

The Incarnate Word

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[0 : 00] John chapter 1, verse 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.

He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

[1 : 12] 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.

John bore witness about him, and cried out, This is he who was of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.

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.

No one has ever seen God, the only God, who is at the Father's side. He has made him known. And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you?

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. I'm still trying to figure this out.

[2 : 32] That's a famous passage you just read from John chapter 1. And it goes in the face of something that people in Western civilization have been hearing for a while.

For example, Ludwig Feuerbach claimed that God is a human invention, this German atheistic philosopher. Karl Marx said that God is an opiate for the masses.

Sigmund Freud said that God is an illusion, a figment of the human imagination. And Friedrich Nietzsche declared that God is dead.

These priests of atheism, so to speak, they boldly proposed what they called the secularization hypothesis, which claimed that as the world advanced, as societies progressed, that through modernization and rationalization that they would become increasingly e-religious, that God would be no longer needed.

However, the reverse has happened. In 1900, that's actually the year Nietzsche died, the man who declared that God is dead, there were 8 million Christians in Africa.

[3 : 39] Now there are 335 million Christians in Africa. The Pew report documented that in 2010, there were 2.2 billion Christians in the world, which was at the time 31% of the world population, the largest numerical growth that Christianity has ever seen.

And in case you dismiss these statistics saying that, you know what, that's just in the third world countries, in Africa and Asia, that's where the growth is happening. In parts of the world where the world is actually, society is progressing and advancing, that kind of growth is nowhere to be seen.

In case you say that here, the Gallup World Poll, which surveyed more than a million people in 163 nations, says 81% of people claim to belong to an organized religious faith.

74% say that religion is the important part of their daily lives. You see, in only a few countries in the world, actually, the number of atheists exceeds 5%. Not only that, in every part of the world, and seemingly, the parts where Christianity had been receding, people are increasingly looking to and turning to more unconventional kinds of spiritual answers.

For example, in Russia and France, there are more occult healers than there are actual medical doctors. 38% of the French believe in astrology. 35% of the Swiss agree that some fortune tellers can really foresee the future.

[5 : 01] As C.S. Lewis once said, A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word darkness on the walls of his cell.

It seems that the light of God simply cannot be blotted out. No matter what these people would tell us, that we do not need God, the advanced civilizations have no need for God, people everywhere seem to be crying out for God, searching for God.

Then how should we seek God? How can we know God? How can we know which faith and religion is true? And in order to find out, we're going to embark on a new sermon series starting today from the Gospel of John entitled, Jesus, the Son of God.

And Gospel, the word Gospel, simply means good news. It refers to the good news of the person and work of Jesus Christ. And there are four Gospels in the Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and John is the last one that was written around 80 AD.

And it's explicitly written to answer that question. How can we know God? You see this in chapter 20, verses 30 to 31. John writes this. Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book.

[6 : 18] 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.

That's the purpose of the Gospel of John, the explicit purpose. And if you read that, you might say, well, that's not what you would call an objective history, is it? Well, he's Christian.

He has an agenda. He wants to convert people. He wants people to believe it. So how can we believe that what he's telling us is true? So someone might say that in the modern era. However, there's a biblical scholar named Richard Baucom who wrote a groundbreaking book called Jesus and the Eyewitnesses.

And in it, he documents the fact that in the ancient world, the eyewitnesses were considered the best and the most reliable form of historical writers.

And the reason why they thought that is because, you know what, it's the people that care the most deeply about their subject who are going to make the most painstaking effort to preserve the details of that subject.

[7 : 21] In the same way, if someone were to come and say, I want to write a biography about you, you wouldn't want a detached and disinterested bystander from somewhere that has no relationship with you whatsoever to write that biography.

No, you would want someone that knows you intimately. You would want someone that actually cares about the details of your life to write that biography. That person would take the pains to make sure to preserve those details.

In the same way, for that reason, the ancient writers, the writers of the Bible were eyewitnesses and we were interested in preserving the details of Jesus' life precisely because they cared.

And for that reason, they wrote this with the intention that it would be a trustworthy account that people can see and believe in. So now that's what we're going into in the Gospel of John.

It's a reliable account. It's an eyewitness account. We have four different ones all attesting to the same Jesus Christ. Yes, it's not disinterested, nor is it uninterested, but it's an invested, trustworthy eyewitness account of what happened to Jesus.

[8 : 22] And he doesn't brush over things and hide things. He includes even the embarrassing details about himself and others. He includes difficult and controversial saying that would have been very expedient to leave out.

These are signs that show that this is a reliable account. And so then I want to ask all of you to ask that question as we go through the series together and as we go through the sermon today. Who is Jesus Christ?

And then consider the weighty implications of that answer that the Gospel provides. So we begin today in John 1, chapter 1, verses 1 to 18, which is the prologue of the Gospel.

It really contains in seed form everything that John talks about throughout the book. All the major themes that he covers in the book are introduced here in this prologue.

And John's main point is this, that in order to know God, we must believe in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, who is the ultimate disclosure of God Himself.

[9 : 23] In order to know God, we must believe in Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate disclosure of God Himself. And I will unpack that first by talking about the Word of God, and then secondly about the light of God, and then lastly about the glory of God.

So you can follow along with me, verses 1 to 3. In verse 1 it begins, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In the beginning. Anybody who has tried to read the Bible, usually they begin in the beginning. So they open the book of Genesis, and if you've done that, you're probably familiar with that phrase.

In the beginning. That's how the whole Bible begins. It begins with creation. In Genesis 1.1 it says, In the beginning God created. Here in John 1.1 it says, In the beginning was the Word.

And you can feel the kind of weight of this passage in the way John wrote it. Because he intentionally uses repetition and rhythm to produce this kind of dignity in this passage.

[10 : 34] So read with me as I go through verses 1 to 3. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. Do you hear that rhythm? The cadence of this passage tells you that John did not write this haphazardly.

He understood precisely the weight of what he was writing, and he wants to communicate an important truth that we do not miss with this deliberate wording and phrasing. And this beginning of the Gospel is very different from the rest of the Gospel.

Because Mark, if you look at it, it begins with the public ministry of Jesus. It begins with him starting his ministry. Matthew and Luke begin with the infancy of councils. It begins with the birth of Christ.

But John here, he goes all the way back, before creation, to the time of the pre-existent, eternal Word that exists.

[11 : 35] So for the moment, forget the sentimentality of a baby in a manger, and the pageantry of the three magi coming, John's taking us all the way back to the Word, pre-existent Word from the very beginning, before nothing else existed.

In that beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. What that means is there was never a time when the Word was not. Before anything else came to be, the Word was.

And what is the Word? John's not speaking, of course, of a word that we write, or a word that we speak. So the Greek word, the word is logos, which is the word from which we get the English word logic.

And in the Greek culture at the time, it referred to an inner thought, something like reason, or you could even call it a science, or you could call it, and this was a really popular concept among the Greek philosophies at the time.

So Stoics and the Platonists, they all talked about the logos. They believed that that was the rational principle, the animating principle, that undergird the universe, that drove the universe.

[12 : 44] And that's what they thought this logos was. But John here is not simply adopting that meaning. He knew that that was a buzzword, so he uses that as a bridge to connect to the culture that he's in, but that's not the primary background for this word.

Because the primary background for this word is actually the Bible. Because if you look at the Old Testament, the word is God's speech.

Look at Genesis 1, 1-3, and you can turn with me if you'd like, but I'll read it for you here. It said, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.

God creates by his speech, by his word. He creates. God also reveals himself by his word. So that's why in the prophets, if you look at Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, they say things like, The word of the Lord came to me.

[13 : 52] So God creates by his word, and God reveals himself by his word. And finally, God also saves by his word. Psalm 107.20 says, He sent out his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.

So the word, then, is a really powerful concept. In short, it's God's powerful self-expression in creation, revelation, and salvation.

That's what the word is. Right? So, so far, so good. So you continue, but if you continue reading verse 1, it tells us something that is absolutely mind-blowing.

Look with me. In verse 1. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

So the word was with God. What does that mean? Because the word is God's speech. It has a personality. It's with God.

[14 : 58] It's distinct from God, yet it's with him. It's in his presence. And the word with conveys a kind of relationship, a fellowship. This word was with him. He's in relationship with him.

Now, not only that, but if you read the next clause, it says the word was God. That's even more mind-blowing. Right? Because if this word was with God, how can this word be God?

Right? But that's exactly what it's saying. In fact, that phrase is, the order, the syntax has God, the word God in the front for emphasis. So it actually should be something like, God was the word.

The word was that same God, that in the beginning was, the word that was with, the God that the word was with, it's that, the word is that same God. So a theologian, Edmund Clowney puts it really memorably.

He says, the word was with God. He was God's eternal fellow. And the word also was God, God's own self. Now, that doesn't mean that this God, this word is another God, or a part of God, or a second God.

[16:03] Rather, this word was that same God, yet he was distinct from that God. He had his own person. This is the building block of the doctrine of the Trinity, which our church is named after.

Because we see in the biblical data that God is one, that there's only one God, yet there are three persons. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And we don't see the Holy Spirit explicitly mentioned here, but he's also implied here, and later John makes it more explicit.

Because if you look at Psalm, it talks about how God creates by his word, and by the breath of God, he makes it, he beautifies it.

And so if that's the case, then the word of God is carried forth by the breath of God. And the same word breath can also be translated spirit. So here we see the Trinity and actually in creation, in Genesis, and that's what John's getting at here.

So if, that's what, so why is this important for us right now? Because if John's going to tell us later about the incarnation, about how this word became flesh, but we can't grasp the momentousness of that event unless we understand the cosmic, eternal significance of God's word.

[17:16] That this word was God. He's part of the triune God, and we existed from before time began. And this eternal word is also light. It's the light of God.

So follow along with me, verses four to five. In him was life, and the life was the light of man. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Later in John chapter 5, 26, he says that the Father has life in himself, in the same way he has granted it to the Son to have life in himself. So to have life in oneself, it's pointing to self-existence.

That God exists on his own. He's not derived from something. He doesn't originate from something or somewhere. He has his own existence, which is different from everything else in creation.

We all have a derivative existence. We get our existence from God. We have a source. We originate from somewhere. But this word, this light of God, is like God.

[18:14] He has life in himself. He has life. And this life is the light of man. So light and life are concepts that show up prominently in the Gospel of John.

And as we will see throughout, John has a tendency to use words with double meaning. So he uses light both in the sense of the light that illuminates the physical world and the spiritual light that reveals God to people and drives out darkness.

In the same way, he uses the word life to refer to the life that animates the physical world, but also to the spiritual life, the resurrection life, that brings spiritually dead to life.

And then we have this little excursus about John the Baptist. And the reason why John talks about John the Baptist is because he serves as a literary foil to highlight this even more special importance of Christ.

That this powerful and holy prophet, this John the Baptist, he was not the true light. He was just a witness, John says. There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

[19:18] He came as a witness to bear witness about the light that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. That's John's function.

He serves to highlight as a contrast Christ's importance, surpassing importance and greatness. And this true light that John the Baptist bore witness to came into the world.

Please follow on with me, verses 9 to 11. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him.

Yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. Can you hear the tinge of sadness and the irony in that verse?

That his own people did not receive him. The world he created did not know him, recognize him. Several years ago, actually, it's almost a decade ago now, but the Washington Post conducted an experiment where they asked Joshua Bell.

[20 : 21] I don't know if you guys know about him. He's a world-renowned violinist, and he plays a \$4 million Stradivarius violin. And they hired him to go to a metro stop, a subway station in Washington, D.C., to play.

He put a baseball cap on. He was incognito. He played just like a normal busker, and he played for 45 minutes. And the experiment was designed to test people's public taste, their priorities, what people will do.

Will beauty transcend the bustling subway station? The result was very disappointing. Of the 1,097 people, 1,097 people that passed by, only a few stopped to listen.

And Bell made a whopping total of \$32.17. Despite the fact that just three days earlier, he had packed out Boston Symphony Hall, where he played the exact same repertoire, and each seat, the ordinary seat, went for \$100.

And only one person actually recognized who he was. So this is really sad. What was going on? We don't know. We could think about it, and maybe the people were just so busy, so caught up in the everyday hustle and bustle, they just didn't have time to stop to listen.

[21 : 41] Maybe the people had become so desensitized in pop culture or through music, they don't know how to appreciate transcendent music. So they just walked right by. Maybe people had become jaded.

They've seen so many mediocre buskers in that exact same spot, they assumed, oh, just another busker, and walked by. We don't know what happened. But you see, what John's talking about here in this passage is even more tragic than that.

Verses 9-11, Because the true light, which gives light to everyone, the light of mankind, it came into the world, and when he was in the world, the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

The world that he himself created did not recognize him. And he came to his own people, the people for his own possession, people that he chose for himself, and his own people did not receive him.

There are many people who continue to live in ignorance of their maker. It could be the same reasons. Maybe they're just too busy to hustle and bustle of life, to stop and ponder eternal things.

[22 : 50] Maybe they have become desensitized to the pleasures of this world. They don't recognize a true good, eternal good and beauty when they see it.

Perhaps it's, they've been jaded to see so many religions, so many people claiming to have the answer, so many people claiming to be the savior, that they have learned to tune these things out.

But I want to urge you this morning, if you do not know God, if you do not have a relationship with God, don't leave this place today until you consider the weight of the claim of this passage, that the maker, the word, became flesh, became into the world.

verses 12 to 13 say this, but to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become the children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The true light is offering himself to you. Simply receive him and believe in his name, right? The name of someone is not just the name as we would talk about, like Shakespeare would say, oh, what's in the name?

[24 : 08] A rose called by another name would be smelled just as sweet, right? But no, in antiquity, in the Bible times, name stands for the whole personality and character of the person. So when he tells us to believe in someone's name, it's saying, entrust yourself to that person. Believe in that person. And so Psalm 21, 20, verse 1 says, May the name of God of Jacob protect you, right? Believe in the name of Christ.

And it is God who gives us the right to become the children of God, right? We do not possess that right by default. It is not our right to claim for ourselves. We do not deserve to be saved by God.

We do not deserve to be in his presence. We do not deserve to become the children of God. But it is God himself, he's the subject, who gives us the right to become the children of God when we receive him, when we believe him.

And this is, no amount of human effort can save us. And that's what the verse 13 is getting. Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Man and woman can get together, they can procreate, they can have babies, right?

[25 : 15] But no biological process can make us children of God. Nothing do, nothing that we do. We can't become children of God through marriage, we can't become children of God through procreation.

The only way we can become children of God is by faith. Receiving and believing in this word, the Son of God. Now then, we're asking at this point, we have kind of revealed it to you already, but John had been building this anticipation up to this point.

He says, so what's his name? Tell me to believe his name. Who is this person? The word, preexistent word that came into the world, the light of all mankind, who is this person? Verses 14 to 17 give us the answers.

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.

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. For from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace.

[26 : 23] For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is his name. The man that was born as a baby 2,000 years ago, the man that walked the earth 2,000 years ago, he is the word, that preexistent eternal word made flesh.

And we can know God and we can encounter God precisely because this word of God, the self-disclosure of God became flesh and dwelt among us.

And that's a staggering claim that we can just, because we hear it maybe every Christmas season, we forget the importance of that and how amazing this is.

But think about the word became flesh. The Greek philosophers could not imagine such a thing. The word became the flesh that we can touch and see and hear and this word dwelled among us.

More literally translated, that means he pitched a tent among us. And the tent refers to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting in the Old Testament during the time of Moses where God's presence dwelt and where people could come to encounter God, to meet with God.

[27 : 35] And this tent, that tent in the Old Testament, that tabernacle was just a shadow of the reality and it was pointing to Jesus Christ who would come as the word incarnate, who would become this word in flesh that dwelled among us, that pitched a tent among us.

The implications of this are so wonderful. The God that we serve, the God that we have is not a distant God like the gods of Greek mythology who dwell in a distant mountain somewhere on Mount Olympus.

Rather, this God we have is a God that came into the world. He took on our flesh and dwelled among us. And because of that, he knows all of our weaknesses and he's experienced all of our infirmities.

The king of all knows what it's like to feel a backache after a hard day's work. He had dirt under his fingers. The Lord of life experienced grief and indignation.

The creator of all things was rejected by his creatures. He became like us and dwelled among us so that at no one at any point of their life can say to him and point his finger at him and say, you simply don't understand.

[28 : 54] No one can say that because this God came to dwell among us, became flesh, pitched his tent, in our midst.

And because the word that was with God and that word that was God became flesh and dwelled among us, verse 14 continues, we have seen his glory.

Glory as of the only son from the father full of grace and truth. See, the glory that John and the others saw was of the only son of the father. You see, in some way, we could say that God is the father of all people because he's the creator, right?

But no one is a son like Jesus Christ, the word, because he's made, he's cut from the same cloth, he's of the same nature as God the father. He's fully God and yet he took on flesh and he became fully man.

And in so doing, he didn't lose his deity, but became simultaneously fully God and fully man. And for that reason, because as a result of that, in all of history, Jesus Christ is the only God, the only son that can reveal the fullness of God's glory to us.

[30 : 02] And at the same time, he is the only man that can fully relate to humanity. That's our intermediary. That's our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And verse 14 describes God's glory more in detail. He says that it was full of grace and truth. Such a wonderful expression that his glory is full of grace and truth.

And that's an allusion to Exodus 33, 18 to 23. Where Moses says to God, please show me your glory. Right? And then God replies, 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. But you cannot see my face, for man, you shall not see me and live. Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock 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 pass by.

Then I will take away my hand and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen. Right? And then later, Exodus 34 recounts what actually happened when God's glory, his goodness, passed by in front of Moses.

[31 : 17] It says, the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord. You see the parallel. 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, 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.

Moses asks to see God's glory and God obliges by letting his goodness pass before him. So sometimes, a lot of times, Christians talk about God's glory, but we don't really know exactly what it is, but the glory is referred, it's a summary, really summary attributes of all of God's goodness.

And so when we glorify God, we're displaying that goodness and we're saying, we're appreciating that goodness. of God. And so, and how is this described in this passage?

The two primary characteristics of God's glory from Exodus we learn is steadfast love and faithfulness. And these two words occur repeatedly throughout the entire Old Testament to describe God.

And these two words, the Hebrew word translated into Greek is what John is getting at, grace and truth. Steadfast love and faithfulness.

[32 : 45] And steadfast love means something like loving kindness. It refers to a covenantal love. And we have a hard time understanding what that's like nowadays because we see very few examples of covenantal love.

Rather, we see contractual love. We see love as contract rather than love as covenant. So, a contract at the heart of it is the idea of individual happiness and fulfillment.

I will be in this relationship with you and I will love you as long as you fulfill my needs and as long as you make me happy. That's a contract relationship. Covenantal love, which is what marriage is supposed to be, is at the heart of it is constancy and sacrifice.

The other person is the center, not oneself. That's a covenantal relationship. That's why in marriage vows, traditionally we say, I take you to be my lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and health until death do us a part.

That's covenantal love. Enduring love. And that's why often I find people crying during the vows. Because they, it's moving to think someone would commit to that, to you.

[34 : 01] Right? But nowadays, marriage is treated more like a contract, so people get divorced for all kinds of flimsy reasons. Like, oh, I just don't love that person anymore.

Oh, we're just drifting apart. Or that all-encompassing but just vague phrase, we have irreconcilable differences. In that kind of culture, the marriage vow should be, I take you to be my lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, until you get poor, sick, or simply don't make me happy.

Right? Where is the love in that? Where is the covenant in that? But God's love toward us is not like that.

It's a covenantal love. It's an enduring love. It's a gracious love. And that's the, that's the concept that the New Testament idea of grace also covers as well. Grace means unmerited favor.

It means that God bestows his favor on us and he loves us even though we never deserved it. We never merited it. And for that reason, there's nothing to be gained by him in loving us.

[35 : 08] Rather he, even though all we have done is to besmirch his glory and spurn his approach, yet he shows us grace, unmerited favor. That's covenantal love, steadfast love God has toward us.

And faithfulness or truth, that's, that's the other twin attribute of God's glory. It means truth, meaning that not only what is true to reality, but also that God is true to his character.

That he will never do anything that is contrary to his character. He is a holy God, he is a just God, and he will never deviate from his holiness and his justice.

It's unchanging. Unchanging, he is stable, he is firm, he is faithful and true. That's what that means. Read along in verses 16 to 17 what he says about this grace.

For from his fullness, this fullness of Christ, we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. This is not contrasting the law and the grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ.

[36 : 16] Whether it's saying that the law was one expression of God's grace and now we have grace upon grace that we perceive that fulfills that earlier grace in Christ, the grace and truth of Christ.

And the Son of God, Jesus Christ, imperfectly embodies the grace and truth, the steadfast love and faithfulness of God. Now, up to this point, we would have been warranted in thinking that this glory that Christ has was just blazing out wherever he went.

Everybody could see it, but that's actually not the case if we read through the Gospel of John. We see that a lot of people don't see this glory. In fact, Jesus reveals this glory a little bit at a time through the signs that he does.

So, chapter 2, verse 11 says that Jesus Christ performed signs to manifest his glory. It's like an elementary school experiment that we do of trying to look at the sun and stare at the sun.

You can't obviously look directly at the sun where we can permanently damage our eyes and become even blind possibly. So, you poke a little hole with a pencil through an index card, put it pointed at the sun.

[37 : 23] You don't look through the hole, but you put another index card about three, four feet down and you look at the reflection and you can see the sun. That's actually a great way to absorb an eclipse or whatever you want to do.

So, in that kind of a way, Jesus reveals his glory in ways that we can experience it without, because if we see the face of God like we read earlier, we would perish.

His glory is that blazing and consuming and powerful. So, Jesus reveals God's glory through the signs that he does. But you see, in the Gospel of John, the signs and miracles do show God's glory, but the signs are not the most prominent place where God's glory is displayed.

The glory of the incarnation is not confined to the birth of Christ. It is chiefly displayed in the death of Christ. So, John 12, 23 says, the cross is the place, John 12, the cross is the place where Christ is glorified, paradoxically.

When Christ is lifted up onto the cross, he is lifted up in the eyes of the world, in the eyes of God, he is glorified. That's what John writes in the Gospel. That's the climax of Christ and the display of his glory.

[38 : 40] And why is that? Why is the cross this death machine, this execution, why is that the place where God's glory is most displayed?

Because that's the place where God's steadfast love, his unmerited grace, and his unyielding truth toward fickle sinners come together. God's covenant love, gracious love toward sinners, and God's faithfulness to his character, his holiness, and justice collide together at the cross.

God is holy and just, so he must punish the rebels that we are, the sinners that we are, so he must uphold his character, he must be true to his character, he must be faithful to his character, yet God is merciful and gracious, and he longs to forgive us and to save us.

So the proverbial, you know, unstoppable force here meets an immovable object. And what results is this paradoxical beauty of the cross of Christ, where the fountain of life thirsts, where the beautiful king of the universe is treated like a slave, where the Holy One bears the sins of the world, where the healer of the world is wounded for our sake, where God, the Lord of life, dies, so that we might live.

That, my friends, is the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, and that's why it is on that cross the glory of God, the grace and truth of God are most brilliantly displayed for us.

[40 : 20] So let me remind you with that truth, what verse 12 to 13 said. Do you know this God?

Not just that you've heard of Him. Not just that you know about Him. Do you know this God? Do you know this Jesus Christ? Did you receive Him? Do you believe in Him?

That's the most important question we have to answer in this life. So I urge you, don't listen to this this morning and then hurry off as if nothing happened.

In order to know God, we must believe in Jesus Christ who is the ultimate disclosure of God Himself. Let's pray together.

God, we are amazed that you would reveal yourself to us.

[41 : 33] We are amazed that you would stoop down to the squalor of sin, the despair of death to raise us up.

Thank you for offering your Son to us. Let us now believe, receive, and live in light of this one.