

John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made, without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God---children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' 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. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only who is at the Father's side has made him known.

"Word Becoming Flesh"

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God . . .

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth."

John 1:14a

In "Word becoming flesh . . . the Disguise of the Divine," Rev. Fred Craddock commented

"And the Word Became Flesh" is a Christological affirmation of a radical nature with far-reaching implications for our thinking

*Emerging from
the granite prison
is a human being,
taking shape
before our eyes.
The struggle to burst
forth — stone becoming
human form —
stirs us to imagine
God's Word
becoming flesh.*



Michelangelo, Awakening Prisoner

about God, life in the world, and what it means to be Christian. Analogies about changing clothes, as in the stories of a (ruler) who wears peasant clothing in order to move among his subjects freely, are not adequate for clarifying John 1:14. The church has always had members who wanted to protect their Christ from John 1:14 with phrases such as “seemed to be,” “appeared,” and “in many ways was like” flesh. Whatever else John 1:14 means, it does state without question the depth, the intensity, and the pursuit of God’s love for the world.

Christmas united Word and Flesh with Love. For Christians, this means that our embodiment is Holy. Celebrating this sacramental nature of our flesh, Rev. Caldwell reflected: (Dec. 25 Daily Devotional, “Flesh”)

This is what we celebrate: that God, who didn’t need one, got a body. That God was so hungry to be close to us that nothing---not eternity, not power, not immortality---was too much to give up, and nothing---not time, not weakness, not a mortal body---was too much to take on. This is what we celebrate: God with a body. So it’s fitting that so many of our Christmas traditions have to do with delights of the flesh: eating, drinking, singing, hugging and kissing, seeing beautiful things, hearing beautiful sounds, smelling good smells. Each is an opportunity for worship and praise. So . . . take time to consecrate your fleshly pleasures to the God that consecrated your flesh by taking it on. Make them sacraments: Marvel at the miracle of food and drink. Be astounded by the sanctity of human touch. Wonder at the beauty around you, delight in making and hearing sounds of praise, revel in a beautiful smell. Celebrate with your body, and say that God is great. During Christmastide this is what we celebrate: that bodies are good, and flesh is a gift and our God put them both on for us.

Christmas united Word and Flesh with Love. For Christians, this Means that the words of Jesus are Holy and True. Rev. Eugene Petersen explained (Tell It Slant, p.10):

The words that God uses to create and name and bless and command in Genesis are the same words we hear Jesus using to create, and name, and heal and bless and command in the gospels. Jesus speaks and we hear God speak.

Jesus used sacred words in different ways. He preached. Preaching revealed the good news that “God is alive, present, and in action.” Preaching is Biblical Word, God’s Presence, Holy Spirited Action. Jesus taught. He summed up the five books of Moses into the First and Second Great Commands; taught the Beatitudes; instructed the Twelve; guided the discipleship community, warned against hypocrisy, and taught on the Last Things. His teaching expanded on what was proclaimed. He connected the dots for living the kingdom life in the here and now . . . instructing his disciples on the implications of scripture. Jesus preached, taught, and talked with people along the streets, at the market, at the supper table. When he talked with individuals, God’s language became personal and relevant. He helped ordinary folk hear the echo of Truth in their lives, feel listened to and understood, and name healing at their point of need.

Jesus, The Word Made Flesh sacramentally united Word and Flesh in Love for the glory of God. He gave himself as Christ, full of grace and truth, to be faith’s Great “I Am” for the salvation of the world.

“I am the light of the world.” (8:12)

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” (14:6)

“I am the true vine.” (15:1)

“I am the resurrection and the life.”(11:25)

“I am the Good Shepherd.” (10:11 and 14)

“I am the gate for the sheep.” (10:7)

“I am the bread of life.” (6:35)

Let us pray. We try, as best we can, to live by bread alone, or pie or cake or sweet rolls. And then comes your word! In our hearing we are reminded that we live by every word that proceeds from your mouth, promise and gifts, blessings and threats, summons and commands, assurances and requirements. We thank you for bread, and for the many cakes, pies and sweet rolls that inhabit our life of privilege. While we munch, give us ears, make us better listeners, give us patience with our odd utterances, give us openness to your new utterances, we vow to listen. We pray in the name of your fleshed utterance become our bread. Amen. (Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth by Walter Bruggemann, p. 67)