

Jesus Is God Made Flesh
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We're going to be continuing on in our summer sermon series where we are looking at the reality of who Jesus is. And as we do so we're basing this, the different aspects of Christ that we are looking at are based largely in Colossians chapter 1 where Paul bursts into praise of Jesus Christ, saying this is exactly who it is we're talking about. And he begins unpacking some of that. In particular today, what we're going to look at is the fact that Jesus is God made flesh. Colossians 1 verses 15 and 19 say that He is the image, speaking of Jesus, "*He is the image of the invisible God...for in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.*" What that's speaking about is Paul is referencing the fact that Jesus is God fleshed-out. God the Father...He is invisible. We can not...He is so far beyond us that we cannot understand Him. Christ is the one who reveals God to us. Jesus is God in the flesh, is what Paul is hitting on here.

What we're going to do is we are actually going to look at John chapter 1, and we're going to focus on the tail end of that passage, verses 1 through 18. We're going to look at those last few verses there. Last week we looked at the first five verses or so. And last week and this week kind of answer to two common mistakes that people make with regard to Jesus. Last week we talked about the fact that Jesus is the Creator and Sustainer. That addresses one error that people make, and that is to minimize the deity of Christ. People may look at it and they minimize the reality that Jesus is God. He always has been, always will be. And as a result, what ends up happening...if you're of a more secular mindset you probably come to the point where you say or propose something along the lines of Jesus is just a good, moral teacher. Ok? If you were religious you'd probably fall in some sort of mindset or religion, denomination, something, where you indicate or you believe that Jesus was somehow a spiritual child born at some point in time in a premortal life, and He was literally born to a heavenly Father and, I suppose, a heavenly mother. Or perhaps Jesus was the first one created, and then He turned around and created everything else. John emphatically says no. Jesus is God. Ok?

So that answers to that, but the second common mistake is one that I find is more common among just typical, everyday Christians; and it goes to varying degrees, but we minimize the humanity of Jesus. Yes, He is God; but He is not so far up on a pedestal that there is no connection or common ground, so to speak, with us. And we're going to look at what I mean by this. And this is not to take away from His deity, because the simple reality is Jesus is one hundred percent God; He is also one hundred percent man. Ok? John drives this point home very, very well as he gets into the tail end of John 1:14-18. I'll read these and then we'll look at 'em and unpack 'em for a few moments here. In verse 14 it says

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. [And then in parentheses to clarify who he's talking about he says] (John bore witness about Him, and cried out, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because He was before me.'") [And it picks up again in verse 16] And from His fullness [speaking of Jesus] we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God [speaking of the Father, ok? That's 'no one has ever seen God']; the only God, Who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known.

Ok? Now here's the thing. We're gonna look at this. And basically John, he is...up to this point, up to verse 14 it would be a little bit controversial, ok? You're talking about...there's not too much issue. We're talking about a deity, and ok, you want to talk about a deity, that's fine. In first century culture, there you go. Not too, too, too many problems. The problem really comes in verse 14 through 18 where John totally throws everybody a curve ball, ok, because one, he says that this deity is Jesus Christ, the deity about Whom he is speaking. But number two, and this is something that happens in verse 14, he says "And the Word," this God that he'd been talking about, "became flesh." Now here's the thing...we come from...maybe if you come from a church setting, or even if you're in...that doesn't sound too offensive. But John is actually being...he chose...I believe he chooses his words under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and he was being very, very direct...to the point of almost coming across as base and offensive in his culture. Why? Because of this. See, in first century culture if you wanted to say that 'Here is God' and you wanted to talk about God to the first-century Jews, that's fine. But the moment you say that God becomes flesh, no. God is spirit. It is blasphemy to imply that somehow God puts on flesh, puts on meat. Ok? The Latin

word would be 'carne', ok? That's where we get 'carnal', of the flesh; ok, the Greek word 'sarks'. It's all the same ideas. He became...He put on meat. John didn't say He became man. He didn't say He became a person. He became...He put on meat. He fleshed Himself out. That would be extremely offensive to the Jews; it would also be extremely offensive to first-century Romans and Greeks who, according to their philosophy, everything of the spiritual realm was higher. Anything of the physical world was base and just...and disgusting. And it would be completely...it would be scandalous for anything to willingly...that is of the higher realm, that is of that spiritual nature...to willingly put on flesh, because they would be scandalously debasing themselves.

Now, here's the thing. That's a very...that's a point that John drives home, and he wants to make clear in the verses that follow why that matters. Ok? He unpacks it a little bit and explains a little bit of why that matters. And he does that more fully through the whole book of John. But that's where I wanna start off.

Now here's the thing. So that we don't minimize Jesus' humanity, ok...oftentimes it's like we look at Jesus and it's like 'Oh, He's Jesus, and yeah, well He's got...yeah, but He was God. I mean, sure, He lived it, but He was God.' And we have this expectation. Let's just put it this way. If I were to communicate this in some ways to you today... Jesus is fully human. What does that mean? Well, among other things, it means that when He was born His first crib was a feed trough. Ok? Let's not put a manger... It was a feed-trough, ok? He was sleeping in a barnyard animal's feed trough. As He grew up, as a little boy...having a young boy myself and knowing many other young children who are roughly his age, I suspect that Jesus was not that different. He probably picked His nose; he probably maybe had accidents or something like that as He was growing up. Why? Because He was fully human, ok? He was a boy. At the same time, as He got older there were probably times where in the carpenter's shop He banged His thumb with the hammer, big ol' blood blisters, you know, nice thumb nail kinda starts swellin', and yeah, purple, nasty, everything like that; skinned His hands up. There were probably times when He had a bad burrito or something like that, whatever the first century equivalent would be, and it gave Him some major, major, major indigestion, ok, He had some serious intestinal problems and got extremely sick. As best we can tell it seems as though He lost His father sometime between the age of twelve and roughly the age of thirty, because all of a sudden Joseph is in the biblical accounts through the time that He is twelve, and after that he's not there. Jesus lost friends, He lost loved ones.

He was rejected by people. The Scriptures make it clear that even His own brothers thought He was insane, claiming to be God. Ok? They tried a couple of times to come and say, 'Ok, look, let's just be quiet and let's go home. You know, there's a crowd...' No. I mean, think about what it would be like being Jesus' brother. Ok? And think about the hard time that His brothers, 'cause He had several of them, would give Him. I don't care if He's the oldest brother; He would be overpowered by His younger brothers because they...I mean, He's the brother that everybody loves. I mean, He's Mom and Dad's golden child. Really. I mean, 'He never does anything wrong? Give me a break. C'mon, it's just favoritism and it's just...' I guarantee His brothers just tore Him up every chance they got. Why? Because they were like 'Oh, of course, He's the golden child.' Jesus didn't exactly have an easy life. He was fully human, and Scripture makes it very clear that He was tempted in the same ways that we are tempted, only He did it without sin. And when we look at, say, the cross, the cross was not easy for Jesus just because He was God. If anything, I suspect that it made it even harder because He fully knew exactly what was coming, He fully knew exactly what He was giving up, He fully knew what the consequence and the price that He would pay for the sins of every single person that He would redeem. In fact, He was so much man that it tells us that in the Garden Jesus was not looking forward to the Cross, so much so that He became so stressed that...this is an actual medical condition where you are under so much stress that your blood pressure rises and you begin...it looks like you are sweating drops of blood. What is happening is the capillaries under the surface of your skin are starting to burst and it is little drips are coming out of your pores. It's something that happens on occasion to people who are under an extreme amount of stress. The simple reality is Jesus was fully human. And I think He had a much better idea of what was coming, even on the cross, than we have any glimmer of understanding. And He was so human that He actually began to sweat drops of blood.

Now, here's the thing. I just stress that because what we're going to do is we're going to look at the reality that Jesus is God made flesh. Ok? How does this play out? But first...and how it impacts our lives. But first I wanna just unpack this section a little bit more. And so what we'll do is we'll look at, first of all, well why become flesh? Why does that matter? Why does Jesus become flesh? Why did He put on meat? Why does He flesh Himself out? Well, it says, "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,*" literally like He pitched His tent; He tabernacled with us, which kind of calls to mind back in the Old Testament, in Exodus when God, His presence would come and come down to the tabernacle, and God would tabernacle with His people for a period of time where His presence was experienced in their midst. What John is saying is that is exactly what Jesus was doing; when He came down He was 'tabernacling' among man, living among man, with us for a time so that we could experience His presence in a very real way that we otherwise would not be able to.

What ends up happening is, well, why? It explains, as you go down, verse...like 17, 18...no one has ever seen God. The idea that God is so far above and beyond our level of comprehension that we can't even begin to understand Him unless if He reveals Himself to us. It takes Him taking the initiative for us to understand. And so what it says is that Jesus has made the Father, has made God, fully known. The idea is it's that He is fully explained...the structure is that He fully explained the Father. If you want to understand something about God you look at Jesus. If you want to know God you go to Jesus. If you want to be in God's presence you go to Jesus. That's part of the reason why the following chapter, in John chapter 2, Jesus refers to His body as the temple, and He says, *"If you destroy this temple I will raise it up in three days."*

What is a temple? If you wanted to know a god back in that day you would go to that god's temple, because that was where that god's presence could be experienced by man. And Jesus says, 'Listen, ok, here's this temple over here. But you know what? This building doesn't matter, because *I am God* in the flesh. If you want to know God, here I am, made apparent so that you can come to understand Me, because I am so far beyond your comprehension that I have to fully... If you want to know about God's character, look at Me. If you want to know about God's truth, who He is, what He is like, what He believes about, you look at Me and I will explain it.' Jesus is the full embodiment, the full revelation, of exactly who God is. That's why Jesus is where you go if you want to meet or know God. He's it. That's also why Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Me."* That's just the simple reality of it.

Ok, well, so what does Jesus show us in the incarnation? It kind of... John kind of unpacks here and he explains that He dwelt among us; and He dwelt among us because He's enabling us to see the glory of God, to see the glory of the Father. And the Father reveals His glory through the Son. And so what ends up happening is we have seen His glory, Jesus' glory, and it is glory that is the fullness of God's grace and truth. Grace and truth come through Jesus Christ. The idea is the incarnation, Jesus putting on flesh, Jesus...God-made-flesh...is the full embodiment of God's grace and truth for His glory. He wants people to know who He is and enter into a relationship with Him, and interact with Him as He should be interacted with, as God.

Now, here's the thing. Grace and truth...well, why? Well, why is that the full embodiment of grace? First of all grace...and I don't know, I won't ask for any of the middle school...I know I've covered this different times with the middle school over the past year. But grace, ok? Grace is basically when you receive a good gift, a compassionate gift, that you do not deserve. That's grace. Ok? When you receive something good that you don't deserve. Jesus, God-made-flesh, is the embodiment of God's grace because it is God Himself, in the flesh, coming down to save, to give a compassionate gift, to people who are completely sinful and do not deserve it at all, people like you and me. Jesus is the full embodiment of God's grace, His compassion on sinful man. He is also the full embodiment of God's truth, because Jesus is the One who truly explains and reveals God. If you want to understand God you go to Jesus. The extent to which you know and experience and understand Jesus, and you do so accurately, is the extent to which you know and understand, have a relationship, and can wrap your mind around God. Because Jesus is the true, accurate revelation of the Father. They're both God, but they're one substance.

Now, here's the thing. Ok, we'll look at this. What's the application? How does this play out? Ok? How it impacts our lives, and we'll spend the rest of our time kind of unpacking how this impacts our lives. First of all, if you are not a believer, if you are not a follower of Christ, this is kind of where it impacts your life. This is really geared towards you. It's the simple reality that the God-man, Jesus, the One who is 100% God, 100% man, He makes the Gospel possible. He makes the Good News that God wants a relationship with you and that is...He makes it possible. How? Why? No one else can. Here is why. Because basically, when you sin, when I sin, the result is we owe an infinite debt. It's a debt of death, rejection of life. It's a debt where we, in order to pay that debt back, must pay it back for all of eternity. And because it is an infinite debt we have not yet even begun to pay it back, because there is all of infinity left to pay. You see, Jesus...or God, He is... Let's put it this way...if God is infinitely the source of all good, if He is infinitely the source of life, if He is infinitely the source of beauty, if He is infinitely the source of knowledge, of understanding, of power, of everything good that exists, then when we reject Him we are rejecting the infinite source of all of that. And because He is the infinite source of all of that, He is worthy of infinite honor. It's a dishonor when you look at a masterpiece and say, 'That's a piece of junk.' Ok? It's a dishonor. It's an insult to the artist who worked that piece of art. In the same way when you reject God, when you look at Him and you say, 'You know what? You may be the Creator, but guess what? I am God. Get out of my life. I will call my own shots. I will make my own decisions. I don't care what You say about this area of my life. I will do things my way. I don't want You,' what you are doing is you are shutting out the infinite source of all goodness and life and beauty. And you are saying, 'Get out of my life,' and not only that but in doing so, because He is infinitely the source of that, you are committing an infinite offense. He is infinitely due respect, and honor, and praise, and value, worth. So it's an infinite insult.

If you wanna talk about justice, that also means that we have an infinite debt. Ok? That's why sin is an infinite debt. Now here's the thing...it's a debt that is owed by a person. It's an offense committed by a person, so a person, a man, must pay that offense; a human being must pay that debt. The problem is that we, as human beings, are finite. God is the only one who is infinite. So here's the thing...it has to be paid by a person, a human, right? But it also has to be someone who can pay back an infinite debt. The problem is God is the only one who can pay an infinite debt, but the debt must be paid by man. The answer? Jesus, the God-man, the One who is 100% God, 100% man. It is something that goes...to tell you the truth, it's kinda like the Trinity. We talked a little bit about it last week. It goes beyond my comprehension. 100%, 100%...doesn't that make 200%? No. I don't know why; I don't fully understand how God can be 100% man, 100% God at the same in Jesus Christ, God the Son, the second person of the Trinity, but that's what Scripture teaches, ok?

And here's the thing. The beauty is that if you are not a follower of Christ Jesus intends to make that offer, that payment of debt, available to you. It's just that fact that you will have to acknowledge that you will never be able to pay back the debt that you owe. You have rejected God; you have rejected the author and sustainer of life, and as a result you deserve infinite death, infinite suffering, infinite lack of beauty, infinite loss of anything good. But Jesus Christ in His beauty and compassion, in His mercy, in His grace and truth, came so that He could redeem you so that He could pay your debt and you wouldn't have to do it...because you can't. And the question is do you trust Him to do that? Do you trust in His compassion, His grace, His truth enough to do that? And I'll tell you, from here I'm going to talk to you who are believers from here on out. Ok? If you have chosen... So here's the thing. If you are not yet a believer, if you have not yet placed your trust in Jesus Christ to pay the debt of your sins, I challenge you to just keep asking yourself this. Go back to...right here. You wrestle with this first point, because the whole rest of it doesn't matter until you get this figured out. Ok? So, but here's the thing...I'm going to table that, put it aside for a moment.

And now we're going to talk to those of you who are believers, those of you who've looked at it and said, 'I am a follower of Christ. I am modeling my life after His. He has redeemed me; He has paid my debt of sin, and I am redeemed because of it. And now my life is His. Whatever He expects of me I will do because I do not own myself. He has bought me with His blood. His blood, His sacrifice, has bought my forgiveness, and so my life is His.' If you have made that sort of a decision and you are making that decision even here yet today, the rest of this is where I'm speaking to you.

What we look at is the God-man Jesus. There is this expectation...what He calls His followers to is to become more and more like Him. What that means is He calls us to incarnational living, too. He calls us to flesh-out God, so to speak, in the midst of the world around us. He calls us to reflect or to demonstrate the nature of God around us. That is not something we are able to do on our own power. It is something that comes through the empowering of the Holy Spirit working through us as we reflect God. Ok? So here's the thing. What I'm going to do is we're going to walk through just five points real quick, five quick application points about incarnational living—how does this play out, what does it look like? I pulled these points from a man named Mark Driscoll. He summarized these really well. If I ever have a good thought up here, or I clearly explain something that's in Scripture, it's probably because somebody else explained it to me. I don't have original good thoughts. It all comes from Scripture. I'm serious...it all comes from Scripture or somebody else's explanation of it so that I understand it. Really. But this is something that comes...and I'm paraphrasing some points that he has made in the past.

The first thing is...for followers of Christ an incarnational life—where you are fleshing out, you are kind of embodying the reality of God to the world around you—is lived in context crossing cultural barriers. Why is that? Think about this...can you think about a cultural barrier that is greater than that that Jesus crossed by going from heaven to earth? Think of the surroundings He was in. Think about the people He was surrounded by. And all of a sudden He's going to... We want to talk about going to the Third World, I'm sorry, that is no comparison to heaven to earth two thousand years ago, ok? And not only that...He knew exactly the way it was going to play out. Still yet, He crossed cultural barriers and He came and He lived with people, speaking their language, eating their food, celebrating their festivals, doing all of this so that He could reach out to them. The question that I would have to ask is how do you interact with people who are different than yourself if you call yourself a follower of Christ? How do you speak of them when they're not around? I mean, people who...maybe they listen to different music than you do; maybe they dress differently than you do; maybe they have all kinds of tattoos and piercings and everything else and you don't; or maybe you have all kinds of tattoos and piercings and they don't. Ok? How do you interact with people who are different than you? When they look at you, do they see the grace and truth of God reflected in you? Not because of your own goodness, but because of the Holy Spirit working inside of you, and your submission to that. How do you interact with people who are culturally, or even sub-culturally, different from you?

Second thing...an incarnational life is lived evangelistically. Let's put it this way...Jesus makes it very clear throughout His whole life... He heals people, He gives aid and assistance to the needy, even brings people back from death. He works all kinds of wonderful things, but throughout the whole time His whole point, His whole focus, is so that He can reconcile people to God. He can bring reconciliation in a situation where there is division. His whole point was to bring people to repentance, and where they will come into a right relationship with God. That is the point of every single relationship, every single conversation, every single decision He makes...you look at it; that's the way it goes throughout Scripture. And so the question I'd have to ask is if we are followers of Christ and we are truly following after Him, are we living the same way? Is the purpose of your life reconciliation, of reconciling man to man, and man to God? That's...Paul unpacks that a little bit more fully in 2 Corinthians 5 and 6. Are you purposely approaching every relationship in such a way that your goal, your intent, is to help reconcile people to one another and, more importantly, reconcile people to God? Someone who is far away from God, and your whole goal and intent is that when, through your relationship, through this circumstance, through this situation, because of your involvement there they will come to know God better through being with you. That's Jesus' whole goal of everything He does. If we are His followers that is what we are called to do. Ok?

Here's the third thing here. How does this impact our lives? Ok? An incarnational life is lived humbly. You look at Jesus. Philippians 2: 5-11 unpacks this pretty well, where Paul explains that...think about this for a second. The creator of the universe, ok, the creator of the universe who made everything, is the author of everything good...this is scandalous...He goes and He actually humbles Himself, and debases Himself, He hits rock bottom, so-to-speak, is kinda...He goes to so many steps to stoop down. Not because of Him, but because of us. He doesn't need us; still yet, He chose to come down and to humble Himself to such a point that He even came to serve the very people who had rejected Him and who would one day spit in His face and torture Him to death. That is completely scandalous...the creator of...that is completely unheard of in all of religion. The only God that has that sort of amazing...and He does this for the whole purpose of having a relationship with the very sinners and rebels who have rebelled against Him, and who will kill Him. That is the height of humility, to leave the heavenly palace and come down and serve, and be treated like a dog, and ultimately die a gruesome death, just so He can have a relationship with the people who hate Him...you and me.

If we're following in His footsteps, how are you serving others currently? Not how have you served others in the past, not how are you planning on serving others in the future. How are you serving other people right now? Christ was constantly serving. His whole life on this earth was serving. And furthermore, what do you consider a measure of success? Let's put it this way. In Jesus' economy, in the economy of His kingdom, the greatest is the person who is the lowest, most humble servant. The great people are those who are not much of anything in His kingdom, and that goes totally counter to the American dream. What characterizes your assessment or your evaluation of success in your life? Is it how much money you have, maybe your retirement account? The size of your home? The cars you drive. Maybe how good or how together your family is. Maybe it's the job that you have. Maybe it's the way that people think of you; the esteem that they give you as a worker, as a friend, or something like that. And all of those things...to tell you the truth, Jesus looks at it, He says 'It's nothing. You wanna be great in My economy? You be the servant of everyone, and do so humbly, just being grateful that you are a servant in the kingdom of God.' And the thing is, they aren't just empty words from Jesus, because He was the Creator come down to serve even the most debased human beings in all of existence.

The fourth thing that Driscoll points out is that an incarnational life is lived devoted to the church. This is something that runs throughout Scripture, throughout Jesus' ministry. He came so that He could institute and establish the church. And Paul unpacks this numerous places throughout the New Testament. It's unpacked several places. One place that I think of is Ephesians 5, like 25 through 33 or so, right around there. He unpacks this idea that husbands are to love their wives just as Christ loved the church, continually giving Himself up every day. And basically Paul drives this analogy; and it's based upon Jesus' own teachings and the way that He speaks of it. And it is under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that makes it clear that Jesus Christ looks at the church as His body, as His bride. So the question you'd have to ask yourself is how do you contribute to the body of Christ? If you call yourself a follower of Christ how are you contributing to the body of believers with whom you are enmeshed? And how are you allowing them to contribute to you and to your life using gifts, abilities, resources. Furthermore, how do you...do you actually claim to be a follower and servant of Christ but you avoid serving the body? Or avoid loving the body that He clearly refers to as His bride and body?

Let's put it this way. If you wanna be my friend, you wanna have a relationship with me, ok? If you wanna have a relationship with me, Ashley, probably it's not going to be...we probably aren't going to be too close if any time we're around each other, or any time you're around with other people, constantly just talking about how nasty my body is. Ok? I mean, seriously. That's probably not going to be a good thing. And now, I can handle that. Talk bad about my...ok, fine. I've got a fairly thick skin. I'll be ok. But you start talking about my wife, my bride, and just...I'm sorry.

You are not going to have an extremely close relationship with me unless if you are willing to have a relationship with my wife, because she and I are one. You don't get one without the other. Why is it we think we can turn around and badmouth Jesus' bride, or that we can somehow cut off relationship with Jesus' bride, but still have this deep, growing relationship with Him? It doesn't make sense, completely unscriptural, and that's part of the reason Paul hits on it and it's developed in a whole lot of ways in various parts of Scripture.

But we'll move on and talk about just this last point here. An incarnational life is lived globally. Let's put it this way. Jesus...Scripture makes it clear He came to save the whole world. He did. That's what He came to do. He came to save everyone who was willing to believe and accept Him. It also...we see in the gospels ever time He encountered a foreigner He had extreme compassion upon that person. He did. And it went totally counter to, and totally, *totally* counter-cultural... His friends, even His closest friends, would look at Him at times and say, 'What in the world are You thinking? You're talking to *that* person? What are You thinking?! Why are You being... No! Uh uh!' Scripture also makes it clear in Revelation that one day around Jesus' throne there will be people of every tribe, tongue, nation. There will be people of every complexion. There will be people of every language. There will be people of every culture. There will be people of every background who come, and they're all there around Jesus' throne, worshiping. So the question I have is how do you support the spread of the Gospel globally? That's a fairly...'Ok, I pray', or 'I give'. That's good. Ok? Perhaps God is calling you overseas. I love being overseas, and my heart in many ways is overseas. It's also here, because God has called me here.

But we're gonna move this a little bit closer to home, and I'm going to dwell on this...not because I tend to minimize people who are serving overseas for God's glory, but because of the simple fact that most of us are not going to be overseas. Most of us are gonna be right here. And I'd have to ask the question—how do you reach out to, and pour out, and show compassion on foreigners in our own midst? Let's put it this way. You wanna evangelize the world? How about stay right here in America? I don't know if you've noticed it or not, but the whole world is coming to our doorstep. And sadly, what ends up happening is, typically, we Americans...ok, this is part of our history. Any time more people come, new people come, well they're the outsiders. And they get shunned, and everybody who's here in the circle, we all kinda turn inward and there we go, until another wave of people come or something like that. Sadly, Christians...we fall prey to this as well. And the question I'd have to ask is how are you reaching out to the foreigners in our very midst? Are you pouring out compassion on people, regardless of why they are here or whether they are here under whatever circumstances, regardless of what the government says, regardless of what our culture says, are you being compassionate?

Now hear me on this. I'm not speaking any sort of political policy. I'm not saying how the government should regulate anything else. What I am saying is you, as an individual follower of Christ...when you encounter and interact with foreigners, people who are of a different language, tribe, tongue, nation, complexion, whatever they are...when they interact with you and you relate to them in the walk of life, do they see Jesus reflected in you? Do they see Him, His grace, His truth, reflected in you? Sadly, I think often not. And I suspect that really God is heartbroken at the fact that here we are, we wanna talk about reaching the world and we turn a blind eye to those in our very midst who are of the world.

We'll go ahead and here...I know that this has kind of been a little bit heavier sermon topic, whatever else. Tell you the truth, that's the nature of things. This is a...this is just a difficult, gritty...Jesus became flesh. He is God in the flesh. And He did so, and that was required, because He knew that it was a very difficult task ahead of Him, and it could only be accomplished through the God-man. That was part of His role from the very foundation of creation. That was part of His role that He filled flawlessly. The thing is, if we are called as His followers, then we are also called as His body to flesh out the reality of God in other people's midst, revealing His grace and truth.

And so I'll ask you to stand with me and we'll close with our prayer for witness, asking God to give us the strength, the ability, to speak, to live out, to flesh out the Gospel in the midst of every situation we find ourselves in.

[Congregation sings the prayer for witness song]

Thank you, and go in God's grace and experience it.