

## THE WORD BECAME FLESH

John 1,6-18 (14)

"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."

Dear Living and Holy Father. Thank you for your word from the Gospel of John through which we may come to know that you are the Almighty God who created the world from nothing. Thank you that today we may especially remember your grace that the Word became flesh and served us in grace and truth. Thank you that you fill us now with your Spirit and give us grace through your Word. I pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Last week we learned that the gospel of John begins with the truth that Jesus is God. Jesus is the Almighty God who created heaven and earth, and who has always been there. We also learned that Jesus alone is the true light that can completely replace the darkness of sin. Today we learn about the incarnational grace of Jesus. Jesus completely emptied Himself by becoming flesh and dwelling among us to save us from the darkness of sin. By receiving this Jesus full of grace and truth, we may see the glory of God. Let us meet this Jesus and imitate his incarnational grace this semester through Bible study and life fellowship so that through this many students can be led to the truth in Jesus.

### I. Jesus, the True Light (6-13)

Let us read verses 6 - 8: „There was 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.“ These verses include the work of John the Baptist, but they are intended to emphasize Jesus as the true light. Before the messianic work of Jesus, John prepared the people of that time for the coming of Jesus by preaching repentance. Because of his spiritual influence and popularity, some thought that he was the Messiah. But John knew well that he was not the Messiah, but the forerunner of the Messiah, who was not worthy to tie Jesus' shoe laces (Matthew 3:11). He knew that he was not the light, but he was to bear witness to

the light.

Let us read verse 9: „The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.“ John here again testifies of Jesus as the true light. In mankind there have been and there are lights for a long time, some bigger, some smaller. Some have done great things for humanity, like Albert Einstein or Marie Curie. The climate activist Greta Thunberg is in the eyes of some perhaps a light of this generation. But all of them are not the true light. Their light is also transient. Recently, a professor at our clinic retired. At his retirement party I realized that he had really been a light in the medical world some 40 years ago. But now he is old and simply replaced by other younger ones. Jesus alone is the true light, from the beginning of the world to all eternity. Without Jesus, people's hearts are full of darkness through sin. No man can, by his own strength, dispel this darkness in his heart or in the heart of another man. Because Jesus alone can save us from sin and the power of death and thus truly enlighten us, He has become the true light for us. As John 8:12 says: "When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

The reactions to the true light were different. Let us first read verses 10 and 11: "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." Here the paradox is described that Jesus actually came into his possession, but that his creatures did not accept their Creator. This is an unimaginable and totally inappropriate reaction. It is illustrated in the parable of the wicked vine dressers in Mt 21. The owner of the vineyard had entrusted his workers with a beautiful vineyard. But when the time of the harvest came and the owner sent his son just to take his share of the harvest, they first beat him and finally they killed him. God had chosen the Israelites as a kingdom of priests and holy people, but they remained ignorant, did not accept

his love and even crucified him in the end. Even today many still ignore the rule of God. Although God the ruler of the world, all gifts come from God and we can enjoy a good environment, we often reject Jesus instead of thanking gratefully for His grace. As Romans 1:21 says: „For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.“ The reason is that they love darkness more than light (3:19). As a result, they become ego worshippers and give themselves over to evil. Not recognizing Jesus, that is, not believing in Him, is not a problem of the intellect, but active rejection of God and love of darkness. That is why it is such a serious problem to reject the light of Jesus.

But what kind of blessing do we receive when we accept Jesus as the true light? Verses 12 and 13 say: „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.“ These verses show us that all those who accept Jesus as the true light receive the power and the right to become children of God. Neither that we are born into a Christian family nor our abilities or human achievements enable us to do so. Even Superman would not automatically be a child of God. Only when we accept the true light of Jesus, that is, accept God's lordship and sovereignty over our lives, can we become children of God. As children of God, we have the privilege of maintaining a deep personal relationship with our Father in heaven, whom we may call Abba, Father (Gal 4:5,6). We receive the strength and support to stand on God's side in this humanistic world. God empowers us to live an influential life, especially a truly blessed life with God's mission. Above all, we have hope in the Kingdom of God (1 Peter 1:3,4) and access to eternal life (Revelation 22:14).

We learn here that in order to be used by God, it is crucial that we have received Jesus as the true light. In our time we often think about what can be done to win young people for God's work. Instead of helping them to come to the true light, there is a discussion about how best to adjust circumstances even to the point of being willing to compromise with false teachings. But the only way to decide for Jesus is to help them to meet Jesus as the true light and humbly accept God's lordship and sovereignty over their lives and live by His will. This light can truly change them. It gives them the power to overcome worries, fears and false goals in life and to give themselves joyfully to the work of

God. It gives them the power to be on God's side and to be used as vessels useful to Him. Before John Newton was converted, he led a rather dissolute life and worked as a slave trader. But when he met Jesus personally on a crossing and received the true light of Jesus, he was completely changed. He became an influential preacher and slave liberator. A verse from one of his many spiritual songs, which he later wrote, reads: "Amazing grace, how sweet its sound, that saved a wretch like me. I've once been lost, but now I am found, was blind, but now I see." A young man had many interests in the world and was very interested in making his life beautiful by having fun. But when in his youth and later in his studies he accepted Jesus as the true light through Bible study and decided to live according to the will of God, he got spiritual power to fruitfully serve the next generation and live as a spiritual leader. Another young man wanted to live as a world successful salesman of incandescent light. But when he experienced the true light through the Bible study of Jesus, even though he had not graduated from high school, he was able to live as an influential Bible teacher for students and plant the light of life in some intellectual students. My wife used to think that she could become happy by living a life with a lot of money and without difficulties. But when she realized, with the help of her shepherds, Gal 2:20, that it is not she but Christ who lives in her, she could receive strength to make a decision to live as a missionary and give her life for the salvation of young people. Let us come to the true light of Jesus in this time and give ourselves with a clear decision for the revival of Germany and Europe.

## II. Jesus, full of grace and truth (14-18)

Let's read together verse 14: „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.“ This verse describes the incarnational grace of Jesus. Jesus is God, He is the Almighty Creator. But to save us and to make the necessary sacrifice, he came to this earth as a human being. This was really unimaginable and as if a human being would become a fly or a worm. Although at his birth no one wanted him, he lived among the people as a friend shepherd. Yet he was a shepherd for people from all walks of life. He helped a lonely outcast Samaritan woman to find her true purpose in life in Jesus. He showed an intellectual Pharisee Nicodemus how to be born again. He healed the physically and spiritually chronic sick. He had hope for 12 young untrained people to set them up as apostles

and lived with them for three years. Above all, he preached the living Word of God that alone can give true healing to people. Finally, he died shamefully on the cross to free us from sin once and for all. Phil 2:6-8 says: „Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!“ Through this complete utterance of his, we have received eternal life and can see the glory of the only begotten Son of God. We can also see this total renunciation and grace of incarnation in Mother Sarah Barry, for example. As we know, she could have lived in Korea as an American missionary in the better-off missionary house. But she chose to live with the Koreans by sleeping on the floor with them and eating what they ate. As she did this and faithfully led the one-to-one Bible study, many young people in Korea were able to see the love and glory of God and meet Jesus personally. They were also encouraged to do the same. Although they seemed to have nothing to give or say as a third world country, they went out into the world and practiced the incarnational grace of Jesus among the young students by serving them in community through Bible study. In this way, we were able to witness God's glory that excellent students in many humanistic countries were led to faith in Jesus. Horst Engelmann, one of the spiritual leaders in Germany, who was himself a missionary in Tanzania for 20 years, once told me that it is unbelievable and an unimaginable achievement that people from a Third World country could lead proud European students to faith in Jesus. The secret is that they followed Jesus' example of incarnation. By practicing this incarnational grace, we can see and experience the glory of God today. By faithfully building the altar of prayer and passing on the gospel on the campuses of the Law Faculty, the Medical Faculty, the Math-Natural Faculty, the Faculty of Philosophy, the Rhein Sieg Campus, the University of Koblenz, etc., we can see that an Abraham and a Sarah of faith will be raised up on every campus this year. Let us pray that through our faithful prayer in the early morning 10.000 one-to-one Bible study teams will be formed on the campuses of Germany and Europe this year.

Through the fellowship and intensive one-to-one Bible study, we can also see God's glory in raising up house churches among the second and third generation and using them as global spiritual leaders and Bible teachers. Our next generation has truly had a great privilege to study the Bible inten-

sively from early childhood. They already know the Bible much better at a young age than many students from the Bible School I have met. By faithfully serving their friends, brothers and sisters and Bible circles through Bible study with the grace of the incarnation, just as they have seen their parents do and lead the community, they will see God's glory in the revival of Germany and Europe.

Let us read verse 14 again: „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 also says in this verse that Jesus is full of grace and truth. Even though Jesus was full of mercy, He always said what needed to be said to help people until repentance for the new life. For example, he humbly asked the Samaritan woman: "Will you give me a drink.?" Then he ordered her: "Go, call your husband and come back!" and treated her root of sin clearly. In chapter 8 he defended an adulteress: "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground." Then he challenged her clearly: "Go now and leave your life of sin." Jesus rebuked the sin of the Pharisees very harshly by calling it the birth of a serpent. During the cleansing of the temple he spoke angrily: "My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers."

We learn here that grace and truth are inseparable. To live a new life in Jesus does not mean to hide behind grace, but to fight the daily faith struggle against sin through repentance. Under the guise of grace, many want to lead a comfortable life of faith without responsibility, self-denial and challenge. They don't want to hear the truth and they don't want to speak the truth, but by doing so they deny the truth. Prof. Peter Beyerhaus, who went home last week, was a servant of God who was not afraid to speak the truth. He spoke clearly against the teaching of genderism and stood up for the biblical truth. In doing so, he left a great heritage of faith for this generation. I thank God that my father M. Peter has faithfully served the young people and the next generation in grace and truth in the last 40 years by not bowing to humanism and teaching them the truth of the Bible clearly. He is interested in the next generation by having fellowship with them, helping them spiritually and praying perseveringly for them that they follow the way of Jesus instead of following the spirit of the times. Through this faith struggle, we were able to see God's glory last year, especially through GLEF 2019, that many missionaries of the Next Generation were encouraged not to bow to the spirit of the

times, but to live a God-centered life in this generation. My parents also served me in grace and in truth by loving me and praying for me, but also always helping because of the Word of God. In the past they sometimes did not understand when they helped me to give my life to Jesus instead of following my will and path or being more interested in my human career. Because they persistently planted Matthew 6:33 in me, I was able to recognize this word as God's truth: Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all this will be yours! and make a clear decision for the truth. Now I thank you for serving me through this fundamental truth, because through it I have come to life. How can we remain in the truth? We can do this through intensive Bible study. As John 8:31.32 says: "To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Thank God that we will be able to study God's Word intensively next week through Nehemiah BS and Factual Studies and through the GLE Forum 2020 and thereby recognize God's truth. Let us also serve our Bible students and the next generation with grace and truth so that they can develop clear spiritual insight and make a decision for a life with Jesus in this humanistically shaped time.

Let's read verses 15 to 18: „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.'" Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known." John the Baptist knew perfectly well that Jesus is God, and testified to this. The fullness that God has given us, which is spoken of in verse 16, is the law and the grace of God. The law is a blessing because it helps us to recognize sin, but it cannot save us. But through grace and truth that we have received through Jesus, we can be set free and receive eternal life.

In today's text, we have learned that Jesus is the true light that can cast out darkness and that by truly receiving Jesus, we receive the power to be children of God who bear witness to His name. We have also learned that the Word, Jesus, became flesh by completely humbling himself and serving people in grace and truth. We are allowed to follow this example and preach the Gospel in grace and truth on the campuses in Germany and Europe, so that Germany can be spiritually awakened and 3 bases can be established in the Muslim countries.