

Life Group Notes

Sunday 4th February 2024

Speaker: Scott Taylor

Title: The Presence: Jesus

Passage: John 1:1-3,14

Today we are at the middle point, the centre point, the fulcrum point, of all history, including the history of God's presence with his people. Today we centre on Jesus, Immanuel, God with us.

To understand the impact of the statement the Word became Flesh, we first need to understand who the Word is and John makes three things clear: 1) The Word, Jesus, was 'in the beginning' – present at creation. He had existed eternally with God. 2) Jesus is distinct from the Father – 'he was with God'. 3) Jesus is the same as God – 'he was God'.

Then in verse three John continues to build, he says that all things were made through the Word. In Genesis 1 we read that God speaks and things happen, when we speak words come forth. The Word, Jesus is the agent, the means of creation. God speaks, Jesus goes forth and creates – the Word.

What we have seen so far in our presence series is all the outworking of this. The Triune God of whom the Word is one person, creates the world plants and garden and then presences himself in that garden, walking with Adam and Eve in the cool of the evening. He was knowable, and they were not afraid of his presence until they ate of the fruit. His permanent, divine manifest presence is with his people.

Then, after the fall, makes himself tangibly known to his people as a whole is in the tabernacle, in one tent. His presence now is fearsome as a cloud and as his glory, his manifest presence filling the temple, so much so that Moses cannot enter. There is great mystery, they look on in fear. When his cloud lifts and moves, the tabernacle is deconstructed and they carry it to the next place and is reconstructed and God comes and tackles his place once more. As such God's presence comes to many places but in one tent.

Later we see the temple, once built God comes and presences himself in the Holy of Holies. Now only for one people in one geographical place. This was never what God had intended, the manifest, divine presence of God now restricted to a small area in a temple in one city for one people accessed by only one person! So far from his walking in the garden.

Then we read the Word becomes flesh. Where God used to fill a space, he now comes and fills flesh and walks on the earth. WOW! Still in mystery, both fully God and fully man, but as something we can fully understand.

He comes and dwells, pitches his tent, tabernacles with us. Taking the initiative to pitch his tent! No longer strange manifestations, now God as a human. And this changes everything. It's hard for humans to relate to something we don't understand, hence it is hard to understand God's love mercy and grace, until we see it in the person of Jesus. His presence changed the way we perceive and see God. It also informs our understanding of being a new creation as Paul calls us. We know what it looks like for God to now presence himself in human form and we become those who are now full of the fullness of God. Just as Jesus was. We get to do the same things as Jesus. After Jesus we see Pentecost, a temple moment, where we see the outpouring of his Presence by the Spirit. It may be in one place, but it is for all peoples. As the church becomes established, we see a movement towards tabernacles, many tents in many places, churches who manifest the presence of God. All looking forward to a day where we will be in Heaven with him, once again in his permanent, glorious manifest presence.

Suggested questions:

- 1) What was new to you or something that God underlined to you through the meeting or through the sermon on Sunday?
- 2) How does understanding the mystery of the Word in creation and throughout the History of Israel, helps us greater understand the Word made Flesh?
- 3) How does the presence of God through Jesus change our understanding of how God relates to us and us to him?
- 4) How does the presence of Jesus have a greater understanding of being new creations?

Glorious permanent manifest presence

HEAVEN

Many Tents

CHURCH

Many Places

All People

PENTECOST

One Place

Human, temporary,
manifest presence

JESUS

One People

TEMPLE

One Place

One Tent

TABERNACLE

Many Places

manifest presence

GARDEN

Divine permanent