

“In the Flesh” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Christmas Day December 25, 2025

- I. **John 1:1; 14a** - ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.
- II. **Today we have one of the most profound readings in the Bible.**
 - a. If there was any doubt that Jesus Christ is God, it is hard to argue with John outright saying that the Word is Jesus Christ and that Word is God.
 - i. Augustine once said that we just aren't able to comprehend this idea of Jesus becoming human as He did, but mystery is a good thing, because it allows God to be God – He's bigger than we can possibly understand.
 - ii. I suppose there will always be those who harden their hearts against the idea of Jesus and His divinity... and that He could forgive the sins of all through His death and resurrection.
 - b. Way back when St. John wrote the Gospel we read today, there was a heresy called Docetism which comes from the Greek word, dokew, or to seem.
 - i. Teachers of this false belief system said that Jesus didn't actually take on flesh and become a real human... it just seemed that way.
 - ii. They just could not believe that God would actually lower Himself to the level of humanity like He did.
 1. But John, in our Gospel today, wants to be sure we know the truth – “I am an eyewitness... I walked with this Man, hugged Him, cried with Him, and ate with Him. I spent 3 years of my life with Him and no one can honestly say He was just an illusion.”
 2. No, Jesus Christ was sent in the flesh to save real people... the Word became flesh to save real people – like you and me.
 3. It is also true that Jesus' divine nature was veiled... the people around Him only caught glimpses of His glory until after He rose from the dead... but that doesn't change the fact that He's God.
 4. Sometimes the most amazing things can happen right in front of us and we no clue.
 - c. I've used this illustration before, but we don't always recognize when we're in the midst of greatness...
 - i. A famous violinist named Joshua Bell owns and plays a Stradivarius worth 15 million dollars to packed concert halls... and he decided to do a little experiment on the subway platform in Washington DC.
 - ii. He put a baseball cap on with jeans and a t-shirt, and he played a 45-minute concert.
 - iii. I guess they counted almost 1100 people who walked by, and out of all of them, only seven people stopped to listen.

- iv. He made about \$32 in dollar bills and change... which is very funny because his concerts can easily command \$400 a ticket.
- v. One woman recognized Joshua Bell though, and she sat there, front and center with a giant grin on her face.
 - 1. She was interviewed and said, “It was the most astonishing thing I’ve ever seen in Washington. Joshua Bell was standing there playing at rush-hour, and people were not stopping, and not even looking, and some more flipping quarters at him! Quarters! I was thinking, ‘Oh my gosh, what kind of a city do I live in that this could happen?’”¹
- d. It seems the Joshua Bell experiment is a microcosm of the life of Jesus.
 - i. People overlook the beauty of the Christ Child – the One Who came in the flesh into our ordinary world to fix the brokenness that began just after creation.

III. **This failure to recognize God** in His creation is not new... It is as old as humanity itself.

- a. The Bible says, “¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² He was with God in the beginning. [This is Genesis stuff here] ³Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.” (John 1:1-5)
 - i. Jesus Christ is the fix for the darkness and sin that has overcome this world and even you.
 - ii. None of us can look around and say that evil and sin don’t exist... although it is hard to admit that it resides in us.
 - iii. Every human being has inherited the sin of our ancestors, Adam and Eve as they disobeyed God’s command... but listen to what Colossians 1 says:
 - 1. ¹² [God the Father] He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to His people, who live in the light. ¹³ For He has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of His dear Son,¹⁴ who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.¹⁵ Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,¹⁶...Everything was created through Him and for Him... ²² Yet now [the Father] has reconciled you to Himself through the death of Christ in His physical body...” (Colossians 1:12-16; 22)
 - 2. And that physical body... God in the flesh... was broken and crucified on the cross for you.
- b. Again, we go back to the wonderful fact that Jesus really is God – All things were created by Him and for Him – and God the Father chose to change

your inheritance of sin through Adam and Eve to an inheritance of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ.

- i. Stop for a moment... sit down and enjoy the music of what I just said.
- ii. Without faith in Jesus, we have no hope and are dead in our trespasses and sin, (Ephesians 2:1) but with faith in Jesus, He died and rose again for the purification of your sins. (Hebrews 1:3)
- iii. As the sin in us constantly wants to reject God... to distance ourselves from His glory... to ignore the gifts that He gives us... The Christ Child catches our attention as an extraordinary event in a very ordinary package.
 1. The solution to everything is the Baby found in a manger... somehow, even though it's hard to understand, this Baby is the solution to our sin... the great chasm that separates us from God.
 2. The baby Jesus came into the world to redeem sinners... and after many years of heartache and rejection, Jesus the Man would have His physical body broken for us upon the cross

IV. **God in the flesh the great surprise** and wondrous mystery of Christmas.

- a. Because God shows up in a place where we certainly don't expect to find Him: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14).
- b. God the Word, Who was there in the beginning and participated in the creation of all things, took on a human nature like yours.
 - i. The Uncreated became a creature... the Infinite became limited and bound... the Eternal became subject to time.
 - ii. The Word became flesh, Jesus Christ, true God and true man in one person.
- c. I know that I might be preaching to the choir today, or that you might recognize the truth of Jesus Christ and His divine nature.
 - i. However, the world is full of scoffers that look at Christianity like it is one of many ways to know God – if God exists at all.
 - ii. In the midst of that kind of darkness we are called to point right to Jesus Christ.
 1. And yes, they might initially think that Jesus is just another hack musician in a subway – but as they continue to listen, the music becomes more clear and more beautiful... it begins to ring true.
 - iii. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us – He is the Savior – and that Man, Who is also God, died and rose again to pay for the sin of the world... but even more personally... He paid for your sins and mine...
 - iv. Let the music ring out... God has come in the flesh... the little babe in Bethlehem is born and you are forgiven!! Amen.

¹ Gene Weingarten, *The Fiddler in the Subway* (Simon and Schuster, 2010), page 360