

“Why Does Jesus Want to be With Us?”

John 1:1-18

When Gabriel appeared in a dream to Joseph, Jesus' earthly father, he encouraged Joseph by telling him

Matt. 1:20 “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

Since the first days when God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden it has always been His desire to be with His people. When the Bible concludes telling us about our future on the new earth we read with finality in Rev. 21,

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

And everywhere in between Genesis to Revelation, God shows this is His and His Son's intended desire. This culminated in Jesus becoming one of us and actually coming to earth to live with some people even if only for 33 years. We know what it looked like in the garden and a good idea in glory (although still on the fuzzy side) what does it mean for now? What does that look like now and if He really is with us, shouldn't that change the way we live?

This Advent we're going to be exploring God with us as to what it means for us. And the first passage we want to look at is how John the apostle began his gospel with Jesus' beginning. If we can call it that, because for John we have to go back to eternity past if we want to understand why God and Jesus WANT to dwell with us.

Mark ignores Jesus' birth and starts at the beginning of Jesus' ministry when John the Baptist comes to announce Jesus was here. Matthew starts with Jesus' birth, focusing on His Davidic lineage and fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. Luke gives more detail about Jesus' birth through Mary and traces Jesus' lineage back to Adam, as the fulfillment of God's promise in Gen. 3:15. But John goes as far back as any of us can know, before the beginning of time as we know it.

“In the beginning” is a clear link to Genesis so John is saying that Jesus already co-existed eternally, one with the Father and was equal partners with God in bringing ‘the beginning’ of all we know about earth to be.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

The term “word” is the Greek word ‘logos’. While the Greek philosophers of John’s day used ‘logos’ to describe an impersonal source of life, God already had coined the term to refer to how He logosed everything into existence and now John says “Jesus’ is God’s revelation; He’s the source of life. And it is through Jesus that all things were created. “All things” that we see around us and under us and above us and microscopi-cally and telescopically that which we can’t see. But even more important, Jesus made people. And the most important thing we need to remember and share with a world who doesn’t understand this is that

Jesus Made Each of us So We’ll Know We’re Valued **(1:1-4)**

We can only imagine a conversation that Jesus and God had as they were planning on creating the world. ‘So we’re going to create a world with people after our image who we’re going to let choose whether they follow us or not. But that means the close relationship You want will be broken.’ “Yes, I know”. ‘Can you fix that?’ “Yes”. ‘How?’ “*Through Your becoming one of them and dying for them to show how much I love them.*” And Jesus agreed with that before ‘the beginning’. Peter affirms this as true in 1 Pet. 1:18-20.

God created each human being uniquely. All people were made by God and Jesus with individuality by the wonderful imagination of God. Satan has people so confused that they think they can recreate themselves into something unique apart from God to “find themselves”, to find value and identity. But they are already valued and special by the One who made them. Because of sin, we only know about physical life which doesn’t ultimately satisfy us. So the Word came

That we may experience true life (vv.1-4)

Obviously, John means that being alive physically and getting this life are not the same thing. Since we are born with a sin nature we are missing this ‘life’. This life which we call ‘eternal life’ is a quality of life that one can only receive through Jesus.

⁴ *In him was life, and that life was the light of men.* ⁵ *The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

Sin is equated with darkness. Until we have our sins forgiven we don’t understand what life and light are in Jesus. The word for ‘understand’ can also mean ‘overcome’ so some of our translations say the darkness has not overcome it. Both are true. Light always repels darkness. If I stand in a dark room with a flashlight and someone opens a door to another dark room, the darkness does not overpower the light.

So until we come to Jesus – who alone is sinless and died for our sins – I cannot understand His light and I cannot overcome the darkness of my sin. But once I come to Jesus, I have new life, eternal-God like life that brings satisfaction and purpose that I never knew nor understood until He came to dwell in Me and therefore is always with you and me.

The amazing thing about Jesus choosing to become one of us and making the decision to die for our sins even before anything came to be means He chose to die ...

Knowing some would choose the darkness (vv.5-11)

Paul writes in Rom. 5:8

⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

On the cross Jesus cried out ‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing.’ He was dying and many were mocking Him, totally unaware of their own darkness and sinfulness. Yet, Jesus still chose to die for all of us knowing many would not turn to Him. John summarizes this as he continues and introduces John the Baptist who had to come first to prepare the way for Jesus to come.

⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

John the gospel writer never refers to himself as John in his gospel. Every reference to a John is always the Baptizer. Light and life come through Jesus alone. John’s and our role is to testify/witness of who Jesus is. The Jewish leaders rejected Jesus as Israel’s Messiah “His own”. Yet we could also extend the application to anyone who rejects Him because everyone is made through Him and if they reject Jesus they reject “their own” creator.

It boggles our minds that Jesus wants to be with us in spite of so many not wanting Him. But because He created us individually shows us how much He values us and wants each one to find light and life through Him. His heart aches for those He created who choose darkness over light. He urgently wants to save us from the penalty of sin; the complete opposite picture of those who view God and Jesus as harsh task masters waiting to pounce on us for every mistake we make. We’ll come back to this.

So why did He die for us?

¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

Jesus died for us so He and the Father

Could meet our real needs (vv.12-13)

Our sin has blinded us to God’s love and we only live for that which we see. But when we repent of our sins and believe in Jesus – explained as receiving Him – inviting Him to take control of our life so we now desire to obey His will. Which satisfies us far more than anything we’ve tried. And plugs the hole in our hearts that we’ve been trying to fill by pursuing the things of this world.

Even then, it’s still more of a work of God than it is our will. John calls it being born of God. Jesus will explain this in Ch. 3 with Nicodemus as being reborn; starting all over again, this time with God instead of apart from God. Now He literally is with us by His Spirit coming to dwell in us.

He gives us new life when we repent of our sins and accept Him. We become spiritually alive by confessing we are dead in our transgressions, without hope and without God, repenting of our sins, asking Jesus’ forgiveness. Jesus alone is the way to the Father.

The people of Jesus’ day had a hard time believing Jesus was the Messiah because He looked so human! But isn’t that what Is. 9:6 said?

For a child will be born to us, a son is given to us, ...

The crux of faith is to actually believe the person Jesus was the Messiah sent by God who was in fact the Son God given to Israel and us. Most of them rejected Him because they wanted a warrior not a teacher. They wanted military might more than miracles. So they rejected Him because He was so human; having parents and siblings. Can't be that guy, he's too normal. But

Jesus Became One of Us SO We Could Value God **(1:14-18)**

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

God's expression of Himself – Jesus, the Word – became one of us. The word “dwelling” literally means ‘tabernacled’ and is a clear reference to the Tabernacle in the wilderness. When God took Israel out of Egypt His first desire was to bring them in the wilderness where they would worship Him. In Ex. 25-40 God told them to make a Tabernacle and He would dwell with them. His shekinah glory – His presence through the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies, dwelled there. When they were camped the Tabernacle rested with His people.

When the Tabernacle transitioned to the Temple, the Temple was set on the highest spot of Jerusalem, overlooking everywhere. God was telling them I want to be with You. The greatest tragedy of course was when God's shekinah glory departed from the Temple during the time of the Babylonian captivity. Even though Israel came back in 536 to their land and rebuilt the Temple they awaited the presence to come back. The last OT prophet Malachi promised that the messenger would precede the coming of the Lord who would suddenly come to His temple (Mal. 3:1). Jesus came and tabernacled among His people. And even before He left Jesus said that when he departed He would send “another” like Him, the Holy Spirit who would be with us, and He dwells in each of us.

This has always been God's desire – to dwell with His creation in perfect peace and harmony. He became one of us to show us what God is like so we will value Him too.

Jesus showed us the Father (v.14, 18)

The Greek word for Glory means the true nature of; the essence of who one is. The creation (Ps. 19) reveals that an amazing God exists but Jesus has come so we get an even clearer picture of who God truly is. Heb 1:3 tells us

³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

‘Exact representation’ means exactly like the original. If you want to know what God is like look at Jesus. And what's Jesus like? The same as the Father

Full of grace and truth (vv.15-17)

“From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the Law was given through Moses grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Jesus spoke truth to us – our need to be saved from our sins – but He did it with love. He didn't give us only truth and that harshly, nor did He show us only grace ignoring our sin. He is full of both. And yet hasn't the world depicted God as harsh, brooding and moody, aloof and cold. Jesus comes along and says, 'Look at Me and see God! He is full of grace and truth as I have shown you grace and truth.

Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. That's why the people said Jesus spoke with authority because He spoke truth graciously. The Pharisees twisted the law (God's Word) to manipulate people to follow them. Jesus didn't force Himself on people. He spoke the truth graciously but didn't shy away from what was true. Since no one has ever seen God, Jesus who is now at the Father's side (at the time of John's writing since He had long rose from the dead) has made Him known.

So if we have learned about who Jesus and God truly are we have to respond:

We need to believe/receive Jesus

Only He makes it possible for us to know God. The only way we can know God is to fix the problem of our sin that separates us from God. Receiving what Jesus did for us as payment for our sins make us born again. A new start. A new kind of life. And this new kind of life should result in our wanting to

Follow Jesus to make Him known

The world has many false ideas about God. They see Him as either a happy old grandpa who winks at their sin and will welcome them home anyway. Or as a harsh taskmaster who wants to make life miserable for us. Jesus set the record straight. He came to be one of us so we could see and hear first hand what His Father is like; forgiving yet firm in truth, graciously patient yet does not force Himself upon us.

But He left to go back to his Father and now empowered us to be His witnesses (like John) and explain who Jesus is and what God is like. What's the best way to show that? Live a life as full of grace and truth as possible. Be like Jesus.

We have to allow the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, to follow His leading so we can produce Jesus characteristics of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control. Self-control because we're so tempted to react at the world's unkindness, impatience, ungentle and unloving words and actions. Jesus loves them because He created them. We are fellow humans so we need to show His grace of forgiveness and kindness towards them sharing His truth in a loving way so that they understand they are valued so highly that Jesus died for the very sins they heap up as evidence of their rejection of Him.

Perhaps if we show more grace than judgment and share the truth of our own lostness apart from Jesus' intervention in our life, we might see more of them understand who God and Jesus are and receive Him for themselves.

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