

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!

Verse 14 at the end of our gospel this morning, starts with “And the Word became flesh, and lived among us.” This verse articulates in a way that nothing else can, the center point of our faith that in Jesus God took our human flesh upon himself. It’s an incredible statement, totally radical, world changing. To the Greeks, the flesh or body wasn’t the real person, the person was the mind or the soul, the part of us that thinks. To the Hebrews, the body was a good thing, created by God for our enjoyment, but completely beneath God. Just dust formed from dust.

And here we have John writing “the Word became flesh” which was scandalous to both Jew and Greek. To the Jew the very idea that God would stoop to take human flesh which belongs to the world of creation was absurd and offensive. To the Greek the idea of God taking flesh was inconceivable because the body was inherently evil and besides that why would God take on the weakness of human flesh.

But still we have the statement “The Word became flesh.” Not “human” or a “body” but “flesh” the reality of humanity. Flesh with the aches, pains, weaknesses, desires, lusts, needs for food and water. All this, and that’s what God took on when the Word became flesh.

So why would God do this? It’s a question I’ve asked and I’ve been asked.

In our ELW, in a Christmas hymn called “Let All Together Praise Our God” by Nikolaus Herman, the third verse goes like this “O tender Child, you veil in flesh the splendor of your might, a servant’s garb now wraps the one who clothed the sky with light.” The fifth verse includes the lines “A wonderful exchange you make: you take our flesh and blood, and in return give us to share the shining realm of God.”

There we have it. God become human. Veiling in flesh the splendor of his might, is the only way we might hear and believe this Word he spoke to us, taking our flesh and blood, crucified in our place, and giving us (who believe by grace) this word of grace, mercy, forgiveness and love, the shining realm of God. Jesus became one of us not just to share himself with us but also as the Christmas hymn “Away in a Manger” has it, to “fit us for heaven, to live with you there.”

By taking becoming flesh and living among us, he invites us to come to him, to touch and embrace him, our Savior. When we celebrate Holy Communion in a few minutes, we will know again that Christ is truly present. We touch him, we embrace him, we take him into ourselves, tasting, seeing the goodness of the Lord. Jesus shares himself with us, having become one of us, that we might be one with him.

“The Word became flesh and lived among us.” And the Word lives among us still. An incredible, remarkable gift, laid in a manger in Bethlehem, laid on the cross of Calvary, and at the table of the Lord, Jesus speaks to us, embraces us, and gives to us the promise that we will live with him forever. AMEN MERRY CHRISTMAS!

