**Grace to You** :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

**The Glory of the Incarnate Word**
Scripture: John 1:14-18
Code: 1503A

John chapter 1, this morning the text for our message will be verses 14 through 18. John writes, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried, saying, `This was He of whom I spoke, He that cometh after me is preferred before me for He was before me. And of His fullness have all we received and grace for grace for the law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.'" May God bless to our hearts this portion of Scripture and prepare our hearts for the message.

We'd like to inform our visitors that we have just begun in John's gospel in the morning and in John's writing of Revelation at night, so we're dealing with the same author in both cases, morning and evening, the Apostle John, this is our third message in John's gospel. It's really only the third segment of one sermon that we've divided into three parts. The first 18 verses of John's gospel deal with Christ the living Word. And they are John's prologue to everything he says in the rest of this book. The first 18 verses summarize in a capsule form everything that John says in the entire gospel. And they present a tremendous unequalled picture of Jesus Christ the living God in a body. And that's who Christ is.

And so as we have looked at these 18 verses we have really been only considering one subject, Christ the living Word. It's taken us three weeks to consider it because there have been many parts. We talked about, first of all, the eternal Christ in verses 1 to 3. Then we talked about the incarnate Christ, that means God in a body in verses 4 and 5. Then we talked about the heralded Christ in verses 6 to 8, that He was announced by John the Baptist, or heralded by John the Baptist. Then we talked about the unrecognized Christ in verses 9 through 11, we saw that Christ came unto His own and His own received Him not...He was in the world, the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not. But in spite of the unrecognized Christ we next came across the omnipotent or all powerful Christ and even in the midst of rejection there were some who received Him. And His power was extended to some. And the plan of God was not frustrated. God is all powerful. In spite of man's rejection, He still called His own children to Himself.

Today we come to the sixth in our points about Christ the living Word and that is the glorious Christ. We've seen the eternal Christ, the incarnate Christ, the heralded Christ, the unrecognized Christ, the omnipotent Christ and this morning we're going to consider just the last point, the glorious Christ. And

verses 14 to 18 cap off the entire prologue. You might say that the whole book is summarized in the first 18 verses. Then you might say that the first 18 verses are summarized in verses 14 to 18. Then you might say that verse 14 summarizes verses 14 to 18. That's what you might say if you got that. The book is summarized in the prologue, the prologue is summarized in verses 14 to 18 and verse 14 really summarizes everything. And some people feel verse 14 is the greatest verse in the entire Word of God. If you can look at verses relatively, it can certainly convey the greatest truth in the Word of God. Everything that God said is true and great and glorious, but this just happens to be the most unbelievably fantastic thing that God ever did, and that was become flesh.

And so, as we come to the glorious Christ we are coming to the presentation of all the fullness that is in Christ. And you're going to see as we look at these verses the word "full" and the word "fullness" because John is just wrapping it all up into one final crescendo about Jesus Christ. Now I want you to notice the fullness of the glorious Christ and I really am in sad straits to try to convey this truth in terms that can make it what it really is. And I am really leaning upon the Holy Spirit to teach your heart and my heart the tremendous monumental colossal content of these verses in just the simple words that are going to come out of my mouth. But we're going to see the glorious Christ. This is the Son of the living God who was with God in the beginning, who was God, who came to man as life and light, who was heralded by John, whom men rejected, despised, spit on and crucified. And in spite of that whom God used to redeem as many as received Him. That same Christ John sums up in these last verses in a sweeping tribute to the person and the reality of who Christ really is. And this is an exciting place, this passage here is the focal point of the gospel, God becoming flesh.

Now look at verse 14 and let's see the glorious Christ. "And the Word was made...and better translated became, and I'll explain that in a minute...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father...what's the next word?...full of grace and truth." We're going to see that word "full" again because here we come to the full glory of Christ as he sums up his prologue.

All right, John begins by describing the glorious Christ this way, he says "And the Word became flesh." The word is genneta, became, not was made in terms of being created. It is not the idea that God created Christ out of nothing. It is the idea that He became a man.

You say, "Well what is this trying to say?" Well this little simple statement, this little five-sentence...five-word thought "and the Word became flesh" is probably the most profound statement ever uttered in the history of the universe and in such simple little words...the Word became flesh. Do you know what that's saying? That says infinity became finite. That says eternity got squeezed into time. That says essentially God became man, the invisible became visible. The supernatural reduced itself to confinement in the natural. Fantastic thought.

You say, "Well, who is this Word? And the Word became flesh, who's the Word?" Well that's Christ. Well you say, "Well why does John call Him the Word?" Two reasons, because the Greeks would understand what he meant and so would the Jews. You remember how we went over that.

Now the Jews knew what the Word of the Lord was. In the Old Testament the Bible would say, "And the Word of the Lord went out and such and such happened....and the Word of the Lord went over here and so-and-so did this...and the Word of the Lord came to so-and-so and this happened." The Word of the Lord was the transmission of God's mind and God's thought and God's reason and all that God was to men, see. God was up there. The Old Testament people were down here. And the Word came to them and that was transmitting what God was to them. And so all John is saying is that transmission in the Old Testament called the Word of God has now come into a body, see. Hebrews says, "God at sundry times and diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets." He talked to them, didn't He? The Word of the Lord came.

In these last days He's spoken unto us how? By His Son in His Son, the Son is the embodiment of the mind and reason and all that God is transmitted to man. And so the Jew would understand that because he understood the concept of the Word of the Lord and all that John is saying that Word of the Lord that used to come to you is now here in a body among you. So when he says Word, the Jews, he's tuned in, he knows what he's talking about.

But not only that so was the Greek because the Greeks had a concept called the logos which is the word for word. The logos was sort of the floating essence of the reason of the universe. It was philosophical, they didn't attach it to any personality. But interestingly enough, the Greek philosophers had a concept of a floating reason that kept everything in its right place, kind of a floating creative rationale of the universe and they called it the logos or the Word. And so what John has found here is a universal to pull together the Greek and the Jew to understand this thought of who Christ was. He is saying to the Greeks, "Hey you Greeks that have been wondering about that floating reason, that reason and mind and will of the God that runs this place, that has become embodied in a man, Christ." So he's talking to the Jew and the Greek and they both get the message. Thus he calls Christ the Word, the living Word.

Now he says the Word became flesh. The mind and will and dynamic and power of God became embodied in Jesus. And this is a tremendous concept. And you know, for some people it was too much to handle. It was far too shattering a concept for their brains. And you know, it is really a difficult thing to fit into your mind, how in the world something infinitely transcendent like God can reduce Himself to a man? How could and why would God become a person? And why would the creator become a part of His creation?

Well there's a good reason for it and I've shared this same thought but I want to give it to you because it's the whole idea of what Christianity is all about. Now get this. Now we live in a natural

world, right? Nobody is supernatural, we're all natural. Just to kind of make it vivid, just kind of draw a little box in your head, that's the natural world. You live there, I live there, we all live there. We're all born the same way, came into the world, none of us dropped off a tree, none of us...we were all born the same way, we arrived in a natural world, we all do the same thing with the same functions, we are natural creations. Despite what you've been led to believe, you cannot go into a phone booth, change your clothes and come out Superman, it doesn't work. You are a natural human being. You cannot reconstruct yourself into something that is super nature. So consequently we are confined to our little natural world and our world is defined by space and time. We live in a space world, everyone of us occupies space, different kinds of space, shapes of space, but all space. And we move about but we're only in one space at a time. We occupy time, we don't live tomorrow, we live today. We have a time/space confinement.

Now outside our little box is the supernatural world and that's where God is. Now the dilemma of man is, I can't escape my little box, what am I going to do to find God? How am I going to get out there because I have this longing inside of me that He exists. I have an innate sensitivity to the fact that God is. How can I discover Him? Then someone comes along and says, "All you need to do is read the Koran, get down on your knees and go like this five times a day toward Mecca and you'll poke a hole in the box, crawl out and find God." And somebody says, "Well that can't happen." Somebody else says, "That's not the way you do it. You read the Bhagavad Gitaand you read all about the meditation and all of that and all of a sudden you'll poke a hole and crawl out and you'll find God." And Mary, Baker, Eddy, Paterson, Grover, Frye says, "Read Science and Health and Key to the Scripture, you'll poke a hole, find God."

You know what? You can't get out of your natural world. You couldn't find God. You couldn't escape your natural world. Listen, if man can't get out to find God, what has to happen? God has to come in. Did He ever do it? In the form of Jesus Christ. God blasted into our world in flesh. You know what that is? That's God the supernatural bringing the supernatural reality to man. And He came and Jesus was God in human flesh. And thus the Word became flesh. Tremendous reality.

Now some people have said, "Well, but when the Word became flesh He stopped being the Word." See, they take the word "became" to mean the idea well He used to be the Word but He stopped being the Word and He became flesh. Well that's not necessarily the meaning of became. Let me illustrate it. In the Old Testament, you remember the story of Lot. Lot's family was told to get out of Sodom and Gomorrah and God said, "Don't even turn around and look at that place." But Lot's wife did. And the Bible says, quote: "Lot's wife became a pillar of salt," essentially. Now when Lot's wife became a pillar of salt she stopped being Lot's wife. That's true. But on the other hand, the Bible also says that at an earlier date that Lot's wife became the mother of Ammon and Moab. Now when she became the mother of Ammon and Moab she didn't stop being Lot's wife. So there is a sense in which "became" does not necessarily mean stop being what you are and start being something else. When Christ became man He didn't stop being God anymore than a woman when she becomes a

mother stops being a wife. And so it is that when Jesus Christ became flesh, the word is used in that sense, He became flesh in the sense that He was still all that He was as God, but He just added to it the total dimension of humanity.

You say, "Who was Christ?" He was 100 percent--100 percent God, 100 percent man in indivisible fused oneness. You say, "I don't understand it." That's okay, neither do I. Our problem is not to understand it or define it, our problem is to do what? Believe it. That makes it simple, doesn't it? All it takes is faith.

And so he says the Word became flesh, but still remained the Word. God became a man and yet He was God. Oh, the mystery, the mystery of such a thought. And that's what Paul said when he said, "O, the mystery of godliness that Christ was incarnate in the flesh." That's a mystery.

To some it was so staggering they couldn't accept it. There was a group of people in the time of John's day called "Docidists(?) or Docudists(?)." They were an interesting group. They got their name from the Greek word dokane(?), which means to seem to be, to appear to be because they said this, "Well, first of all, flesh is bad, all flesh is bad, spirit is good flesh is bad." It's the old philosophical dualism. "Flesh is all bad, we've got to get rid of flesh, that's our problem." So they said consequently since flesh is bad, Christ couldn't have had a real body.

Now you see, their logic is great from here on only they started on the wrong premise. And they said if flesh is bad, Christ couldn't have a fleshly body therefore He wasn't really a man. And that's where they got their name, "He just seemed to be one." And if you were living around and you went up to one and said, "Say there, Docidist, I'd like to ask you who was Christ?" You know what he'd say? He'd say, "Well, He was a phantom, He was an apparition. He was sort of like a ghost. He just appeared to be a man but he wasn't one because flesh is bad." And it was to those that John wrote these words, listen, "Every spirit that confesses that Jesus is come in the flesh is of God and every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." That's heresy unless Jesus Christ was 100 percent man. He was no phantom. You don't hammer nails through the hands of a phantom. Christ was fully man. The Word became flesh. Jesus Christ was God in a body on earth.

Now notice John says "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." For 33 years Jesus Christ tabernacled among us. The word "dwelt", an interesting word, esgenoson(??) means to pitch his tent and it's the idea that He really came to live with us. He reduced Himself to become a part of our system, a part of our culture, a part of our world, a part of what we are. He was one of us. He tented with us which was really nothing new for God because God tented with Israel in the Old Testament, didn't He? And what was the tent called? The tabernacle. And that's where God tented with them.

And you want to know something else? I just...I really get excited when I read Revelation 21 verses 3 and 4 because it says there that in the days to come when we're in heaven with God, God is going to make His tabernacle with men and God is going to be their God and they're going to be His people and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes and no more sorrow and no more death and all of that for the former things are passed away. God tented in the past, He's going to tent with us for eternity in the future, but in the meantime for 33 years He tabernacled with us in the body of Jesus Christ. That's when He blasted into our little box otherwise we'd be lost, wouldn't we? Otherwise we'd have no concept of who God was and we'd be stuck with our own opinion. And so Jesus Christ came to us, He was veiled. His deity was veiled by His body and He dwelt among us.

But you know there's something that's interesting is that He veiled Himself but He still couldn't hide His glory, could He? The glory that Jesus Christ had as God shown through. What does John say, look at it, "He dwelt among us and we beheld...what?...His glory." He couldn't hide the glory of who He was. Christ was here on earth and they said we beheld His glory.

You say, "Well, you mean, physically?" Absolutely. They beheld the physical glory of Christ. They saw the brilliant glow of who He was. You say, "When was that?" On the Mount of Transfiguration. They went up there and Jesus just kind of opened up the veil and the light came out, remember that? And He was transparent and shone like the sun and they saw His glory. And you want to know John never forgot that, neither did Peter. In fact, when they were up there they loved it so much they wanted to build houses and live there. They didn't even want to go down in the valley. You know, they hang the people in the valley, let's stay up on the mountain, this is terrific. They saw the glory of Christ. "We beheld His glory," they said. This is nothing new, it had happened in the Old Testament. Remember our time a few nights ago with Moses when he beheld the glory of God, when he got a little of God's afterglow on his face? Came down that mountain and the children of Israel perceived that Moses wist not that his face shone, he was lit up with the glory of God.

And so we see Christ's glory revealed in a physical way to these disciples. But beyond that, and I think even more significant, they saw the glory of God in His spiritual qualities, didn't they? For you know that in reality the glory of God is manifest in grace, in goodness, in love, in wisdom, in knowledge and understanding, in mercy, in all of the attributes of God His glory is revealed, for glory is all that God is, that's what glory is. And Christ came to earth and by His wisdom and love and grace and all of these things He was expressing the reality of glory. And so when John says I beheld His glory, he's not only saying physically but he's saying I sensed it because I walked with Him for three years and I talked with Him and I sat with Him and I followed Him and I listened to Him and I prayed with Him and I loved Him and His glory splattered all over me because it was there and you couldn't stop it. And so John says though it was veiled it was visible, I beheld His glory.

You say, "John, what kind of glory was it?" Well, John says it was two-fold kind of glory. First kind, watch this, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, that's the first kind of glory. And the second

kind, it was glory that was full of grace and truth.

You say, "Well what kind of glory is glory as of the only begotten of the Father?" That statement is talking about essential glory, the glory of His essence. Now I'm going to give you a little theological distinction here, compartmentalize it somewhere in your theological portion in your brain. There are two types of glory, John says. There is His essential glory as the only begotten of the Father. In other words, because He is, the monogenes as the Greek is, the prime one of God, because He is that He has an essential glory that is part of His nature. In other words, He just is glory as you are a human being, as you are a man, as you are a woman, Christ is glory, that's what He is. He has essential glory because He's the first begotten of the Father. And so He says He has an essential glory just because of who He is.

But beyond that there's another kind of glory and that's His moral glory. And by that I mean the glory that revealed itself to us in His attributes. And John says He not only had essential glory but He revealed that glory because He was full of...what?...grace and truth. You see, there is the expression of essential glory in the moral relationship to man. And so Christ expressed His glory in two ways because He was full of grace and full of truth.

You say, "Well why does He pick those two things?" Well because those two are the composites of salvation. It's based on grace and it is the truth. Those are the two attributes of glory, or the two distinctives of glory that designate salvation, right? "For by grace are you saved when you believe the truth." That's the essence of salvation.

Now, he says first of all, the Son of Man came full of grace. And that's true, His message was grace, wasn't it? I mean, let's face it, if God dealt with us for what we deserved, it would be pretty sad, wouldn't it? If God just gave us justice, it would be pretty sad because we rebel against Him, we're stubborn, we despise His ways, we walk in our own paths, we do the things that are Satanic, we follow the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, disobedient to God. If God just dealt with us on the basis of that He could wipe us out and start with a whole new generation. But God doesn't deal with a sinner on the terms of justice. Initially He deals in the terms of...what?...of grace. And Christ came as the expression of grace. He was saying, "World, I know you sinned. World, I know you've rebelled. World, I know you hate Me but I love you. And I'm going to graciously give you opportunity to accept My love and return it through Christ." And so Christ's coming was pure love on heaven's part. Did we deserve Christ's coming? Did we earn it? Did we do so many good things that we just forced it to happen? It was pure grace, pure grace. And so Christ came with full grace, just what we needed, full grace.

Have you ever thought about that? You see, grace is totally comprehensive. It doesn't matter how rotten, vile, how absolutely detestable, how flagrant your sin, how low you are, the scum of the earth, the worst human being that ever lived, grace can handle you. It's full grace. Christ came full of

grace...full of grace.

Secondly, He came full of truth. Another expression of His moral glory, Christ was full of grace and He was full of truth. You say, "What do you mean by this?" Well in the Old Testament truth was only partially revealed, wasn't it? You had a lot of types. This was a type of Christ and that was a type of Christ and this was a type of Christ and this was a shadow of Christ. But you couldn't see the fulfillment without Christ, could you? So you know what you have in the Old Testament? You have partial truth. And who was the full truth? Jesus Christ. And do you know how you know that? What happens to the person today who was raised in Judaism who knows all of the truth of the Old Testament and rejects Jesus Christ? Hopeless, right? Half truth is no truth. Christ came as full truth. And in the Old Testament it was only shadows and prophecies and types and all came to fulfillment in Jesus Christ. He was full truth. And it was all partial before that. They were all looking forward to it, weren't they? Now it has happened. He's full truth. That's why He said, "I am the way...what?...the truth," and that's why He was talking later on in John chapter 8 and He said, "If you come unto Me you'll know the truth and the truth will make you free." I am truth, the Father gave Me truth, I reveal truth. Christ was truth. And He also said when I go away I'm going to send the Comforter who is the Spirit of truth. Everything about Christ is Christ full-orbed truth.

You want to know something? When you've had Jesus Christ you don't need anymore revelation, do you? Do you wonder why when He died on the cross He said, "Te telosti," which means "it is finished." Why? No more half truths, it's all accomplished, full truth. And that's why if you know Jesus Christ you have the truth, if you know anything less than Jesus Christ, you have partial truth or no truth and it's the same thing.

You know, some people have a funny false security and they feel that if they believe in God that's enough. Have you ever heard anybody say, "Oh, well we're wonderful, we believe in God, I believe in God." Well that's no big thing. Do you realize that the people who crucified Jesus Christ thought they were doing it for God? Do you realize that the Apostle Paul thought he was serving God when he was running around killing Christians? You can go back into history of the church and you can find some pretty gross atrocities done by people who were doing it, quote, "for God." Believing in God doesn't mean...the devils believe in God. You know why? That's half truth, man, that's half truth. It's not half true, it's totally true, God is but only to believe in God is just to believe half the truth.

You say why? Because you don't get the full thing until you see Jesus Christ who is the expression of God and who lays before us what God requires. And so don't ever find security in the fact that you believe in God, there's no security there. You stop with just believing in God and you're in the same condition that an atheist is in because you've got an undefined God and you've got a God you say you believe in but reject His revelation in Christ. And so you're saying yes in one mouth and no out of the other side. Jesus is the expression of God. Without Him there is no full truth.

Now when this truth came John says we beheld it. It was obvious. It was full truth and full grace. Now John doesn't want to be alone so in verse 15 he calls on John the Baptist to kind of jump in and testify with him. See, the reason John's writing is to convince people of who Christ is. So John says in verse 14, "I'm telling you this Christ is God," he says, "And I'm not the only guy," in verse 15 he says, "John the Baptist said the same thing." And then he says in verse 16, "Not only do I and John the Baptist say this but every believer knows that he has the fullness of Christ. So we all testify to who Christ is." So John pulls us all in. But he comes to John the Baptist, any time you see the name "John" in the gospel of John it's always John the Baptist, never John the writer for John never calls himself by his own name, he always calls himself "that apostle...that disciple...the disciple whom Jesus loved," he never mentions his own name. So whenever he's talking about John, it's always John the Baptist.

Now he says, "John the Baptist bore witness of Christ, I'm not the only guy and he cried, John the Baptist, loudly and proudly announced Christ." What did he say? He said, "This was He of whom I spoke, He that come after me is preferred before me for He was before me." You say, "What is that?" Well John says He that cometh after me. What do you mean, John? See, John the Baptist was born first before Jesus was, right? John the Baptist started his public ministry before Jesus did. Consequently John the Baptist had a little group of followers, he had a little John the Baptist Cult that we talked about last week and John's trying to counteract this a little bit so he says, "Now listen, I know I was born before Jesus, I know I started my ministry before Jesus, but Jesus is God, He's been around from eternity." That's what he said. "He cometh after me is preferred before me for He...what?...for He was before me." That's a pretty sweeping statement.

Now you want to hear one that will really...I can just...I just wish I could have seen this situation. In John chapter 8 verse 56 Christ...He's talking to the Jews about Abraham and the Jews are saying, "Well, we're of the seed of Abraham. I mean, what's this stuff you're telling us, we are Abraham's?" Jesus says, "Before Abraham was I am." Oh, You're not even...how can You, You're not even 50 years old. I often wondered why they thought, he said you're not yet over 50...evidently the strain of the ministry of Christ in three years had given Him the appearance of an older man. They said You're not yet 50 years old, what do You mean You're before Abraham? And then He said, "Before Abraham was I am." You know how they reacted to that? They grabbed a whole lot of rocks and started to stone Him. He was God. He just disappeared. And they were left standing there holding the stones.

This was God. Before John the Baptist, before Abraham, before anybody was He was. And He never wasn't. And so John the Baptist's testimony corroborates John the Apostle, He came after me but in reality He was before me.

Now he brings the testimony of all believers in verse 16, "And of His fullness have...how many received?...all received." That's fantastic..."and grace upon grace." You say, "What is that saying?" That's saying this, if you're a believer you have the fullness of Christ. You say, "I do? What does that

mean?" Well let's analyze it. Colossians 2:19 says this, "In Him...that is Christ...dwells all the fullness of the godhead." All that is God is in Christ. Now watch this. "All that is in Christ is in us." Pretty good.

You say, "But I'm so inadequate." Listen, we go around and we think we're so inadequate, do you realize that you as a believer have the fullness of Jesus Christ and He has the fullness of the godhead? God didn't say, "Now go live the Christian life and see if you can find some of the resources. Hunt them up." When Christ came into your life He planted in you all that is God's. Fantastic. You know what Peter says, he says, "We have all things that pertain to life and godliness." Isn't that unbelievable? We have all the things that pertain to life and godliness, we don't lack anything...nothing. Except as James says the wisdom to know what we've got. It's all there, all the fullness of Christ is mine. Do you know what that says? That says because Christ is in me my resources are inexhaustible.

You say, "But you don't know my problems?" Well I may not know your problems but I know Christ. And He doesn't have any problems. You say, "But you don't understand what I'm going through." No, maybe I don't but I know what He went through and I know He knows the way. You have all of His fullness...all of it. There's no reason for a Christian to feel inadequate. It's all yours.

And then he adds, and I love this at the end of verse 16, he says, "And grace for grace." You know what that is? Grace in the place of grace. When grace goes grace comes, it's just like this...it's like the waves on the ocean, one wave rolls in and right away comes another one, more grace and more grace. Ephesians 2, I think it's about verse 7, he says, Paul says that God is going to show unto us the riches of His grace throughout all the ages. Have you ever thought about grace? God's gracious love just keeps coming like the ocean, it just never stops. You know one thing, there's no such thing as stale grace. I mean, well, God was gracious to me two weeks ago and I'm still trying to thrive on it. No, no. Grace upon grace upon grace...you just get flooded with grace. And if you don't recognize it, that's not God's fault, it's not that the grace isn't there, it's that you would rather court your misery than express it in grace. And so we see God's grace as grace and the place of grace, grace upon grace, constant flowing of grace.

You say, "Well why does God keep it coming like that?" I'll tell you why, because for one second if grace stopped...humph...you're done. When God turns off grace, He's left with law and you've broken law and that means hell. And that's why Paul says in Romans chapter 5 verse 2, "In this grace in which we...what?...stand." You know, as I told you before, we live in a bubble of grace. And if there ever was a moment when grace didn't come, we would be done because it only takes one sin to make a sinner, one sin not under grace does it. And so God just keeps the grace rolling in like the waves and grace in place of grace, and all the fullness of God. You see a slight contrast between the believer and the unbeliever? Empty, purposeless, meaningless, void, vague, no resources and the believer, the whole fullness of God. Fantastic. I don't know how to put it in words but I can feel it, can you? It's a reality.

And so, the whole testimony of believers come together and say, "I know Christ is God, I have His fullness." And then he draws a closing contrast in verses 17 and 18 and it's very simple. He says, "For the law was given by Moses," and he just reiterates the truth of verse 14, "But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Moses gave the law, went up in Sinai and God carved it out on the mountain with His finger of fire. Moses put the two tables of stone under his arm, called the tables a testimony, marched down off the mountain, brought the law. Everybody was put under law, obey the law or else...whack, that's it. Is there any grace in law? No...there is no grace in law, Romans 11:6, "If grace...if law has got grace in it then it's no more law and if grace has law in it, it's no more grace." The law had no grace. In fact, in Hebrews 10:28 it tells us that the one who despised Moses' law died without mercy. There was no grace in law.

You say, "Does that mean there's no grace in the Old Testament?" No, there was grace in the Old Testament, wasn't there? But it didn't come in law. Sometimes God was gracious even to people who broke His law. Prime example, David. O God showed grace but the grace wasn't in the law, the grace came on top of the law. And so, Moses brought the law that said do this, do this, do this and if you don't, whack. And Jesus Christ brought grace which says I know you broke My law, I know you rebelled, I know you're stubborn but I love you and if you'll take Me as your Savior I'll take your sin away, I'll cleanse your life and I'll substitute eternal life for damnation from the law. and so grace came by Jesus Christ. Oh there was partial grace in the Old Testament but full grace in Christ. And there was partial truth, as we saw, but full truth in Christ. So the law was given by Moses and all the law could do was show you how rotten you were, it couldn't save you. The law just showed us how bad we were, but grace and truth which provided salvation came in Jesus Christ.

Then we come to the final verse in John's prologue, verse 18, "No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten Son who is the bosom of the Father," and the phrase "the bosom of the Father" indicates the intimacy of Christ's relationship with God. Remember how I told you how He loved to be with God, how He prayed in His high priestly prayer in John 17:5 when he said, "O God, glorify Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world began." He said, "God, I can't stand being separated, I want that fellowship, I want to be in Your bosom." And the term simply identifies the tremendous closeness of the fellowship between the Father and the Son. And you notice the present tense, the only begotten Son who IS in the bosom of the Father, there's another statement of the mystery of the trinity. Not that He was in the bosom of the Father and left it, He was always there...except for a few hours when He was hanging on a cross was He severed from the Father when He said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" In that split second He knew the cry of the heart of every man and identified in our suffering, didn't He?

And so, in the bosom of the Father He was, no man ever saw God but Christ declared Him to us, the only expression of God that any man will ever know is Jesus Christ. The writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus Christ is the express image of the Father. He is God revealed to man.

It's interesting to me that as Christians we see more of the glory of God in Christ than even Moses saw that day when he saw...remember in Exodus 33 when Moses saw the back parts of God? But Paul says that we see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Moses saw the back, we see a little more, we see the face, though veiled we experience the glory of God.

And so it is then closing in verse 18 that it is Christ who has declared the reality of God. We see from these 18 verses as we come to a conclusion, we see in Jesus Christ the distant, the unknowable, the invisible, the almighty, the transcendent, the majestic, unreachable God reaching to man and becoming a man. And because God became a man God is no longer a stranger, is He? If you know Jesus Christ, is God a stranger to you? Not a stranger, He's a Father. And so we see the glorious Christ who reveals God, rejected by most, received by a few, witnessed by John and then presented to the world...the eternal, incarnate, heralded, unrecognized, all powerful, glorious Christ. That's what Christianity is all about. It's not a form of religion. It's not a system. Listen, it is this...a personal love relationship with Christ who is God in a human body who died and rose again and lives today. That is Christianity.

Our Father, we thank You this morning for Your Word again to us, tremendous lesson in these verses. And, God, we have only said one millionth and even that beggars it of what is here. We cannot express such inexpressible realities. God, we want to thank You for something right now, I do personally, I want to thank You for faith because were it not for faith the Bible would be total mystery. God, I thank You that You've given us faith because though we do not understand we can believe, not blind, untrustworthy stupid faith, but faith based on realities. We thank You that though we do not understand You we know You, though we do not understand all that You've done we know You love us, we can sense Your warmth and Your arms about us, though we do not understand the mystery of godliness that Christ was incarnate in human flesh, though we can't fathom such a union, at the same time we love Christ and we know that He's ours and we are His. We know that He was God and man and died for us and rose for us. So we thank You for the revelation of Yourself in the living Christ. And, Father, even now we pray that if there are some in our congregation this morning who do not know that living Christ, who never have come to grips with who Jesus Christ is in their lives, who have never seen Him as the blessed Son of God who came to tell us what God was like and then to bear our sins in His own body and die on a cross in our place that God might cleanse our sins by virtue of Christ having paid for them and take us to be with Him for eternity. We thank You for the thrill and the joy of knowing Jesus Christ and knowing that our sins have been placed on Him that we are under grace. And, Father, we pray for those who may not have that experience that this morning they might meet Jesus Christ and invite Him into their lives, come to know Him as their Lord and Savior. sense His forgiveness and cleansing of their sins and their union with Him as a child of God. We thank You for the fullness of Christ that is in us all and the abundant grace that comes our way moment by moment, we pray in the name of Christ. Amen.

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