

Text: John 1:1-18

Theme: And the Word became Flesh

Sermon delivered by Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi during Christmas Day Holy Communion Service on 25/12/2017 at 10.30am

The key verse in John 1 that shows Christmas orientation is verse 14: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." This is the meaning of Christmas. God has come into the world, born of virgin, in the person of Jesus Christ. John 1 is so full of particular truths about Jesus Christ that we desperately need to know and embrace.

This is especially important today because, even the major non-Christian religions of the world are speaking these days as though they esteem and honour and, in some sense, believe in Jesus. You hear this from Muslim leaders who want to draw the fact that they even honour Jesus more than we do because they do not think God would allow him to suffer the ignominious death of a criminal on the cross. So it is crucial that Christians know Jesus Christ very well, and can tell the difference between the Christ of the Bible and the Christ which other religions claim to honour.

My aim is that you might see him for who he is and be moved to receive Him as your Lord and your God and your all-surpassing Treasure. And if you have already received Him, I pray that you will embrace him, and treasure him and delight in him and follow him and display Him more than you ever have. So let's begin with clear truths about the "Word-Made-Flesh" in this passage.

- **The Name of the Word-Made-Flesh on Earth Is Jesus Christ (V.17-18).**

Christ made his way into the world of humanity that first Christmas because He wanted to share with us a common humanity and reveal God to us. It's always helpful to put yourself even temporarily in someone else's shoes in order to feel the throb of their hearts and relate to them properly.

- **There is also the necessity and reality of His sacrifice.**

A chicken and a pig were walking down the street one day and noticed some poor children who looked as if they hadn't eaten anything for days. Moved with compassion, the chicken said to the pig, "I have an idea! Let's give those children a nice breakfast of ham and eggs." The pig contemplated the chicken's suggestion and said, "Well, for you, that would involve a small sacrifice; but for me, it would involve total commitment!"

When Jesus came to save us from sin, he knew that it would cost him his life. He went to the cross anyway to offer to us eternal life. His commitment to us was total.

At this Christmas time we need to remind ourselves that love is not measured by the size of a gift or the beauty of a verbal profession. It is best measured by a willingness to sacrifice. By that measure, love certainly did come down at Christmas. Christ was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice.

- **Finally, there is the reassurance of His presence.**

Does it matter that he is Immanuel, God with us? Does he really light our poor lives here and now? He does.

The Word-Made-Flesh Existed as God and with God before He Was Born as a Man on Earth.

See Verse 1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Verse 10 tells us that: "He was in the world, and *the world was made through him*, yet the world did not know him." The point here seems to underline the seriousness of the world's

blindness, and the greatness of the world's evil in rejecting Jesus. He comes to us as our *Maker*, and *still* the world will not receive him.

Yet we are told in John 1:4 that "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men." All life originates in the Word. That is obvious because, as we have seen already, he is the Creator of all things. But here the focus is probably on spiritual life. **In other words, there are two overwhelming problems we humans face: we are spiritually dead and therefore spiritually blind. John is saying here: Jesus is the remedy to both of these problems:** He has the life we need, and this life becomes the Light we need. John 5:21 says, "The Son gives life to whom he will." In other words, he does for us spiritually what he did for Lazarus when he stood before Lazarus' tomb and said to the dead man, "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11:43).

And how does that life, given by Jesus, relate to light? In two ways. One is that it enables us to see. When dead people are given life, they see. Or, to change the image, when you are born, you see. So it is spiritually. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is *born* again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). So **first Jesus gives *life* and then that life becomes *light* – the ability to see spiritual reality.**

The other way that the life Jesus gives relates to light is not that it enables you to see, but that Jesus himself is the Light that is seen. What, after all, are we blind to, when we are unbelievers? We are blind to the truth and beauty and worth – the glory – of Jesus.

Finally, then what are the responses you might give to all this revelation about Jesus Christ, the Word-Made-Flesh?

One Response is described in verses 10-11: I Do Not Know Him and I Do Not Receive Him: "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. (11) He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him." You might hear this and say, "I do not know him and I do not receive him." That is a very frightening thing to say about your Maker and your Life and your Light. At the very least I plead with you, Don't say that lightly this Christmas.

Another Response is found in verses 12-13: I Know Him and I Receive Him

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, (13) who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." This is the response I pray for this morning. Receive this great Word-Made-Flesh. Receive him as Saviour and King and God and Word and Creator and Life and Light. And all that God is for you in him!

Christmas is like God sending his Son into the world to find all the Bin Ladens of the world, hiding in the caves of darkness and death. Instead of throwing flames into the caves, he first stands at the mouth of the caves and says, "Come out into the light for I have died on the cross for sinners; if you will receive me as your God and your Substitute and your Treasure, my death counts for your death and my righteousness counts as your righteousness, and you will have eternal life."

A relationship with Jesus Christ means, first of all, that we live under His Lordship. There comes that time when we acknowledge that we are his. He is our Sovereign, our King, the Ruler of our lives.

It means that we live under His Lordship, but also that we live under His Leadership daily. We become children of God, but that does not mean that we remain simply children. We grow, we mature.

We live under His Lordship; we live under His leadership. Most importantly, we live under His Love. When we say that we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, are we not saying that Jesus Christ can be as real to us as the person sitting beside us right now?

Isn't what you really want this Christmas is to know deep in your heart that you can be more than you are today? That you have a right to become a child of God? Isn't what you really want to know is that you can live the next 365 days confidently aware that your life matters? To know that God is with you and that you can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens you? "To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."