

John's Cosmic Christmas (Part 3)

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Date: 18 December 2016

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] There's coffee at the end of the service, please stay behind and give us a chance to meet you if you're able to do so. Good to see also some of our students back who've been away for a while and they're back with us for a few weeks.

Good to see Brendan back from the Amazon jungle and we look forward to hearing all the stories that Brendan will bestow upon us over the next few weeks. So good to see everybody. Welcome to the service.

One of the information to bring to your attention before we begin. Evening service tonight will be at 6 o'clock and there will be a community cattle service afterwards at 8 o'clock.

So that's 6 o'clock for the evening service and 8 o'clock for the community cattle service tonight here in the community centre. In the course of the week as usual, first routes and road to recovery on Tuesday, normal times and places.

The prayer meeting will be on Wednesday at 7 o'clock in the community centre also. And there will be on the 24th Christmas Eve, two things to note.

[1 : 10] The first is there will be a Christmas holiday club in the community centre here from 1 o'clock till half past 3 o'clock. And that follows on from the holiday club in the summer, but obviously the theme will be the Christmas story.

If you can donate some baking, biscuits, sweets that will be suitable for the outreach, please add your name to the sheet that's at the door. And any donations can be brought to the hall between 12 o'clock from 12 o'clock on the 24th or given to Keeney, Marian or Marian beforehand.

Watch night service on Christmas Eve also half past 11 in the community centre here. And the services next Sunday, 11am will be a Christmas family service, a shorter service than usual.

And the children will be taking part in that service in various different ways. So please be encouraged to come along on Christmas Day and to remember the reason that we celebrate. And the 6 o'clock service will be a galaic service on Christmas Day.

And that will be led by Angus McVicker. The record is on the table there for those who subscribe to it. And subscriptions are now due. And speak to Callum about that if you want more details on that.

[2 : 24] A thank you, a belated thank you, but I thank you nonetheless for all who contributed to the special collection at the communion services. It was £710 raised on that Sunday evening.

And that was to go in aid of a tiered one. So thank you for all who donated. And that will be heading there shortly. We had a meeting here on Wednesday evening, as you know, to discuss the various options regarding the Paris Inn, if we should be successful in securing that.

And it was good to see a number of you there. Obviously not everybody can be present. And I think it would be good to have Gordon give us just a very brief update on where we're at after that meeting. Thank you, Gordon, for that.

And thank you once more. Just a word of encouragement. From Andy, as an outsider, the architect, looking into the congregation and listening into the discussion, he said that really has been at a meeting where there's been such a oneness of mind as to the actual agreed position that we came to by the end of it.

And he was very encouraged by that, as was I. So we pray on and ask that the Lord will direct us for his glory, for the sake of his name. We're going to worship God now and sing to his praise.

[3 : 43] And we sing, first of all, for Mission Praise 211. The words are on the screen also. Mission Praise 211.

Hark! The herald angels sing. Glory to the newborn king. Peace on earth. And mercy mild. God and sinners reconciled. And we sing the whole of this hymn to God's praise.

We don't have musical accompaniment today, but we will be led by the presenters and we'll stand like this. Amen. This is John here to God, and parents.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you this morning for all that we are able to sing. The privilege of being able to sing everything that we have sung in these last few moments.

We thank you that we are able to sing of the newborn king that was born into this world. The one who was very God.

[4 : 44] And yet, who came to this world. And took on our flesh. That we might be able to be saved.

And reconciled. Lord God, we confess that we are those who are sinners. And by nature we are far from you. And we have no way back to you.

But we thank you that Jesus came to this world. In order that there would be a way back. We thank you for the eternal reconciliation. That was offered to us in Christ.

And Lord, we pray that this Christmas season we would be found looking to Jesus. And not only looking to him. But looking in faith to him.

Trusting him. Confessing our sins. And asking that he would receive us. So that we could become children of God. Thank you for the wonder of the Christmas message.

[5 : 48] That the word became flesh. And dwelt among us. And Lord, we pray that none of the impact of that message would be lost in us.

That the Holy Spirit would be active. In each of us. And in this community. Drawing people to see. The wonder and the glory. Of the incarnate and the risen Christ.

The one who came to this world. And lived for us. And died for us. And rose. And Lord, we thank you that there is one day coming soon. Where Jesus will return to this world.

Not as a baby. But as the King of Kings. And the Lord of Lords. And every eye will see. And every tongue will confess. That Jesus is Lord.

And so we pray that we would all be found ready for that day. Prepared. Cleansed. By the blood of Christ. Clothed with the righteousness of Christ. And looking in faith to him.

[6 : 50] Lord God. We pray for every opportunity that you give us over this Christmas season. To speak of Jesus. And we pray that we as your people. And we as a congregation here.

Would take that opportunity to speak of Jesus. The great commission. Is a commission to go out into all the world. With the gospel message. And so we pray that you would help us.

To go out where we are. In this community. In this place. To speak to people. Of our saviour. And we ask Lord. That you would prepare hearts. Just as you opened the heart of Lydia.

So long ago. We pray that you would be opening hearts. In this community. In this village. In this area. That they would receive Christ. When they are appointed to him.

And so Lord. We pray for every endeavour. To speak of Jesus. We pray for the services today. And the community carol service tonight. We pray for the services around.

[7 : 49] This community. In different churches. Wherever Christ crucified. Is preached. Lord God. We pray that you would add your blessing. And that you would glorify your name. And that you would draw many.

In faith to yourself. We pray Lord. For the outreach. On Christmas Eve. And for the young ones. That you would touch their hearts. And the hearts of their parents. That they would come.

And that they would believe. And see. That everything. That they have been told about Jesus. Is true. And Lord. For every other conversation. That you give us.

Every opportunity. That you present. And pray. That we would take it. Pointing people. Not to ourselves. Not even to the church. But to Christ.

Himself. The one who is able to draw. All people. To himself. So help us Lord. We pray. In the commission. That you have given to us. We ask Lord.

[8 : 47] That you would be with people. Who are struggling. At this time of year. And we pray on. For those. Known to us. We think. Of those. Who are struggling. With illness. At this time.

And who would love to be here. But who can't be here. Meet with them. We pray in their homes. In hospital beds. In respite places. Lord God. We ask.

That they would be. In the spirit of worship. On your day. As you draw near to them. We pray for those. Who. Even perhaps this week. Have received news. That you are struggling with.

We thank you. That you are the God. Of all comfort. You are the God. Who steadies us. In difficult days. And we pray. For your steady hand. Upon those. Who are struggling.

For those. Who are receiving treatment. Of one kind. And another. We ask Lord. That it would be effective. That you. The great physician. Would lay your healing hands. Upon those. Who are frail.

[9 : 42] In the physical sense. We pray for those. Who struggle. With the festivities. And every temptation. That that presents. Lord protect them.

Those who are young. And those. Who are older as well. But to. Feel the. The draw. Of. Temptation. Especially at this time of year.

Protect them. Lord. We ask. And. Give them your strength. And we pray for those. Who are lonely. That they may find. Companionship. With Jesus.

As that friend. Who sticks closer than a brother. And with your people. Lord. Help us. We pray. To reach out to those. Who are lonely. In this community. We pray.

Not just for this place. But for our country. And for all nations. And. This morning. In particular. As we continue to see. The. Harrowing scenes. From. Aleppo.

[10 : 36] We pray for those. Who are struggling. Those who are suffering. Those who. See no. Way out. And those. Who have. Even received. A way out. And find that they are.

In greater turmoil. In the place. They have arrived. In the place. That they have left. Where there is such. Brokenness. Lord. We pray. That you would. Minister. To the needs. Of those who are suffering.

And that you would. Move those. In authority. To make. Wise decisions. That will bring an end. To the suffering. We pray for. Your world. And ask.

Lord. That you. In your. Redemptive power. Would be. At work. Hear our prayers. Continue with us. We thank you. For this place.

Where we worship. We thank you. For the meeting. On Wednesday. And the prospects. That may be before us. In the future. We continue to acknowledge you. And ask that you would. Guide and direct.

[11 : 29] Our path. That every decision. That we make. And every step. That we take. May be guided by you. And for your glory. Hear our prayers. Cleanse us from sin.

Fill us with the Holy Spirit. And enable us. To know you. Hear our presence. Blessing us. We pray. In Jesus name. Amen. Boys and girls.

Could you come out please? How's everybody today? Happy? Excited? My experience of children at the moment is.

It's a kind of. It's a constant brink. Between tears of joy. And tears of despair. There's been so many parties. So much activity. Over the last week. While everybody's on the brink.

Walking the tightrope. But you're looking forward to next Sunday. Yes. Absolutely. Who's decorated their house?

[12 : 26] Who's got decorations up in the house? Tell me. What kind of things. In the house. Do you do. To. To help you to remember. Because. If you never had these memories.

You'd probably forget. It's going to be Christmas. Wouldn't you? Not likely. What kind of decorations. Have you got up in the house? Tell me. Katie.

What do you have in your house? A Christmas tree. That was the last answer. I was looking for. But the first one I got. That's the right answer.

What else do you have in the house? Just. We'll have a few things. Christmas tree. Christmas tree. Thank you. Do you want to? Ailey. What do you. Adam. Adam. Adam.

Christmas tree. And stuff coming down. From the ceiling. That's the last thing you said here.

[13 : 20] You tell me that in a second. Okay. What else do you have in your house? John Roddy. Calendars. Calendars. You open the door every day. What does it have in it? Pairs to smell the socks.

Chocolate. Chocolate. Yeah. Caitlin. Christmas decorations. Bethany. Um. Lights. Lights.

Yeah. What are the lights? Why do we have lights? What do you think the light reminds us of? That's a thought. Other things?

We'll come back to that one. Right. Let's think about the Christmas tree. Can you see a Christmas tree here? Yeah. Over there. What does it have on it? It has bobbles.

It has bobbles. Katrina. What does it have on it? Decorations. Decorations. Lois. What's it got? Pardon?

[14 : 16] Decorations. Decorations. Do you want to? Bubbles. Bubbles. Bethany.

Bows. Pardon? Bows. Bows. Bows. Bubbles. Bubbles. Bells. This is like a sermon. It's all beginning with the same letter. What does that Christmas tree not have on it?

It's snow. All agree? It doesn't have a? Star. It doesn't have a star.

And what should be on the top of every Christmas tree? Star. A star. Who's going to put it on the top of the Christmas tree?

I don't think so. Me. Who's going to put it on the top of the Christmas tree? Gordon, there you go. You might need to take one of the wee ones to actually lift them up.

[15 : 19] John. No. John. Come on. There goes John Roddy. Hopefully that's the only time you'll have to go with Gordon.

Do you want to tell you to stop the road? Thank you, John Roddy and Gordon. Now we've got a star on the top of that Christmas tree.

We might not have a star on the top of our Christmas tree now. But there's one on the top of the Christmas tree there. Why is there stars put on the top of the Christmas trees? What does that remind us of?

Grace. There was a star that was in the sky. So there was a star in the sky.

And who did that star, what did that star do? Who did it point people to? Who did it lead people to? Jesus. Jesus. Jesus.

[16 : 17] Jesus. Jesus. And so the star, like a big light shot in the sky, and as they followed the star, who followed the star? Shepherds.

Shepherds. Yeah. The wise men. And the wise men, they all saw the star. And when they followed the star, it took them to Jesus. Boys and girls.

Has anybody ever said to you, you're a little star? Yeah? Now God wants us all to be little stars.

And just like that little star reminds us of the big star that pointed people to Jesus. Do you know how you can be a star?

Not by going on the X Factor. Not by trying to be the most famous person in the whole country. The way that you and I can be stars is by using our lives and the light that's in our lives if we are trusting Jesus to point other people to Jesus.

[17 : 30] So that when they look at us, they see something of Jesus in us. They hear something about Jesus from us. And they follow him.

So when you see all these stars over the next few days, and when you see the star on the top of the Christmas tree, remember that star in the Bible. And remember the star that God wants you to be pointing people to Jesus.

Let's pray. Dear Lord God, we pray that you would help us in our lives, whether we are very young or whether we are older.

First of all, to trust you. To trust Jesus. To ask him to take our sins away and come into our lives and bring his life into our lives.

And we pray that once we trust Jesus, we would use our lives not to make us look great, but to make people look to and see how amazing Jesus is.

[18 : 33] So help us over this week especially to point people to Jesus with our lives and with our tongues so that they too would see him and follow him. And we pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. We're going to sing now and we're going to sing the words that are on the screen and it's in Mission Praise 597.

Another carol that you know very well. And it speaks about how the shepherds first saw the light. Silent night, holy night, sleeps the world hid from sight and so on.

We sing about Jesus' work. Let's stand to sing again. Let's stand to sing.

Let's pray for them. Just quietly in our own hearts as we see them going out. Let's remember to be praying for them. We're in John chapter 1 and we continue in this passage this week.

[20 : 03] John chapter 1 and you're reading from verse 1. In the beginning was the word. He was with God.

He was with God. He was with God. He was with God. He was with God. And the word was God. He was with 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. 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.

Or the darkness has not overcome 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.

[21 : 00] 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. Children born not of natural descent.

Nor of human decision. Or 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 of whom I said. He who comes after me has surpassed me. Because he was before me. From the fullness of his grace.

[21 : 58] 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. Amen. And may God bless that reading. And shall we. And perhaps O. God bless you.

what B'hook do when the praktek morning and the■■■■ in the wilderness a lavishiki want to go home to the■■■ EV it talks to God's ■■■■■ compared to Sip■■■ in Syria will once suffer.

Hold yourself, see me, see me and will what you love me.

I feel both. I feel them and justuy canlish, If you would like a in the world problem we have that transition into our living lives in our reserved places draws a gallium from Praha that contains our years and goes comment and dive in.

[24 : 22] It seemed like it was written a time as she was going to work with us...

Let's go to published a painting every morning for once tho at school, Then others can not work for himself ...

we are thankful for himself. So I know he has the heart too. Keep your heart, and you are now Ekankar.

I am now on your way and our BMWallo. Here I am, For ferwo■■ciers living in which always houses, He got rid of those weapons at foundences Coldplay may live in many cases Virus and have been taught at school Her home homes are more than ever i an but i know listen so so I them in the 66 Nähl and then he told me that he seemed holding And he said I'd bring my options, but I feel like playing again with the andron er ok and we feel threatened and that's why

I increase education for the more children and children 130 years, in great■■■■■■ies we have Benyan doing Where we bertondea where the Findhs and Des-C Verse Thank you by■■o for being here theilling child.

[27 : 30] In thei Tudo an Prophet which was a conveyed we are a nativeist and chodzi tam from a military special I I come we sing now to God's praise from the psalm, Psalm 42 Psalm 42 and the first two verses, the first two stanzas of the psalm in Gaelic

Like as the heart for water boots and thirst of plant and rain So pants my long and solo
God that come to thee I may My soul for God, the living God, doth thirst Then shall I near
unto thy countenance approach And in God's sight appear These two verses of Psalm 42
to God's praise in Gaelic Everything will be seen This is VI amestui Oh Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[31 : 13] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[33 : 07] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. That fact of the oneness From Sinus known to... And... Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Over the last few weeks, especially for the benefit of those who are visiting, let me just say that we've been looking at the Christmas story through the lens, you could say, of John's gospel.

[34 : 46] And John is the gospel writer who doesn't begin the Christmas story in the manger and in the specifics of the familiar elements of the Christmas story as grounded in this world.

But John begins the Christmas story in eternity. Perhaps John, you could say, he breaks the train of our thought in the terms of the familiar scenes.

And he causes us to think deep, not just about the incarnation, not just about the coming of Jesus, the word, into this world. But John leads us in thinking about who God is and is being.

So who is God? Is the question that we've been giving thought to over past weeks. And the headings that we've gone through, as we've gone through verse by verse, is God is eternal.

He's the one who has no beginning. That blows our minds from the accent. We can't grasp it. God is triune.

[35 : 57] He's the God who is three in one. The word Jesus, verse two, was from the beginning, in the beginning, with God the Father and with the Spirit.

God is our creator. And every breath that we have, every day that we are given in time, is a reminder of the fact that we are made. God is the one who made us.

He's our creator. He's the one, verse four, who breathes life into us. He's the one who is light. As we thought about very simple terms with the children, verse five.

And so, as we think about these theological questions of who God is, it strikes me, as I expect it strikes you, that John's cosmic gospel, it's very out there, very otherworldly, as we think deep about the revelation of God to us.

It might even be so otherworldly, so theological, that we can be tempted to ask, in the light of John, what? What impact, actually, does this have on me?

[37 : 14] In the here and now? How does this affect me? It's very out there. But how does this apply personally to me, if I'm a believer in Jesus?

Well, here's one very personal application, as we come to the next point. If you have believed in Jesus, if you are somebody who has, by faith, received Christ, you have a father.

You have a heavenly father. The next point, in God's revelation of himself to us, through John, is that staggering fact that God is father.

He's eternal, he's creator, he is light, he is life. and yet he is our father. Look at verse 11.

The verses in between, by the way, that we've jumped, we will come back to over the next week or two. But I want to go to verse 11 today. God is father. Verse 11.

[38 : 35] He, Jesus, that is, 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.

Children born not of natural descent, not of human decision, or a husband's will, but born of God.

Now when we think about salvation, and we'll do more of this, this evening, very briefly, I'll be merciful to you tonight. I know there's a carol service at eight, so we'll have a short service.

We'll think more about salvation this evening. But when we think about salvation, when we think about the fact that Jesus came from heaven to earth, to save us, we often emphasize, all that Jesus saved us from.

And it's amazing to think about what he saved us from. He has saved us from our sin, the penalty of our sin. He has saved us from the enemy of our soul, Satan, and his clutches on us.

[39 : 50] He has saved us from death's clutches. We pass through death when we are in Christ. He has saved us from hell. All that he has saved us from.

But how often do we actually think about what God saved us into? He has saved us into the family of God.

As if everything that he saved us from was not enough. Think about what he has saved us into. So when you and I accept Christ's salvation, when we, verse 12, believe in his name, when we receive him into our hearts, Jesus not only becomes our saviour, our personal saviour, and our friend, but we become, verses 12 and 13, children of God.

We are adopted. God takes hold of us. And he adopts us into his family. Ephesians 1.

If you want to explore that more. And if we are children of God, adopted into the family of God, we are able to come to God as our father.

[41 : 20] That's an amazing fact that John shares with us and Jesus builds on as the gospel progresses.

The wonder of being able to come to the eternal triune creator, our light and life-giving God who is out there, who is the God of heaven and earth.

All the galaxies that we know and all the galaxies that we don't know. That God who created it all. We're able to come to him here in this wee hall and call him our father.

You know, if we were to go out like the BBC, BBC Alaba, microphone, take a wander around this area. Head to Storny for the day and ask the question, what's Christmas all about?

People would say curfies and lights and tinsel and presents and baubles and all the stuff that we expect over Christmas.

- [42 : 30] But one of the answers that would commonly come forward in response to what's Christmas all about is family. What's Christmas all about? It's about family.
- About taking time to be with your family. And John in one sense here is saying, you're right. The Christmas story is about family. The Christmas story is about the eternal family.
- The Christmas story means that through Jesus, you and I can become children of God. We can become part of the family of God.
- The Christmas story is about how we can know that God of John 1 as our father. And so I want to ask three questions in application of this point.
- The first question, very simply, very predictably, is do you know God as your father? Do you know this eternal, loving, gracious, trustworthy, powerful God as your perfect heavenly father?
- [43 : 45] You know, in John 14, 6, Jesus says to us, no one comes to the father except through me.
- But John 1 really is saying, if we receive Jesus, if we believe in his name, then we can come to the father through Jesus, the son.
- So have you done that yet? The second question is for those who have done that. If you have come to the father through Jesus, the son, today, let us ask ourselves, how is our relationship with our heavenly father?
- Now I'm conscious, whenever we come to this kind of application, this is always something which it varies from person to person because our experience with our earthly fathers varies wildly.
- Some people never knew a father. Some people knew a father that was not a good father. and so the emotions that arise within us, they vary depending on our experience.
- [45 : 12] For some people, when they hear the word father, it's something of an open wound. for any such people in particular, think about it this way.
- Our relationship with our father, it may or it may not have been a good one, but the heavenly father who is revealing himself to us and calling himself, calling us to him, he is good.
- and he is the one who will always be there and he is the one who will never turn us away. He is the one who is waiting and who is longing to gather his children around him.
- So how often and how quickly do we come to him? Our father. How at ease today are we in his presence?
- How tuned are we into his voice? Are we close? Are we in good relationship with our heavenly father? Or is there an awkwardness that's crept down because of sin?
- [46 : 37] Is there some unconfessed sin that has deep within our hearts that we are harboring that it's bringing a coldness? If so, confess it and then come in response to the call of your heavenly father.
- What a price the father paid in the giving of his son so that we could be called children of God and we could come here.
- So in that location do you know God as father? How is your relationship with God as your father? And the third question in that location here before we move on to the next point is how is your relationship with your brother and sister?
- person? Because if we have trusted Jesus, if we have believed in his name, if we have received him, God is our father and every other person who has trusted Christ, they have the same heavenly father and that means that they are part of an eternal family and we are bound eternally together with him as brother and sister in Christ.
- So the question that follows is how is our relationship with our brother and sister? And the answer is it won't be perfect because families in this world are never perfect.

[48 : 27] but if we have brothers and sisters as we do in Christ, we should be doing what Paul encourages us to do in Ephesians 4 and that's bear with one another in love.

In our home it may surprise you, it definitely won't surprise you, but sometimes there are fights. When a fight blows up between the three girls, we quite often remind them of a song they used to sing when they were, younger.

It's a Colin Buchanan song and I won't sing the song to you, but I think I might have shared the lyrics with you before. It goes like this, in the Bible, in Ephesians 4 and verse 32, God says be kind to one another.

You know, it's only as we're kind, it's only as we forgive, as we have been forgiven, it's only as we fellowship, it's only as we love each other, that other people who look in at Christians will actually be drawn to our family and want to be part of the family of God.

God. So how we relate to each other is crucial, both within the congregation, this fellowship that we are part of, and in the wider context of the family of God across this area.

[50 : 03] there are three churches in Tyrebrook, across the three churches, there are brothers and sisters who share the same heavenly father.

And our lives and our relationships in this place will say a whole lot to the world about the family name.

they can bring honour and they can bring the streets to the name of our father. Challenging.

Yet we have to grapple with this. Who is God? He is our father. Who is God? Secondly, he is the one who became flesh.

Verse 14, the word became flesh flesh and made his dwelling among us. Now when you speak to the children about Christmas and ask them very openly, tell me about Christmas, what's Christmas all about?

[51 : 15] You'll get a myriad of answers, but one of the recurring answers that will happen every year, every time you speak about what's Christmas all about is somebody will say Christmas is Jesus' birthday.

God is the word. In one sense, you have to say, well, that's true. The fact is, Jesus, God the Son, the Word, he existed eternally, but he was born into this world.

Jesus, the Word, verse 14, became flesh flesh, and he made his dwelling among us. And as we think that one, very, very quickly, we tend to move to the question of why.

Like the children, you tell them something, they say why. Tell them something else, why, why, why, why, why? And so it goes on. Sometimes you want to stop them and just say, just park up on question number two and think about it for a minute.

We can be like that. The Word became flesh, we ask the question why, and we've explored the question why, and it's good that we explore the question why.

[52 : 27] But before we get to that, today in this moment, just hit the pause button and let us consider the astounding fact, before we get to the why, that the Word became flesh.

And he made his dwelling among us. God the Son, became flesh. Think about what that means, even in terms of your prayer life.

The Word became flesh. That means that Jesus, the Word, understands what it feels like to be flesh and to be in this world.

And so as we come to God in prayer, praying to the Father through the Son, he understands us. He understands what it feels like to be you.

So when you come from a wedding celebration and your heart is overflowing with joy, Jesus understands that. John 2 tells us he was a guest at a wedding.

[53 : 47] Experienced that in the flesh. And when your heart is breaking with grief, as some will be even this morning, Jesus understands that.

He knows what it feels like to stand and weep with a family, having lost a friend. John 11. And when you've got a backlog of work stacking up and the heat is on, you're feeling the pressure, Jesus understands that.

He understands the daily grind of a workshop because he slogged away in one for 30 years. And when the family situation is tense, as sometimes it can be over Christmas, and when you feel like your family, they just don't get you.

And they're looking at you and they're pointing at you and they're saying things and they're just not getting you, Jesus understands that. He understands what it feels like to have the family say, Mark chapter 3, he's out of his mind.

It's gone too far. And when you may fleetingly become Mr. Poplar, Mrs. Poplar, just for a season, and everybody looks to you and you seem to be the flavor of the month, and everyone seems to love you, Jesus understands that.

[55 : 14] He heard the Christ chant his name, Matthew 21, triumphal entry. And then when the Christ turned against you, and when you're going through a season in this world where you feel that you're misunderstood, and even your friends are turning away from you, and they're turning against you, Jesus understands that.

Because he's been there in the flesh. and when you and I experience pain, physical pain, mental pain, psychological pain, spiritual pain, when we experience loneliness, when we experience rejection, when we experience suffering of every kind, Jesus understands that.

God's heart, and when you're tempted, and Satan is on your case, and he's trying to lure you into sin, Jesus understands that.

Every aspect of life in this world, he understands, because the word became flesh, flesh, and he made his dweller among us.

And that should encourage us to come to him. You know, we tend to be slow to come to somebody who just doesn't understand us.

[56 : 54] We are slow to come to somebody who we just feel has no sympathy or compassion for what we're going through. Jesus understands us.

He is able to sympathize with every weakness, every infirmity that we experience. That's what it says in Hebrews 4. We don't have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, with our infirmities, but he was like us in every way.

He's gone through everything that we can go through, and yet he was with that sin. And he is the one who calls us, Matthew 11, 28, to come to him.

Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. I remember speaking to a young girl one day, and she was upset.

And what she said to me was sometimes it's just hard to be me. Sometimes it just feels like if I'm me, my friends won't understand me.

[58 : 17] They won't accept me. a true friend is the one who gets you, who understands you, somebody you can be natural, no masks with.

It's a great gift to have a friend like that in this world. If I can say this very carefully and reverently, Christ is the friend that our soul longs for.

As the deer pants for the water, paraphrase of Psalm 42, so my soul longs after you. Like as the heart for water boils, and thirst of pant and gray, so pants my longing soul, O God, that come to thee I made.

Our souls have been wired, they have been made to long for and love and connect fully, perfectly with Christ.

Sin broke the connection to Adam, but Jesus came, taking on flesh, so that that connection with him could be restored.

[59 : 44] The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Before we get to the whys, before we get to the implications of all that, this Christmas, this day, just think about it.

Think about that breathtaking story, that amazing plot line that should blow our minds every Christmas, God became flesh. The eternal God stepped into time.

The creator entered his own creation. He entered the womb of a created being and he became dependent in that way upon his mother.

C.S. Lewis said, at one time, in a stable, at one time, a stable had something inside it that was bigger than our whole world.

God did it for us. That's how much he loves us.

[61 : 02] Do you remember the film The Last of the Mohicans? Some of you might have seen it. It's this scene in the film. And there's these two lovers. And they're being separated against their wills.

And they're being torn in opposite directions. And the man says to the woman that he loves, as she's going in the opposite direction, getting torn away, I will find you. I will come for you.

You know, that's the Christmas message. That's the gospel. Christ came for us. St. Lord Ferguson said, without abandoning his deity, the Son of God takes on our humanity in order that he might take on our sinfulness in order that he might become our saviour.

He came for us. And if we're hearing this, if we're grasping this, if it's still holding us, he has found us.

God is God is Father.

[62 : 26] He's your Father. God became flesh. And we could go on, but I think that's enough for today.

Let's pray. our heavenly Father, we accept we we say to you just now that these things are beyond our minds as we think about the wonder of who you are but we thank you that you have revealed yourself to us and you are speaking to us and we thank you that we are able through Christ to call you our father we thank you that in Christ you have a great high priest who is able to sympathize with everything that we go through and who has come to this world for us so that we might be reconciled to God in time and then for all eternity help us to understand you and understand you help us to believe and to receive Jesus and we pray these things in Jesus name amen we're going to close by singing the mission phrase number 539 539 in mission phrase once in royal david city stood a lowly cattle shed where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed mary was the mother of my Jesus Christ her little child and so on we'll sing the whole hymn

God's grace and now with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forevermore amen you