

Christ's Glory in the Incarnation (part 1)

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[0:00] John chapter 1, and we'll be reading verses 1 through 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.

[1:10] Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision, or of 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 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.

Are you enchanted with Jesus? Someone once said, There are these four ages about nearly everything. The unenchanted age, the enchanted age, the disenchanted age, and the re-enchanted age.

[2:22] As a little child, I was unenchanted about bicycles, and then I first learned to ride. I was enchanted. By 16, I was disenchanted.

And now I am re-enchanted. That's what He said. So are you unenchanted, enchanted, disenchanted, or maybe re-enchanted with Jesus?

If you're unconverted, then you're unenchanted with Jesus. You don't see His glory. You've never been initiated to the goodness of knowing the Lord, to His love and to His grace.

Maybe you are disenchanted. So at one time, the Holy Spirit opened your eyes. You were enchanted.

You saw glory in Jesus, and you sang, Oh, how marvelous! Oh, how wonderful! Is my Savior's love for me! You sang it, and you meant it.

[3:23] And then you started the difficult task of Christian living. Or maybe life took you down some surprising turns, and you ended up in a place that you never wanted to be.

with a dead-end job, a broken family. Or maybe life is good. There's lots of ways to lose your enchantment with Jesus.

Maybe life is good, and you're caught up with the working, and the buying, and the planning, and going to the games, and doing projects, and going on trips, and you're swept away with everything the world has to offer.

In any case, now you sing, Oh, how marvelous! Oh, how wonderful! Is my Savior's love for me! You sing it because that's what you're supposed to do as a Christian.

You sing songs like that. Well, if that is you, for any of those cases, what you need is to be re-enchanted, brought back into the wonder of Jesus Christ, if that is you, you probably have

noticed that nothing else is satisfying you.

[4:40] No amount of buying and selling, no amount of going and having fun has satisfied you. No escape mechanisms. And what you need is Jesus.

What you need is re-enchantment with Jesus to get that wonder and that glory that you first had.

And His greatness needs to move you and thrill you again.

And that is the whole point of this series. It's something that I need. It's something that we all need in our Christian lives to have Jesus fill us up. And so, we're these deep-sea divers.

And last week, we examined one coral reef. We looked at that Jesus is the image of the unseen God. When we see Jesus, we see God.

And when we hear Jesus, we hear God. Through Jesus, we come to know God. And He's glorious because He's the only one that can show us the love of God and the goodness of God in its fullness.

[5:40] Well, this week, we swim into another bay, into another coral reef. We're looking at something different today. And it's this. The Word became flesh.

Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great. He appeared in a body. For in Christ, all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form.

Though being in very nature God, He made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. So today, we're going to look at the incarnation.

Infinite God infinite God became one person with finite man. Infinite God, finite man, and one person.

Angels turn their eyes away at mysteries so bright. And so tonight, we can only stick our toes into the water because eternity itself will not explain to us the greatness of this mystery.

[7:00] But we have to start somewhere. And so, we want to start tonight by asking how we can see the glory of the incarnation. What I mean is, what shows me the glory of the incarnation?

How can I see how wonderful and amazing it is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became a man? three ways.

And the first is this. We see the glory of the incarnation in His stooping and His humbling Himself in who the Son of God came for.

In who the Son of God came for. We sing, man of sorrows, what a name for the Son of God who came. Do you remember the next line? Ruined sinners to reclaim.

So, who did the Son of God come for? Ruined sinners. You'll never see the glory of Christ until you see the condition in which we were in without Him.

[8:07] How ruined we were. We were ruined in Adam. sin entered the world through one man and death through sin and in this way death came to all men because all sinned.

Children, did you know that you were born guilty? You were born guilty because your father, Adam, sinned. Adam was our representative. If he would have obeyed, we would have been happy forevermore.

if he would have obeyed, we would have never died. Only when we see how much we lost, what we've accrued because of Adam, what's been counted toward us, death and ruin because of what he did.

If Adam obeyed, we would have never sinned, we would have never died, but Adam fell and with him you fell and I fell. And we became what we never were before, what mankind never was until that fall, evil, haunted, filled with every unclean thing.

Our mouths were open graves. Our tongues practiced deceit. The poison of vipers was on our lips. In other words, we had Satan's mouth.

[9:31] And the father of lies, was the one that we took after him and we lied. We had Satan's mouth, Satan's tongue. Ruin and misery marked our way.

We saw it this morning and we've seen it in the morning where we became spiritual lepers. And so we spread our death with whoever we came into contact with.

Devastation followed us. Ruin and misery marked our ways. That's like saying you can tell where I was because wherever I went there was ruin.

There was misery. So you can look behind you in your life. And what is behind you? Hurt. Pain.

Blood. Broken promises. Hurt relationships. Ruin and misery marked our ways. There was no fear of God.

[10:26] No reverence. No awe of God. We live in a God saturated world. The glory of God. The heavens declare the glory of God.

But we suppressed the truth and unrighteousness. It's not that we couldn't see that glory. It's that we didn't want to see it. And so we pushed it down. We pushed it out of our minds and we pretended like it wasn't there.

And so young people and children listened to me and teenagers listened to me because I was right where you were doing my thing enjoying my life doing what I wanted.

And as I look back at my life I can see that the worst thing I ever did was to hear the gospel and not care about it.

God made me and I just didn't care. about him. I didn't even care enough to be angry at him. To really openly hate him.

[11:31] What I did was even worse. I didn't think he was worth my anger or my hatred. He wasn't even worth my attention. And that thought makes me quake to think about it.

Why didn't he just tee me up and send me straight to hell? I think that's probably what I would have done. I don't know. It was grace.

We live in a God-saturated world but there's no reverence. That's what we were, ruined in death. As for you, you were dead in trespasses and sins. Dead.

Dead but still moving. What moved us? What spirit animated us? You followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

Who did Jesus come for? Who did he humble himself for and take on the form of a servant for? It was for satanically controlled. The living dead.

[12:35] We were dead and yet we walked. So you get the picture. We were spiritual zombies. We spread our death wherever we went. Moving at the impulse of the devil, gratifying the cravings of our flesh, following its desires and thoughts.

Like the rest, we were objects of wrath. Do you see the glory of Christ's incarnation then? Who did he come for?

He came for wretches, for ruins, for nightmares, for horrors, spreading death wherever we went.

Helpless, hopeless, but God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son.

God sent him into the world not to condemn it, but to save it. And so the son of God became man for sinners. And so as a Christian, when you doubt God's love for you, look at Jesus.

And you can look at him now. He bears a human nature. He has joined humanity because he had mercy on sinners. He came when you were ruined.

[13:47] if we made a gospel, and we are so good at making gospels, if we made a gospel, we would say that he would come for the worthy and the holy, and there wouldn't be any hope for us.

Or we would say that he would come for the distressed And the innocent! For those who are calling out and seeking him, but who does Jesus come for? He comes for the complacent, for those who don't seek him, for those who are blind to him, and for the wicked.

Not just because they're ignorant, because they are innocently So, but because we chose that way. So, sinner, there's hope for you in Jesus.

He came to save sinners. He took on finite humanity to save sinners, not the righteous. So, are you unrighteous? Are you broken?

Are you guilty? Then you can rejoice because there is a gospel for you, for sinners. The Son of God joined himself to humanity forever for the wicked sons of men to save them.

[14:58] Now, you see the glory of Christ and who he came for. And you can never see the glory of Christ until you put yourself into that category of I'm a sinner and he came for me.

He humbled himself and he stooped so low for me. And when you see that, then you start to see the glory of Christ, glory of his incarnation.

But then second, you see the glory of the incarnation and how far he stooped. How far he lowered himself.

himself. How far did he stoop? How far did he lower himself?

This is where words, they can say something, but in the end they don't say anything. He stooped at infinite distance. An infinite distance. There's no measure.

[16:02] There's no proportion. If you're going to see the glory of Christ's stoop, then you have to see his original glory. You have to understand how high he was. And you can't comprehend the

greatness of God, and so you cannot even begin to comprehend how far that stoop was for him to become man.

But yet we're going to try. The shorter catechism says how many persons are in the Godhead?

There are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. John 1, 1, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was God. Same in substance. That means all that it meant to be God, that's what he was.

Equal in power, the Son had as much power as the Father did. equal in glory. No difference in the innate glory that he had.

[17:14] The glory he had of himself was the same as God. He didn't worship God. He was God. He wasn't created by God.

He was God. He did not learn from God. He was God. He did not come into being after God. He was God. The angels bowed down to him.

The saints pray to him. The heavens were made for him. So how far did he stoop? How far did he come down? What can we say?

who shut up the sea behind doors? Who gave orders to the morning or showed the dawn its place?

Who loosed Pleiades or cut the cords of Orion?

Who laughs at kings? Who drives out demons? Who has held the dust of the earth in his basket?

Who has weighed the mountains on the scales?

[18:14] The nations are a drop in his bucket. They're dust on his scales. They are nothing less than nothing. How far did he stoop to become one of us?

Infinitely far. How far did he humble himself? Infinite humility. The heavens are his throne and the earth is his footstool.

he sits on the heavens like a chair. Children, all the glory of heaven, all the glory of heaven is God's chair.

Heaven is a wonderful place. For God, it is a throne. It is a place to sit. So do you ever stop and notice the glory of your chair? Well, you have to stop if you're going to even notice it.

So how great is God? God, he has to stoop in order to look into the heavens. He has to condescend and even notice the smallness of the heavens.

[19:20] The earth is his footstool. So the earth, the nations, the continents, the Sahara desert, the Pacific, the mountains, what are those? Those are lines on the fabric of his footstool.

They're places that we die. They're places that we stand and wonder and gaze and yet they're just parts of his footstool. The parts where he props his feet up on.

So how far did he stoop to take on flesh, to join himself to finite humanity? Well, he was by very nature God, but he made himself nothing, taking the very form of a servant.

You see, the picture that Paul is painting is, here's God, and here's everything else. Here is God, he is to be served, and everything else is to serve him.

And Jesus took on the form of a servant. Well, we can't say. We can't say how far he went down.

We can't measure it, but we can adore him.

[20:28] We can worship him. We can marvel at him. We can let our heart be thrilled that whatever that distance is. He went that far for us.

He humbled himself that far for us. We can sing, and we can smile, and we can love him, and we can rejoice, and we can go and do likewise. No, we can never take that big of a leap, but your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

What will kill your pride? Pride is the first shirt you put on and the last shirt you take off every day of your whole life. What will kill your pride?

Meditating on his humility. What will save you from the whirlpool of selfishness? And what will save Grace Fellowship, church, from imploding under the weight of our combined selfishness and our combined ego and vain conceit?

Meditating on the glory of Christ. That was Paul's prescription for the church in Philippi. All this fighting and all these people thinking they're better than what they are.

[21:44] He says, you're not thinking about what Jesus did for you. Your mind, your heart, your attitude should be the same as his. And then he gives that beautiful description of his stooping down.

So we need to stop our mad dash of living. this is a glory that's worth taking time over. You savor fine food.

You don't rush through it. You enjoy it. This is one of those things that we have to stop our mad dash and say, I'm going to meditate on this. I will for the next half an hour think about how much Jesus has humbled himself for me.

We spend a half an hour watching TV and it goes by like that. We spend a half an hour reading a good book that we like and the time just flies, doesn't it?

But focus on Jesus. Pray that I might see his glory. That's work. And that is work.

[22:50] That is war. And it's war that we have to do. Brothers and sisters, that's strapping on your sword and putting to death your flesh. And that is a war that we have to fight.

Jesus must increase. I must decrease. His glory must fill my life and my ideas and my priority and my what I want has to become less and less until he fills me.

And the only way that is going to happen is if you take time to meditate on Christ's glory and so I challenge you for a half an hour, that's not very long, a half an hour this week, meditate with your Bible on your lap, with a pen in your hand, with a paper, with prayer, meditate on his humility. What he did for you. What he was and what he became. And do it. And I, and see if your heart doesn't sing.

And even if it's torture, and even if it's hard, then it's torture that needs to happen. Half an hour, that's it.

[24:01] Will you do that? So how far did he stoop? Well, we can't answer, but together we can worship him for it. Together we can say, Lord, show me your glory.

That's what we can do. Now third, you see the greatness of his glory and how personally unnecessary it was for him to stoop. How personally unnecessary it was for him to stoop.

Now I'm not saying it was totally, it wasn't necessary for our salvation. Of course it was necessary for our salvation. I'm talking about it was personally unnecessary for him. Look at John 1:18.

So John is saying, where was he? Where did he come from? No one has ever seen God, but God the one and only who is at the father's side has made him known.

So where did Jesus come from? Where did the son of God come from? He came from seeing living face to face with God. He came from the side of the father. The King James has that word the bosom of the father.

[25:10] So where did Jesus begin this stoop, this humiliation for him? He was God, but he was also with God.

He was in the bosom of the father. And at God's right hand are pleasures forevermore. To know God, to see God, to love God, to know and experience his love directly to you is the source of all joy.

That is what heaven is about, living face to face where there's no son because God is there. That is the greatest joy that God or man can have and the son of God had it.

He was God, he was with God and he knew nothing at all but satisfying joy. He didn't take on humanity in order to be happy.

There was no ache in his soul, no unmet desire, no unmet joy, nothing missing. As God, he was forever blessed, forever happy.

[26:18] He lived in glory. He lived with God. John 17, Jesus prays, and now Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

He had all glory. glory. Jesus isn't praying here for new glory. He's praying for his old glory. He's not praying that God would do something new.

He's praying that he might have the glory that he had before he came to this earth, before he came to become man. He's praying for his old glory back. Jesus didn't gain glory by becoming man.

he humbled himself in order to become a man. We get to see his glory and now we get to admire and adore and extol his glory.

So in that sense he gets more glory. He gets more glory from us, but he doesn't in himself become more glorious. We get to see him for what he is. So we get to see how great and good and wonderful he is.

[27:25] He didn't become man that he might become those things. he became man because he is those things. He became man so that us sinners could see that glory.

And that's why Jesus later prays, Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

He had glory, glory all of his own before the creation of the world, and he didn't need to become man to get glory. He didn't need to become man to be happy.

He didn't need us to make him rich, and him was life. He was rich. He had life.

He had everything that he could want, and he didn't need us to make him rich, to make him happy, to give him anything, to make him anything. He was in the bosom of the Father.

[28 : 24] He lived face to face with the source of all blessing, and he was himself. the source of all blessing. That word bosom is a wonderful word. Remember in John chapter 13, it's the Last Supper, and John, it says, the apostle, the author of this book that we have before us, he leaned on Jesus' bosom.

He had a special place physically. He had a special place in Jesus' heart, too. It doesn't say John leaned on his bosom, it says the disciple that Jesus loved.

The one disciple, not that he didn't love the others, but John was especially aware that he loved me. He loves me. Bosom meant more than just the physical chest.

It had several metaphorical meanings in Greek. One was the place of honor at the table. So the host would set a guest of honor at the bosom of the table.

And so bosom carries this idea of love and honor, and that's where John is at, at the Last Supper. He's right next to Jesus. It carried the idea of access.

[29 : 47] Remember when Jesus said, one of you is going to betray me. Peter and the disciples are wondering who that might be, and Peter motions to John, ask him who it is, and that's when John leaned on his bosom.

That's when John leaned in. And so Peter's the leader of the group, but it's John who has the special access to Jesus. So John was Jesus' right-hand man.

John was the one that Jesus gave Mary to upon the cross. Remember, he said, here is your son, here is your mother. John was the one who first believed the resurrection.

John was the first one who recognized Jesus when Jesus showed himself after his resurrection on the lake. John was closer than the others.

He saw more. He understood more. He was probably the youngest, and yet he had this close relationship. He was in the bosom of Jesus.

[30 : 48] Jesus. Now, why I'm talking about what John experienced is because that's where Jesus was, and God the Father.

He was in the bosom of the Father. He didn't need anything. He had all the love and the honor that God could give him. And he had all the access. He didn't need to become man in order to fill any need.

He had all the love and honor and joy that he'd ever want. All he did was for our gain.

All he did, and taking on humanity he did for us, it was grace. It was not, there's not the selfish motive to get something out of it.

It was free and generous grace. Or we can think of it a different way. Our loss would not have cost him anything either.

[31 : 52] Our loss in particular, your loss in particular, would not have cost him anything. He wouldn't have been any poorer by not coming. Letting us all go to hell would not have been some personal tragedy for Jesus.

Some great devastating loss. He came because he was gracious. He came because he was full of love for sinners. Richard Crayshaw, the 16th century poet, put it like this, talking about how Jesus, our loss, wouldn't have cost him anything.

Lord, what is man? Why should he cost you so dear? What had his ruin lost you?

Still would the youthful spirits sing and still your spacious palace ring. Still would those beauteous ministers of light burn all as bright and bow their flaming heads before you.

Still thrones and dominations would adore you. Still would those ever wakeful sons of fire keep

warm your praise. Should not the king still keep his throne because some desperate fools undone?

[33 : 11] Or will the world's illustrious eyes weep for every worm that dies? If I were lost in misery, what was it to your heaven and you?

What was it to your precious blood if my foul heart called for a flood? What did the lamb that he should die? What did the lamb that he should need when the wolf sends himself to bleed? Oh, my savior, make me see how dearly you have paid for me that lost again. My life may prove as once in death, so now in love.

Why did Jesus do it? Was it because you were so great? Was it because you were so good and so worth saving? Could he just not live without you?

Would it have been because it was just too costly to let you go? All of heaven's angels would have still sung for him. Heaven would have gone on without any of us being there.

[34 : 27] Why did he humble himself and become born of a woman born under the law? Well, it was for your salvation. It was for your life. It was for your joy.

It was for that forever and ever you might see his glory and be so satisfied and rejoice in it. And so I ask, what will you do? That was his purpose.

That was the reason he humbled himself so that you could love and adore and worship him forever. What will you do if you've lost your first love? Revelation writes to the church in Ephesians and they lost their first love.

If you've lost your first love, will you remember the height from which you have fallen and remember the things that you did at first? If you are disenchanted, Because you're swept up with whatever you're swept up with.

Maybe it's good things, maybe it's bad things, but whatever, Jesus is now in the back seat. You're disenchanted. Will you nail a stake in the ground and say, I'm not coming back here anymore?

[35 : 38] Wherever I go from here, I'm not coming back to this place where Jesus is in the back seat and I don't care about him. I'm going to fight tooth and nail to be re-enchanted again.

I'll get up early, I'll turn off the TV, I'll say no to the computer, I'll say no, I'll turn off the sports, I'll get rid of whatever is sucking out my spiritual life.

Whatever is making me so dull, so spiritually out of it, I'm going to get rid of it. And I know there are things like that in your life, isn't there? Where you do them, there's nothing particularly wrong about them, you do them, and now you don't feel close to God anymore.

Maybe they are wrong things. Whatever they are, I'll get rid of whatever is sucking out the life of my soul, I will cut off right hands, I will gouge out right eyes, I will do whatever it takes to get my first love back.

I want to be enchanted with Jesus all over again. I want to feel what it felt like when I was first saved, to love him and know that I was so unworthy and he was so beautiful.

[36 : 49] So, dear Christian friends, seek the Lord. seek the Lord with all your heart and you will find him and let's seek him together. In Deuteronomy 4, Moses predicted that one day Israel would be exiled out of the land for their idolatry.

And he said something very surprising. He said, you know what, when you're far away over there, you're going to find other gods to worship. And you'll worship those gods. So do you see the situation? They're exiled because of idolatry and then they're in their land of exile.

They found new gods. They're never satisfied. They wouldn't turn to God. And maybe that's where you are, disenchanted with God, in love with the other things that are not God, or doing your Christian life, but Jesus is far away.

In that state, Moses gave Israel a promise. And he said this, Deuteronomy 4, 29, but if from there, so there you are. You're this deep in idolatry.

Your heart is in a thousand places, but if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. For the Lord your God is a merciful God.

[38 : 06] That's the promise. So you're this deep in idolatry. You're this deep in deadness. But if you seek the Lord with all of your heart, you will find him.

And so let's be earnest and seek him until he fills us with the fullness of Jesus Christ, until we are in love with him all over again. And that means you have to give yourself to prayer.

You have to pray to give him no rest until he rends the heavens and comes down until Jesus and his glory dawns on your heart again. Well, let's pray.

Heavenly Father, I pray that you would please help us. Give us eyes that would see something of Jesus and his glory and desire it more.

That we would have a glimpse that would whet our appetites and stir up our thirst and our hunger for him.

[39 : 12] Holy Spirit, that comes from you. Pray that you would give us strength then, Holy Spirit, to seek the Lord with all of our hearts. To be done with lesser things, good or bad, whatever they might be, and make Jesus the one thing, knowing him, having a huge view of him, where he is wonderful and we carry him throughout our days.

That we would have strength in our inner man, that Christ might dwell in our hearts by faith. That we might know something of the height, the depth, and the width, and the length of Christ's love for us. That all the fullness of God might live in us. That our lives might be saturated with who you are, with your glory.

That we might truly live different, holy, reverent, spiritual lives. Father, I pray there are some here that don't know you at all.

They've never seen the glory of Jesus. They've willfully blinded themselves. I pray, break into their heart and arrest them and save them.

[40 : 25] And I pray that you would do it for Jesus' sake. That he would have more glory and more honor and more love, more songs and more obedience for him. pray this in Jesus' good name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.