

**“Why Jesus Came”
John 1:14-18**

Big Idea – God used Jesus’ coming to show Himself to man.

ILLUS: Christmas miracle

After giving birth to her fourth child, Patti White Bull, from Albuquerque, New Mexico, lapsed into a coma for 16 years. But on Christmas day of the 16th year, she awoke and resumed normal day-to-day activities: able to dress herself, walk without support, and talk in complete sentences. Unlike most coma patients, who awake gradually, White Bull spontaneously, and many doctors say miraculously, became fully conscious and showed no signs of mental or physical handicap.

While experts are still at a loss to explain White Bull’s sudden healing, her family and friends vow that it was a Christmas miracle.

We have just come through Christmas and talked about the miracles of the Christmas story. It is filled with the mystery of angels and human impossibilities.

It contains the scandal of an unmarried pregnant fiancée and her future husband taking responsibility for her though he knows he is not the father of the child but the Holy Spirit of God is. It involves an announcement of the Messiah being born to those that were on the lowest social stratum. The Virgin Birth is a wonderful, miraculous story.

And do you know why it has happened the way it has?
It is because...

God wants us to know Him.

John’s approach to describing what we call the incarnation is much different than say the gospel of Luke.

What takes Luke 2,500 words to describe, John does with four.

In one short, shattering expression, John unveils the great idea that is at the very heart of Christianity. He writes, “The Word became flesh...”

The Word (Jesus) became flesh because God wants us to know Him.

And because God wants us to know Him, He has chosen to reveal Himself to us.

So...

In John 1:14-18, we find five reasons Jesus came to show God to us.

1. INVISIBILITY (18).

“No one has ever seen God”

“The unveiled essence of deity has never been given to mortal sight.” (Tenney)

John wants to remind us that the essence of God, completely uncovered, had yet to be seen.

Every manifestation of God in the Old Testament was partial and approximate and did not reveal God's essential being.

There was a sense of awe of God, being wholly other, out of the reach of mankind.

ILL Notebook: God (somethin bigger than Phil)

Several years ago, Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks did a comedy skit called the "2013 Year Old Man". In the skit, Reiner interviews Brooks, who is the old gentleman. At one point, Reiner asks the old man, "Did you always believe in the Lord?"

Brooks replied: "No. We had a guy in our village named Phil, and for a time we worshiped him."

Reiner: You worshiped a guy named Phil? Why?

Brooks: Because he was big, and mean, and he could break you in two with his bare hands!

Reiner: Did you have prayers?

Brooks: Yes, would you like to hear one? O Phil, please don't be mean, and hurt us, or break us in two with your bare hands.

Reiner: So when did you start worshiping the Lord?

Brooks: Well, one day a big thunderstorm came up, and a lightning bolt hit Phil. We gathered around and saw that he was dead. Then we said to one another, "There's somethin' bigger than Phil!"

Well, as the skit humorously demonstrates, invisibility does not mean God does not exist.

But that has been the conclusion of some.

Yuri Gagarin, the first Soviet cosmonaut in 1961 said in space, "I don't see any God out here." Even though the essence of God is spirit and unseen, it does not mean that God has not chosen to reveal Himself.

He has carefully and thoughtfully revealed Himself to us.
This leads us to...

2. **MORALITY** (17).

"For the law was given through Moses"

1. God shows His character through the **law**

Simply, the law is God's expectation of righteousness.

We see what God is like by the standards He sets for His people. But God does something else as well.

The law is a witness to grace and truth.

It is not its opposite.

God tells us the truth in the law.

And God tells us about His loving nature and desire to treat us with grace. So much so, He shares with us how He is going to solve the problem of our sin. It is through the Messiah.

2. The law was given to lead us to the Messiah (Galatians 3:24).

Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians:

So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

The law's task was to lead us to the Messiah.

The law's task was to lead us to our Savior.

This is so that we would acknowledge that our salvation was apart from our own effort.

It comes from God alone.

So grace and truth are present in the law, but their ultimate expression comes in the Word fleshed out

The law was a partial revelation.

Jesus, the Messiah, is the full revelation.

3. HUMANITY (14).

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us"

1. Jesus became what He made.

God, as Jesus the Messiah, expressed Himself in human personality that was visible, audible and tangible.

He partook of the flesh with its limitations of space and time.

He shared in the physical handicaps of fatigue, hunger, and suffering.

And note this...

He did not clothe himself in flesh.

He became flesh.

2. He came to live **among** us as **one** of us.

The Word was translated into a language we could understand.

The invisible God became visible and made His home here.

He settled down and became one of us.

ILL Morris commentary

Laurence Housman has written

Light looked down and beheld Darkness.

"Thither will I go," said Light.

Peace looked down and beheld War.

"Thither will I go," said Peace.

Love looked down and beheld Hatred.

"Thither will I go," said Love.

So came Light and shone.

So came Peace and gave rest.

So came Love and brought life.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

--Laurence Housman

The idea of God dwelling among men in human flesh is more than we could ever have hoped.

It is more than we shall ever be able to grasp.

It should inspire a sense of wonder and awe that will last throughout time and eternity.

4. REALITY (14).

“We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

1. God wants to be seen.

It was John’s testimony that God had been seen.

It was His glory.

It was meant to remind his readers of the “Shekinah-glory” of the Old Testament—the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. the Shekinah was God’s dwelling among His people.

Angel of the Lord was God appearing as Jesus in OT, aka Christophany

Then John describes Jesus as what the King James translates as “the only begotten.”

Although that is a literal translation, the word had taken a different meaning in John’s time of “unique,” “unparalleled,” and “incomparable.”

To describe this uniqueness, some translators use the phrase “the One and Only.”

They wish us to understand that there exists between God the Father and God the Son the closest and deepest intimacy that there can be.

So John affirms to us the mystery that they are the same and separate at the same time.

This happens all because God wants to be seen.

ILL Notebook: Grace (grapes)

When Diana Turro’s son, Evan, was three, they started a bedtime ritual of singing Christian songs. He particularly liked "Amazing Grace." One day as Diana was driving, Evan asked her to sing him a song. When she asked him which one he’d like to hear, he responded, "You know, that song about those amazing grapes."

Well, grace is amazing.

2. God loves us.

God is love.

He is full of grace.

And when grace is poured out on our behalf, it is more than adequate. It is abundantly adequate.

God demonstrates the reality about Himself and us.

God is full of truth.

And He, as the embodiment and communicator of truth, He tells us the truth.

Here is the truth we need to hear...we need help!

We need His grace!

Which leads us to...

5. GENEROSITY (16).

“From the fullness of his grace
we have all received one blessing after another”

1. God wants to serve us with grace.

We desperately need grace.

What is great about this is that God wants to give it to us.

He wants to share continuous, uninterrupted grace that knows no limit.

He wants us to live the adventure of a life that is fully dependent on Him.

ILL Notebook: Grace (Knight)

Long-time Indiana basketball coach Bobby Knight was recently fired for violating a zero-tolerance policy placed on him earlier this year. Knight’s volatile temper has made for a stormy coaching career, bringing repeated accusations of verbally and physically abusing players.

As one follows the media report of this sad story, a thought struck me: I’m sure glad God doesn’t place a zero-tolerance policy on us! His amazing grace allows us to start over at any time.

You see, God wants to treat you with grace.

He wants to forgive all your sins...all of them!

And it is not beyond Him.

The apostle Paul states that where sin increases, grace increases all the more.

For the life that Jesus offers is extraordinary and extravagant beyond your ability to imagine.

It is rich and overflowing.

But grace does not stop there

2. “As the grace you receive flows out to others, more grace will come...” (Hughes)

The translators have come up with several ways to get the idea across to us.

“Grace upon grace,” “grace following grace,” and “grace heaped up upon grace” are all legitimate ways to get the concept across to us.

As we act with grace, it keeps flowing.

The blessings come to us and flow out to others.

And the best news is that the flow never stops.

We can live “Grace-Full” lives!

There was a man that was a kind, decent, and mostly good man. Generous to his family, upright in his dealings with other men. But he just didn’t believe all that incarnation stuff which the churches proclaim at Christmas Time. It just didn’t make sense and he was too honest to pretend otherwise. He just couldn’t swallow the Jesus Story, about God coming to Earth as a man.

"I’m truly sorry to distress you," he told his wife, "but I’m not going with you to church this Christmas Eve." He said he’d feel like a hypocrite. That he’d much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them. And so he stayed and they went to the midnight service.

Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier and then went back to his fireside chair and began to read his newspaper. Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound. Then another, and then another. Sort of a thump or a thud. At first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against his living room window.

But when he went to the front door to investigate he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, had tried to fly through his large landscape window. Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze, so he remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter, if he could direct the birds to it.

Quickly he put on a coat, galoshes, tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light, but the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice them in. So he hurried back to the house, fetched bread crumbs, sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail to the yellow-lighted wide open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs, and continued to flap around helplessly in the snow.

He tried catching them. He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around them waving his arms. Instead, they scattered in every direction, except into the warm, lighted barn. And then, he realized, that they were afraid of him. To them, he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me. That I am not trying to hurt them, but to help them. But how? Because any move he made tended to frighten them, confuse them. They just would not follow. They would not be led or shooed because they feared him.

"If only I could be a bird," he thought to himself, "and mingle with them and speak their language. Then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to a safe, warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see, and hear and understand."

At that moment the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind. And he stood there listening to the bells – "O Come All Ye Faithful" - listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. And he sank to his knees in the snow.

This man rediscovered this truth...The Word became flesh.
JESUS CAME FOR US.

Now it is time for us to respond...