

**Preaching Christ...**  
**...by the power of the Holy Spirit**  
**...and the authority of the Word of God**

**Date:** 24 January 2021  
**Services:** *Across the Diocese*  
**Series:** John's Prologue  
**Title:** Jesus: God dwelling among us  
**Passages:** John 1:14-18  
**Aim:** To blow people away at what God did in turning up in the person of Jesus, lavishing us with grace and making himself known.

**Outline:**

1. When God turned up...
2. ...full of grace and truth....
3. ...we received grace in place of grace
4. ...and he made himself known.

- I said at Christmas that so many people say – “I’d believe in God if he turned up...”
- Now of course there’s a degree of arrogance in that – as if God play to our demands... and that our believing in him is contingent on him behaving in certain ways that **we** dictate!
- But there’s not only **arrogance** in saying – “if God turned up I’d believe” – there’s intense **IRONY**...
- ...because this is **precisely** what God has done... //
- He’s **turned up** and made himself **known**.... /
- ...here now in our **final** passage from John’s opening verses... we’re told ‘how’ this happened...
- *The Word **BECAME FLESH** and made his dwelling among us...*
- Well let’s try and understand this a little more... my outline really is a pithy summary of these verses....
  1. When God turned up...
  2. ...full of grace and truth...
  3. ...we received grace in place of grace
  4. ...and he made himself known.
- So

**1. WHEN GOD TURNED UP...**

- v14 – have a look with me – *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*
- **God-speaking** (the **Word**) became **God-in-skin**...
- Although God had **earlier** spoken to his people through the prophets...– he was **now** to **speak** // by turning **up** as **one of us**...
- God – had a heart **beat**
- Blood pumping through his **arteries** and **veins** just as **you** have
- God – initially **hungering** for his mother’s **breast** – needing his **nappy changed**...
- God learning to **speak** and **walk** and **feed**...
- God **sensing** and **sharing** all our **sights**, our **sounds**, our **smells**...
- God... facing **temptation** and **ridicule** and **experiencing grief and sadness and loss**...

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- God getting his **hands dirty**
- ...mucking in with his **creation /**
- **God-in-skin** – living **right here with us!**
- God-speaking by... by **being here** with us... / **dwelling with us...**
- Now God had dwelt with his people in the **wilderness** by way of the **tabernacle**... do you recall the moving **tent** God had the people make after they were rescued from Egypt, when they were wandering around in the desert?
- **God** with his **people**... they could look to the **tabernacle** and know that he **dwelt** with them...
- ...but now in the **1<sup>st</sup>** century – God dwelling with them in the **person** of **Jesus**...
- (And by the way do you remember the powerful promise of God for the **new** creation from Revelation 21...? - *God's dwelling-place is now among the people, and he will **dwelt** with them.*) ///
- *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us... breathtaking...*
- You know sometimes people may ask **YOU** – “how do you know God **exists**...?”
- And people give a range of answers such as the **beauty** and **order** of **creation**... and **wonder** of **human** life... or the sheer **brilliance** of **science** or **mathematics**... or the fact that we have a sense of **right** and **wrong** – of **good** and **evil**...
- But the **clearest** answer to the question of how we know God is for **real**?
- **He turned up!** //
- Friends when people ask you questions about God's **existence** – keep **pressing** the **point** – keep coming back to **Jesus** – we know because **God turned up** in the **person** of **Jesus**!
- Yes - *the Word became **flesh** and made his **dwelling among us**... ///*
- And when he turned up... he was....

**2. FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH**

- Halfway through v14 – have a look with me – *We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of **grace** and **truth**...*
- When John says “we have seen his **glory**” ... what do you think of?
- Perhaps you think of the time Jesus was **transformed** before his disciples and described as **dressed** in **dazzling white**...!
- But I want you to think of it in more **simple** terms – that John is telling us they saw how **magnificent** Jesus was...
- They saw Jesus as **magnificent** *because* he was filled with **grace** // and **truth**... //
- Let's think of those two words...
- When we think of **grace** – we think of a ballerina dancing with **grace** across the **stage**...
- or that **prayer** we say before **dinner**...
- **GRACE** in this context is: **generous love**... God's **love** **generous love** which we don't **deserve**... //
- **TRUTH** – they heard when he taught them – with such **authority** and they'd never heard **anything like** it!!
- **Yes, when he turned up, he was full of grace** // and **truth**...
- think of it **this** way.... They were struck with his **magnificence** – **his glory** - because it was **wonderfully**

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obvious from his **grace** and / **truth** that he was **GOD WITH US!!** ////

- **SO: God turned up – full of grace and truth...**
- ...AND...

**3. ...WE RECEIVED GRACE IN PLACE OF GRACE**

- Have a look with me at v16 – *Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given...*
- **Grace** in place of **grace already given**...what does **that** mean? //
- Well – we don't have to **guess** because v17 tells us
- Have a look with me – *for the law was given through Moses; **grace and truth** came through **Jesus Christ**.*
- Simply put – the grace of the **new** covenant was **replacing** the **grace** of the **old** covenant!
- The **first** grace of God to us – was the revelation of his **will** in the **law** of **Moses**.
- By his grace... he had rescued his people Israel from Egypt and made a covenant with them in that he would be their God and they would be his people...
- his rescue of his people and the subsequent relationship established with them was based entirely on grace from start to finish...
- ...and as a response to his grace, they were to live by the law he had given them so that they might be his distinctive people – characterised by loving God with all they were and loving their neighbour as themselves.... ///
- That was the **grace** of the **Old Covenant!** ///
- Now, Israel **spectacularly failed** to live out this life of grace... they **failed** to be God's distinctive people... ///
- But God had **more grace** in store! //
- What did the text say? – **grace** in place of **grace already given**....
- His **SECOND wave** of **grace** was infinitely **more wonderful** than the **FIRST!!** /
- Knowing our failure to **keep** the first covenant...
- ... he came with **grace** in **Jesus Christ** so that he might forgive our **failure** under the **old covenant** and reconcile us to **himself forever!**
- And in this **replacement** wave of **grace**... Jesus **himself** keeps the law we **couldn't keep** – and **dies** the **death** we **deserve**...

.....

- We often sing – *Amazing grace how sweet the sound... that saved a wretch like me... I once was lost but now am found – was blind but now I see*
- Can I ask:
- Do you **get** this?
- Have you taken **hold** of God's **grace**?
- Have you **realised** and **agreed** with God that you **need** this **grace**?
- Yes Lord I **am** a wretch... I **cannot** keep your law – or even worse, I **manipulate** your law to suit **me**. I've completely **mucked** it up... I need your **grace**
- And **without** your grace I'm completely **lost!!!** ///

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- That's what Jesus stepped into our world to bring...
- **Grace upon grace**
- **One blessing after another**
- The grace of the **new** covenant, replacing the grace of the **old**... //
- ...for the **law** was given through **Moses**; **grace and truth** came through **Jesus Christ**...
- how **blessed** are we!!
- **Grace upon grace!** //

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- When God **turned up**...
  - ...full of **grace** and **truth**...
  - ...we received **grace** in **place** of **grace**....
  - ...and finally:

**4. HE MADE HIMSELF KNOWN**

- Final verse – have a look with me - *No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.*
- In the Old Testament, it was clear that no one could see God and **live**.
- **Moses** was **shielded** by God, only allowed to see his **passing glory** – the same is true of the prophet **Isaiah** – he saw the hem of God's garment as it filled the temple... and was scared for his life! //
- But now God has **completely** revealed himself in all his fullness
- remember Hebrews 1? - **Jesus** is the **radiance** of **God's glory** and the **exact representation** of his being...
- And Paul's letter to the **Colossians** again emphasised right at the start in ch 1 (15) – he is the **image** of the **invisible** God...
- And of course, in John's gospel – "I and the Father are **one**" - CH 14 – if you've seen **me** you've seen the **Father**...
- Here our passage finishes with *the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known*...
- ...we are not left **guessing** about God...
- ...we don't need **philosophers** or **committees** on the matter of what God is like...
- When you hear **Jesus** speak in the pages Scripture you hear **God**
- When you see him act (as it were) you see **God**
- **What Jesus does, God does**...
- He does only what the **Father tells** him...
- When you see him command **creation** – **God commands creation**
- When you see him rebuke **demons** – you see God rebuke **demons**
- When he declares **forgiveness**, **God** declares **forgiveness**
- When he hangs with **sinners and prostitutes and tax collectors** – **God** hangs with sinners and prostitutes and tax collectors

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- When he breaks the **Sabbath** laws – **God** breaks the Sabbath laws
- When he acts with **compassion** to the sick or dying or dead – **God** acts with that compassion
- when he surrenders to the **evil** will of **humankind** who want nothing more than to do **away** with him... you see God's **self-sacrifice** for your **sin**... //
- And when you see him **rise** again – you see God's **mighty triumph over evil** and his **everlasting victory** in **great power**!! ///
- If you've seen me, said Jesus, you've seen the **Father**, for I and the **Father** are **one**!! //
- God is not **hiding**... he is not **inaccessible**... he is not **silent**...
- He is the **Word**... **dwelling** with us... making **himself known** in **all** his **magnificence** – **revealing** his **patient generous love**.... ///
- How do we **know** there's a **God**? // because he **turned up**!
- How do we know what he's **like**? – because **Jesus** has made him **known**! ///
- For when God turned up...
- ...full of grace and truth...
- ...we received grace in place of grace...
- ...and he made himself known. ///
- Let's recap what we've seen in these weeks from John's prologue:
- Jesus is the **Word** – God **speaking** – are you **listening**?
- Jesus is the **light** – are you **walking** in the **light**? Have you left the darkness of your rebellion?
- All who receive Jesus – that is, who believe in him - are given the right to be his children – **are** you his **child**?
- he came full of **grace** and **truth** / with grace in abundance to give... have you **received** and **welcomed** his **grace**? //
- God has turned up in the **person** of **Jesus**, and has graciously made himself **known**... are you **convinced**... that when you see **Jesus** – **read** of **Jesus** – you **meet** the almighty **God** of the **universe**?
- *The **Word** become **flesh** and made his dwelling among us*
- *Full of **grace and truth***
- *And from his **fullness** we have received, **grace** in place of **grace** already **given**...*
- *And he who is himself **God** and is in the closest **relationship** with the **Father**, has made him **known**...*