of God in the Word becoming flesh.

**The Grace of the Word Becoming Flesh (vs. 16-18)**

"For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (16-17)." John is describing what he means by

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<sup>1</sup> See 2 Cor 3:18. 'Unveiled' is a passive verb, meaning that someone else has done the unveiling. It is called a divine passive, God is the one who had done the unveiling. 'Beholding' is a present tense verb, meaning that we are presently beholding. 'Transformed' is also present tense but with a passive voice, meaning that we are in a continual process of being transformed and that God is the one doing the transforming. Putting this all together, God has unveiled our eyes so we see Jesus' glory and as we intentionally seek to see and savor his beauty, we are drawn to and desire to be like Jesus and this gives us the freedom to choose to be like Jesus.

grace and truth. From Jesus' fullness, we have received a superior grace instead of a temporary or provisional grace that was in the law of Moses.' What John means by grace instead<sup>2</sup> of grace is that the law was given through Moses as a temporary means of grace by showing humanity our sinfulness because we cannot obey the law. The superior grace came through Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the law (Mat 5:17). So, the Mosaic Covenant is superseded by the New Covenant established by Jesus.<sup>3</sup> The law shows us that sin is our issue but Jesus Christ solves our sin issue (Gal 3:19-26). The law was temporary and provisional until Jesus came, the superior grace and fulfillment of the law. What is this grace? Everything that Jesus is and promises to be for us, centered around eternal life. Grace is the presence and power of Christ to save us and transform us, neither of which the law was able to do. Then John explains what he means by superior or ultimate truth. "No one has ever seen God but the one and only God, the Word who is at the Father's side has revealed him (18)." God the Son descended an infinite staircase from the light of heaven into the darkness of this world has revealed the Father to us. If we have seen Jesus Christ we have seen the Father; if you know Jesus Christ then you know the Father (12:45; 14:9). If you want to know what God the Father is like, then read the gospels to understand Jesus Christ, who is full of grace and truth. If you want to know what Jesus is about read the rest of the New Testament as it is an exposition of the person and work of Jesus applied to the church. The Word becoming flesh is the superior grace and truth who perfectly represents God the Father to us. Jesus is God's glory on display and God's grace applied to human sin.

### Take Aways . . .

- Do you see the glory of the person and work of Jesus?
- Do you savor the glory of the person and work of Jesus?
- Have you experienced the grace that is only found in Jesus Christ.

### Questions for Life Groups:

1. What do you think of when you read that the Eternal Son of God became flesh?
2. How did Jesus limit himself when he became flesh?
3. Did Jesus lose some divine attributes or abilities or just limit his use of them when he became flesh?
4. What does it mean that Jesus is full of grace and truth?
5. How have we received grace instead of or upon grace?
6. How have you experienced God's grace this past week?
7. What is the relationship between seeing Jesus and being transformed according to 2 Cor 3:18?
8. What new have you seen of Jesus' glory this past week? Any new glories or glories afresh?
9. How do you know God the Father better as a result of seeing Jesus this week?

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<sup>2</sup> I think a clearer translation of the Greek preposition is instead rather than upon.

<sup>3</sup> This also means that the Old Covenant is no longer binding and Israel is no longer the people of God.

