

The Birth of Jesus

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[0 : 0 0] Now just for a short while this morning I want us to go back to the reading that we took in John's Gospel chapter 1 and maybe particularly to focus around the words of John 1 verse 14 very famous words really for us the word became that word that name that name is given to Jesus Jesus Christ Emmanuel or whatever name that we see and have for him we have this unusual word for him which is the word the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us and I want us to think about Jesus this morning and the fact that Jesus became flesh for his became a human being John's a great book the Gospel of John is a great book at the end of the Gospel in John chapter 20 and verse 3 we are told that there is a reason for John's book John wrote his Gospel for a reason these things are written he says so that you may believe or that you might intense as such so that you might go on believing so you might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that by believing you might have life in his name so the reason for the season the reason for Jesus coming the reason for the word becoming flesh is so that we might believe who he is and as we believe in him we might have life in his name and as Christians we might go on believing so there is an encouragement I hope today for us to carry on believing as well not just to come to faith but to keep on in the faith to keep on keeping on in the Christian life and that is an encouragement for us to do I hope we can do that today and think about that for a short moment that you can take your minds and your hearts and your eyes off the presence and that large turkey that is cooking somewhere in the next few hours or days and think about Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ who is so great for us this is a great prologue a great introduction to who Jesus is Jesus we are told here is the word it is entitled the word became flesh it is a really unusual name isn't it to call anyone the word the logos is the word that is used and is that not simply given to us at the beginning of John to remind us that God in Jesus is a communicating God he is a speaking God he is something to tell us Jesus coming is a declaration it is a statement a really large important statement and so just as God wants to get our attention not only by calling Jesus the word but by sending Jesus there couldn't really have been a more dramatic way to get our attention could there then by God coming in the flesh as a baby that couldn't have grasped humanity's attention anymore then so as believers it is important and particularly

I think for ministers it is very important that we communicate the truth and that we have something important to tell and as Christians we also realise the importance of what we are telling people by our lives as well as by what we say and I will go on to say a little bit more about that but it is really important that I don't as a preacher for example I just encourage you or teach you today dream in church they don't come to the place where you just agree I will switch off just mentally put my feet up and just take things easy because the message is so significant and the word and communicating the word is so central that I need the spirit of God and you need the spirit of God for that message to be alive and vibrant and living for us so Jesus is a message that is being communicated and this passage has got so much in it I am just going to say one or two things about it but we see

Jesus in connection with in relation to one or two different things here and it is very interesting we are reminded at the beginning of the relationship between Jesus and God in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God He was with God in the beginning what does that sound like can you think what that sounds like it sounds like Genesis 1 it sounds like the very beginning of the Bible and it is deliberate because what we have here is a gospel of recreation we have in the beginning in Genesis 1 and now we have in the beginning again in John 1 because what is happening with Jesus is as significant as God creating the world He is in time creating a redeemer for us in Jesus Christ and what He is doing in Christ is greater than what He was doing in creation so you got creation God creating the universe by the word of His mouth and now you have

Him creating a redeemer as it were a creating a redemption for us as it comes into our existence so we are reminded of who we are as people created by God as strange from God as the Bible tells us because of our sin but in Christ we know redemption and what is God like well God is like Jesus that is who He is like do you ask your question who is God what is God like he is like Jesus that is who God is he is like this personal communicating redeeming saviour comes to us on our behalf so we see Jesus in God and we see Jesus as well just as the one who creates through Him all things were made nothing was made without Him nothing was made in Him is life and that life was the light of men so we have got again this link between God as the giver of life and the Creator and Jesus Christ and Jesus is going to come and recreate life isn't he He is going to come and bring us back to Himself and give us hope and eternal life Jesus is the agent of the first creation and so Jesus is the agent of recreation the new birth we have got the first birth in Genesis 1 and then in the gospels we have Jesus saying you must be born anew born again with a different birth and so we have this great powerful redeemer who is the word coming into life our lives and we are told that in Him was life and that life was the light of men the light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not understood it so when God created He created light in the beginning and then in Christ we have light coming into spiritual darkness and Jesus is both the light and the life He is the source of life I think that is such a significant thing that Jesus some people were asking someone was asking recently why

Jesus needed to die or why we die because of sin why did it need to be that why did it need to be sacrificed on the cross why couldn't we have done something else because simply because we recognize and see that when we are separated from God we are separated from life from the author and the source of life and so when Jesus comes into the world to deal with our sin He deals with the death that sin has brought and it brings life again into our lives light in the darkness and so Jesus comes as the light and the life He comes to His own we are told in verses 9 and 10 He came to His own but His own did not receive Him He came to the Jews the Jews didn't accept Him right from the very beginning isn't it is it symbolic is it just an incidental fact that there was no room for Him at the inn

[9:12] I don't think so I think there is a spiritual message in that that wherever Jesus went He had no home among His own people they didn't want Him they didn't recognize Him He was banished to Egypt as we saw last week and He was a wanderer at that level and His own did not receive Him yet He became the one who was received and accepted by those who believe in Him yet to all who received Him to those who believe in His name He gave the right to become children of God so with that great rebirth receiving of Him recreation in Christ and that's what we celebrate and that's what we enjoy today as Christians that we have come from darkness spiritual darkness into spiritual light the light of life we've moved from a place where we're dying I think this is really significant because we often don't think about it but we've moved from a place where we're dying dying to where we're dying living okay yeah we're still physically dying but it's only temporary and the sting's been removed so we're dying living now whereas without Christ we're dying dying dying physically and dying eternally double death desperate because we're separated from the source of life so in Christ we rejoice and give thanks not just that He came to be the light and life but He came to die on the cross and very briefly then we also recognise Jesus in this passage and incarnation it's probably not a passage that people would normally go to when they speak about Jesus in the manger or the story of the angels which were more used to which the children acted out so beautifully last week but here we have this great word that word became flesh and made His dwelling among us there's really no superlatives that express that for us adequately the word the Creator the life the light the source of all that everything that is you know that we feel that sometimes God exists along with this world but this world exists because God is life because God is the source of everything and so we have that God who becomes flesh who enters into our lives in the manger and before that in the womb of Mary Jesus in the incarnate stuns the world by His entrance into this world it's not just that He appeared in the flesh like some kind of woolly ghost wasn't that kind of spectre that He was then just look like a human being He became flesh that's what we're told here it was something that the Greeks who would have been around at that time hated the concept because they thought flesh was evil and it was only spirit that was good but here is Jesus who becomes flesh and who dwells among us now the Jews who read that would know exactly what that meant God dwelling what's the other word for that the old fashioned word for that is tabernacle-ing He would tabernacle among them and they knew that was the word for the temple the movable temple and God dwelt with

His people in the Old Testament in the holy of holies in the temple whenever before they settled in Jerusalem whenever they were going through the desert they had this tabernacle where God went with them and fired the cloud and they knew that this is God dwelling among us what did I say the children was the name of Jesus?

Emanuel God with us and that's what is happening in the incarnation we mustn't stick our nose up at the incarnation we mustn't think it's some kind of fairly insignificant theological reality as if it's all about the death there couldn't have been a death if there wasn't an incarnation there couldn't have been a resurrection without an incarnation so the incarnation is central but not the finished story of course it is all hugely significant and so you can never say when we think of the word God then the God being becoming flesh you can never say however much our experiences might dictate otherwise you can never say God doesn't care God isn't interested God doesn't come here we have the word became flesh and dwell among us he came to redeem he came into our experience he came because he loves us one of my favourite films and I have to say it's a bit of a violent film but I kind of it's not real violence it's okay but it's a good story and it's called taken and some of you might know it and it's about a father whose daughter goes to Europe from America on her holiday was only 17 years old and she gets kidnapped and taken by a group who want to sell her for prostitution and her father is a retired hard man who worked for the CIA or something and so he has all these kind of amazing abilities to get her back and he hears he's speaking to her when she's abducted and he says that he's going to come to get her and then at the end of the film of course when he's killed about 500 people to get to her she says daddy you came you came back and it's such a good strong picture of what's in us all particularly maybe his daddies of protective care for our children and here is God in the flesh coming for his children he's coming for them to redeem them to buy them back because he loves them and we can't say however difficult our lives are that he doesn't care because he has come and he's come to redeem us and buy us back and when we speak about glory we speak about the glory sometimes as Christians we speak about our we talk about God's glory I don't know sometimes what we think we think it's a bit ethereal and a bit floaty or something heavenly but we're told we have seen the glory here his glory the glory of the one and only came from the Father full of grace and truth so glory for us is in the incarnation it's concrete it's glory we can smell and feel and touch because it's glory of God becoming flesh we can see it it's the stuff of humanity is

God becoming flesh we see it as he washes the disciples feet that's where we see his glory we see it as he heals Nicodemus that's the glory of as he takes a child on his knee that's where we see the glory of God who he speaks to Zacchaeus when he speaks to Nicodemus that's where the glory is when he turns water into wine these are the places where we see God's glory and where we can worship him both his glory and also his grace and his truth the only one who came from the Father full of grace and truth so we see in the incarnation the glory of God don't we and we see the grace of God and the truth of God and so just as I close for the last two minutes this passage and I didn't read it also speaks about Jesus as the Lamb of God and that's why I think it's important that we never just stop at the incarnation because when John sees Jesus what does he say remember we looked at the baptism two weeks ago when David was being baptized the baptism of Jesus and John says look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world so of the incarnate Son who becomes the Lamb the Lamb of God and that is right from the very beginning isn't it that's where we see and understand and recognise the mission of Jesus that he became to be the sacrifice without the shedding of blood there's no forgiveness of sins because the blood has the life in it and it's the taking of life that is just as life lost and so at the very heart of the matter we see Jesus coming under the death sentence of sin as the great redeemer we are under without Christ that death sentence and so he comes as the Lamb yes he comes as the word but he also comes as the Lamb the Lamb of God isn't that amazing aren't these amazing words that the word becomes the Lamb shed on the cross for your sin so if we treat sin lightly if it's shabby to us if we don't care if we have Jesus in our back pocket and sin in our front pockets and if sin matters more to us than living for ourselves matters more than living for Jesus we've lost sight of the Lamb and of the word and so the challenges for us I hope today again afresh is to follow him because we went we didn't read but it goes on to say after him being presented as the Lamb of God Jesus said to Philip and Nathaniel follow me so the challenge goes out afresh today Christmas morning follow me follow Jesus as the Lamb of God you following Jesus this morning on this great morning I hope he's not just a sentimental savior for you I hope he doesn't just remain that child in a manger harmless distant disinterested at one level Jesus Christ who asks us as the Lamb of God to follow him all the

days of our lives prioritising him as the Lord and Savior and as we follow him today as Christians can we go from this place and make the invitation that Philip made having followed Jesus Philip goes on to say come and see come and see verse 46 Nazareth can anything good come from there Nathaniel asked Philip said come and see so as we follow Jesus can we be people who also say come and see was it not great last Sunday evening that two thirds of the congregation here in St. Columbus were guests and friends of ours and visitors who you had said to come and see come and see Jesus come and meet our

[20 : 38] Savior that we worship and our Christian friends that worship together wasn't that great come and see maybe we're Christians who are following him and coming and seeing this great redeemer I mean let's bow our heads and pray Father God help us to know you and love you and serve you we thank you today for Jesus becoming flesh for the incarnate Son of God for God the Creator the source of life and light becoming a child in a manger words that trip off our tongue because we know them so well words that are astounding in their reality keep us from fabbling them because of the world we live in that tends to fable these stories and reminders of the sharpness and the grandeur and the glory and the power of these truths and of these words and may it challenge our lives and our thinking Lord keep us from putting you in the back burner of our lives and hearts bless the children today thank you for them in church thank you for them being so good thank you for them be willing to be here and we pray that you bless their day and ours together and we ask that you bless us as we sing together as we finish for Jesus sake amen.