

Keynotes from Pastor Tim's am Sermon on 12/12/2021

Text: John 1 verses 1-18

Sermon Title: Part 2 "The glory of the incarnation"

Scripture references from the ESV

John 1:1-18 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 were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. ⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") ¹⁶ For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Words reveal to us what we cannot see – another person's thoughts or feelings for example, or perhaps an aspect of their character. This may well be why John refers to Jesus as the Word. If someone asks you what God is like, the only reason we can have confidence to describe him is because

God has revealed himself to us through words – His Word

We have the Bible, which contains words that reveal to us the character and nature of God. In this book, we read of:

- his power to create the universe out of nothing, speaking it into existence
- his miracles, where he works outside the laws of nature
- his actions in saving his people from their enemies

- his words, spoken through the prophets

In these words, God has revealed himself to us, showing us what he is like. Not only has God given us the book, he has also given us a person – the Lord Jesus Christ, who John describes as the word in **Ch1:1,14** (above).

The living Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, reveals God to us in a clearer, fuller and more glorious way.

John tells us that '**No one has ever seen God**' (v18 above). God is spirit, having no physical form and so is hidden from our sight. He is holy, and we, as sinners, are unable to look at him. We cannot look at God and live. Yet as John continues in v18 (a verse to ponder, finding mystery, wonder and worship therein), we see he is telling us that

in Jesus Christ, the invisible God is made visible.

Hebrews 1:1-3 (see p4) tells us that the Old Testament shows that God had spoken words through his prophets to reveal himself to his people. Those words would have been sufficient to enable us to put our trust in him, as his people did before Jesus came to earth. However, God went one further. He came himself, in the person of his own Son clothed in human flesh. He did not come only to redeem us from our sin.

- Jesus Christ came to show us what God is like.

Jesus says this of himself too – **Whoever has seen me has seen the Father** (**John 14:8–9** see p4 for full text). John reiterates this in **1:14** (above). When John and the apostles looked at Jesus, they saw his glory – the glory the Father had given him. His Father is none other than God so **the glory of Jesus is the glory of God.**

What is the glory of God? When we speak of the glory of God, we mean his beauty, which has been put on display for everyone to see in the person of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Jesus Christ, the invisible God is made visible.

When we look at Jesus, what is the glory of God like?

1. **It is a glory that is full** (v14 above). John tells us that the glory they saw was a glory full of **grace and truth.**

To understand the majesty of this, we need to look back at the request Moses made in **Exodus 33:18**. He said to God '**Please show me your glory**'. Moses wanted to see all that God is, the fulness of his beauty. In response, God promised to give Moses a glimpse of his glory, after he has passed by (**Exodus 33:19-23** see p4).

What was this awesome event like from Moses' viewpoint? Moses asked to see God's glory and God said I will show you all my goodness. We read in **Exodus 34:6** that God spoke to Moses (words again!) and declared himself to be a God who is abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Looking at the time of Christ, 2000 years later, John was also enabled to see the glory of God – now in the person of Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth. For John:

- the **grace** he saw in Christ corresponded to the steadfast love of God that Moses experienced
- the **truth** he saw in Christ corresponded to the faithfulness of God that Moses experienced

The glory of God that Moses heard declared by God and the glory that John saw in Jesus are the same glory.

A good God is revealed:

- He was good to the children of Israel in their travels in the wilderness, despite their many sins against him
- He is good to us now, despite our many sins against him

Do you see God as a good God? This is the God who is:

- Abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness
- Full of grace and truth

It is true that he is just and holy, and therefore must punish all sin (and we must not lose sight of this), but above all

God is full of grace

He doesn't deal with us according to how we have performed, or reward us only when we measure up to his standards. **He is the God** who draws near to us when we are at our worst, and covered in the filth of our sin.

- **He is the God** who takes our sin away and covers us with his own righteousness

- **He is the God** who gives us eternal life as a free gift of his grace, when we deserve eternal death.

This grace of God was seen in Jesus in all its fulness while he lived on earth. Jesus:

- Did not come to judge sinners but instead came to redeem them from their sin
- Hung out with the outcasts of society, who were considered unclean by the religious hypocrites
- Had compassion on people, feeding them when they were hungry, healing them when they were sick and teaching them when they didn't understand
- Welcomed little children and blessed them in a culture where they had no status
- Reached out to Gentiles and lepers who were considered outside God's covenant
- Lifted the burden of sins from sinners at a time when excessive laws were being laid upon them
- Served his disciples by washing their feet even the feet of Judas who would later betray him - the God who created human feet doing this most menial of tasks

When he lived on earth, Jesus was servant-hearted, patient, kind, gentle and forgiving.

Jesus Christ was the grace of God incarnate

What is the glory of God like? It is a **glory that is full of grace and truth** and it is also

- 2. A glory that is veiled** – his glory wasn't a luminescent glow that people could see!

It was seen in the way Jesus dealt with people, how he commanded demons and nature and the way he prayed to his Father. Hence, many people didn't see his real glory – the glory as of the only Son from the Father. The true glory was veiled from them. Because of that, **his own people did not receive him** (v11 above). They followed him for a while, but when he did not meet their expectations, or when he said things that offended them, they turned away, because of their unbelief, while others saw and believed. (**John 20:30-31** see p4).

His glory was a glory that could only be seen with the eyes of faith that could see beyond the physical realm. Those who had that faith were able to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. That is still the same today.

A miracle of seeing needs to take place, which only God can perform. (2 Cor 4:3-6 see p4) If you have come to see the glory of God in Christ, a glory that is full of grace and truth, a glory that won't hold your sin against you, a glory that will forgive you and receive you, and you have come to trust your soul to him because of what you see then

it is because God has shone in your heart to enable you to see this.

How does this work itself out in us?

a) God's grace is to be seen in us – to be a Christian is to have the life of God in us.

That life is one full of grace and truth, and so we will be full of grace and truth.

Truth, here, is not about the truth of the Bible – it means being true to the reality and therefore dependable. Jesus, full of truth, can be depended on to accept us, forgive us and do us good. If we are full of truth, then we will be true to all that Jesus is in the fulness of his grace, relating to one another on the basis of grace, not on how well we measure up or perform. If the life of Christ is in us, then it will show itself in the same grace he showed to others.

We will be servant-hearted, patient, kind, gentle and forgiving towards those who love us and those who hate us, because we have the life of Christ in us. God places us in communities to expose our hearts as we rub up against one another. We may feel we constantly fail to show grace, letting the Lord down. If that is so:

b) God's grace encourages us to come to God – as the apostles observed Jesus, they saw that he welcomed sinners and failures. He didn't allow them to continue in their sin, but rather welcomed them to change them. When they confessed their sin, trusting in him to forgive them, Jesus welcomed them without condemnation or anger, and he forgave and changed them.

Jesus was full of grace and he is the same today.

If you are struggling with the sin of failing to show the same grace he shows, then you can go to him and he will welcome you with open arms of love, forgive your failure and help you, by his Spirit, to change. That is true with every sin we struggle with, no

matter how long we have struggled. The Bible tells us that we can come with confidence to receive mercy because

God's throne is a throne of grace.

c) **God's grace should lead us to worship** – God put the glory of his grace on display for the praise of his glory (**Eph 1:3-14** see p4). Seeing the glory of his grace should lead us to praise Christ for his grace. To delight in God to the glory of God means that we will:

- see with the eyes of faith the glory of God in the face of Christ and be overwhelmed with joy in what we see
- express that joy with words of praise so that

Christ is glorified

Hebrews 1:1-3 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

John 14:8-9 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Exodus 33:19-23 And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." ²¹ And the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, ²² and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."

Exodus 34:6 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,

John 20:30 – 31 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

2 Cor 4:3-6 Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶ who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life

Ephesians 1:3-14 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us^[b] for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known^[c] to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee^[d] of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it,^[e] to the praise of his glory