

John 1:1-18

2nd Sunday after Christmas

Sometimes when we talk of Jesus we begin by talking of sin. Maybe you've heard the discussion of a world created good, and sin creeping in through serpent and Eve and Adam. And sin being passed from every parent to every child, everyone born human a sinner. Yes sometimes talk of Jesus begins there.

And then it is said that God had to become human to deal with sin. For only God could lead a sinless life and only a human could play the price and that's why God sent Jesus.

And somehow a person could get the impression that if things had worked out the way God intended in the beginning there would never have been the tasting of that fruit and Adam and Eve would have lived on and on and on in that garden, and Jesus never would have been. Can you imagine that! Telling the story of Jesus in a way that seems to say that everything would have been better if Jesus had never been needed, that he was simply the solution to a problem.

Well, when the writer of the gospel we call John tells the story of Jesus he begins in a different place altogether.

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.

Before there was anything - before any creation, any garden, any humans even dreamed, ~~was~~ the one who came to dwell with us in Jesus already was.

John says he was the word. I think of that as what God spoke- like "Let there be light" The word coming from God, the means of God's own self creating, full of all the power of God pushing back the waters and tossing out a universe of stars not with hands, nor even with an idea but with speaking, a word.

John says, "In the word was life and the life was the light of humans" The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

And the word became flesh and lived among us and we have beheld his glory,

glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

God did not need another reason at all to put ^{the word} Jesus into flesh and blood except to show him off. God's glory the glory as a father's only son shown in Jesus. Grace Truth.

Sometimes you just have to see it. The moon rises huge - telling about it is not the same.

Sometimes a baby is so cute - a picture doesn't begin to capture the child, and words describing? - ask any grandparent - only seeing and holding and being with that child will really count.

An architect can make some beautiful drawings, use a computer to produce some marvelously ^{real} pictures but until the building is built and people dwell in it and are shaped by it it is only an idea.

This was something God dreamed of doing from the very beginning - the word becoming flesh in Jesus.

John says, "From his fullness we have received grace upon grace.

I should just stop for a time this morning and let you tell your stories of grace upon grace coming to you in Jesus Christ. One would tell of a fresh start when none was deserved.

Another would speak of faith given in the desperation of battle.

Why just yesterday at the morning Bible study we all heard one say what it meant to know that when this life was ended that Jesus had prepared a place.

Yes, we will talk about what Jesus has done for us but again John does not present Jesus as the means to our ends, as if our need is the only reason he is.

John says: No one has ever seen God, the only son who is close to the Father's heart, he has made him known.

Making God known. Now that is a reason. Showing God's glory. Being God's love.

Any way you and I tell the story of Jesus so that it sounds as if we are the reason for his existence, that's ridiculous.

But I don't know how to tell the story in any other way.

Even John says, For God so loved the world that he sent his son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. And if sounds as if God would never have sent Jesus if it weren't for you. Your need ^{for} God to send JEsus to save you.

Jesus said of himself, the son of man came not to be served but to give his life as a ransom for many.

Where does love begin? When we are young we might think love is created by the object loved. But then we get to see a man faithfully devoted to a wife of many years who now is stricken by Alzheimers. She is hardly at all the person she was yet he loves with the same love. For love comes from his heart.

God's love for you is born in the heart of God and expressed in the living and dying and being raised of Jesus. From his fullness we have received grace upon grace. Love piled upon love is what God gives you in Jesus.

Every time I get that confused I am off on a race to please God and get full of worry and anxiety about how i am doing. and either get very proud of myslef or very discouraged about myself but mostly I forget all about God for it seems that the whole story of Jesus is really about me.

But the truth is that in the beginning God was planning the love God has for you and me that we know as Jesus. And At the end God will find nothing more important to be doing than to be expressing the love for you that is Jesus.

Count on it. Count on Jesus.