

12/14/25 - John 1:14-18 - "Somethin' about this Grace"

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[0 : 00] Open your Bibles, please, to the Gospel of John, chapter 1. The Gospel of John, chapter 1, we will be reading verses 14-18. John, chapter 1, verses 14-18.

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. 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.

For from His fullness 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, the only God, who is at the Father's side. He has made Him known.

This is the Word of God. Definite article today.

[1 : 18] In your name. We're cruising through our Advent series in John, and we've reached verses 14-18.

And I'm just going to give you a warning. I'm going to be flipping back to Exodus 33 in just a moment. So I'd love for you to travel there fairly soon.

But there's moments in Scripture where the longing of humanity is voiced with simple clarity. And one of those moments is in Exodus chapter 33, where Moses says, Please show me your glory.

So Moses isn't asking for information. He's not asking for reassurance or inspiration of any kind.

He simply wanted God Himself. God Himself. Seen. God known. God encountered.

[2 : 29] And so God, in His mercy, grants Moses in a partial answer to His request. He hides Moses in the cleft of the rock, allows His presence to pass by, and proclaims His name.

Abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness is God. Let's look at that, this occurrence here, because this is unfolding in the passage today.

Look with me in Exodus 33. And when you get in there, you'll see something happening between verse 12 and 16.

After Israel's failure with the golden calf, Moses meets with the Lord in the tent, the tent of meeting, and carrying the weight of leading a broken people forward.

Imagine what he's going through here. He pleads for clarity, for assurance, and above all, for God's presence to remain with him. And in verse 14, the Lord promises Moses that His presence will go with him, and that He will give them rest.

[3 : 43] Encouraged by this mercy of God, Moses dares to ask for more. Not success. He doesn't ask for safety, but he asks for God Himself.

Look in verse 18. Show me your glory. So, the Lord agrees to reveal Himself, but with limits.

Right? He tells Moses that He will cause all His goodness to pass before Him and proclaim His name, the Lord.

In Exodus 33, verse 19. And He warns Moses in verse 20. He says, You cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.

Right? And so, in verse 21 through 23, God places Moses in that rock, shields him with His hand, and allows him only a partial glimpse as His glory passes by.

[4 : 45] Glory felt. Glory heard. But not fully seen. And next, in chapter 34 then, the Lord descends again, but this time in a cloud, revealing Himself in a cloud, and stands with Moses.

And as He passes by, God proclaims His own name and character. He says in chapter 34, verse 5 and 6.

Look with me. The Lord says a self-disclosure. He says, The Lord, Yahweh, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

And Moses hears the glory of God proclaimed in words. He encounters God's goodness and mercy, but the fullness of that glory still remains just beyond His sights.

The prayer was right. The desire was holy. But the moment was not yet ready. If we're honest, most of us probably, if we're honest, can probably understand and know exactly what Moses is feeling at this time.

[6 : 13] After all of a sudden, the people God put him in charge to lead out of Egypt are building a golden calf. Complaining, forgetting.

It's these moments when just information about God isn't enough. When answers just don't satisfy. When good theology still leaves our hearts aching.

You don't need to know more about God. You need God Himself. It's that quiet moment when we say, God, I don't just want you to help me.

I just want to know you're here with me. Meet me in my mess. Have you all ever had that time and season in your life?

See, everything in redemptive history anticipates this longing that Moses was experiencing. And John declares today that what Moses was begging to see has now arrived in the flesh.

[7 : 30] Emphasizing God's grace in Jesus Christ. Emphasizing God's grace in Jesus Christ. The sermon title today is called Something About This Grace.

Something About This Grace. And we're going to be breaking this up into a couple different sections, three specifically.

And I'd like for us to see how these three sections actually work together to reinforce a main point and a call for us to anchor our joy in God's grace revealed.

Anchor our joy in God's grace revealed. So let's have a moment of prayer as we dive in. And is it up there?

It's up there. All right. And just pray for the Lord to help us to see His glory today. Let's pray. Father, we come to you longing just as Moses, just as the people of Israel, still wanting, still needing, not just more information, but assurance of your presence, of your glory revealed.

[8 : 56] Help us, Lord, to turn to your word, to feed us as manna in the wilderness of our own lives, and help us to feast upon assurance of your salvation in our lives.

We praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. The first section that we have today is joy in grace that comes near.

And that's just these two verses we have here. What began in chapter 1, verse 1 through 5, which was in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

This kind of like dark cosmological reality of something existing before the beginning of time, outside of time, outside created matter.

And so this was a cosmological reality. And all that's been echoed through the voice of John the Baptist last week from verse 6 to 13, being a historic reality coming to be made known in the world.

[10 : 13] And now this has become a very personal reality in what John writes to us today. He says, just like it was read by the Micah Walton, he said, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

John does not say that the Word appeared as flesh. He doesn't say that the Word visited flesh or borrowed flesh.

He says a specific word here that the Word became flesh. And not only that, but he tabernacled with us.

He pitched his tent with us. During the days of Moses in the wilderness, God's glory filled the tent. But now John says God's dwelling has progressed.

Not a tent anymore. John says God pitched his tent not in fabric, but in flesh. Jesus! Jesus! I can finally say it!

[11 : 30] I've been constrained these past two weeks. You see, if we hold John's words as absolute truth, that this certainly happened in historic history, we get a vivid glimpse at God's heart, don't we?

He doesn't love from a distance, but moves towards us and steps into our darkness of our mess, just as he allowed his glory to enter the wilderness through the tent of meeting.

Now, there's a lot of confusion throughout church history about this verse, about the mysterious act of God stepping into our mess.

There's a lot of issues that have occurred. So it's not as if God is changing costumes or things like that, or of water turning to ice, or as if there's different modes of existence, of God changing modes from one mode to another to another.

No, the words that John uses here actually indicate there's a continuation of being. There's something that never stopped since in the beginning.

[13 : 04] But it's revealed now in a continuous act and existence in a distinct person. In other words, Jesus did not stop being what he was.

He remained fully God, becoming fully man, remaining what he was while becoming what he was not. Many might know the word hypostatic union.

And if you don't know that, let me explain what that kind of means a little bit. Hypostatic is a compound Greek verb of hypo and stasis.

And so under, compound verb, under, to stand. So this relates to a real being, a real being, not just something or something by mere appearance.

This is a real being. And so therefore, the hypostatic union of a under and to stand is not meaning that there were two different modes of existence, but it means that there is a union of two natures in one, divine and human, in one, hoopostasis or hypostasis in our English.

[14 : 26] One person, Jesus Christ, two natures. This is a mystery. Right? You're like, you already lost me at hoopostasis.

I don't know who Poe is. Right? But the reason this matters, humanity needs to know the true God.

If you desire to be saved, this is essential for us to know the true God. We have to wrestle with this.

We can't say, well, I didn't go to seminary. That doesn't matter to me. No, it does matter to you of knowing the true God. Because we can't say that Jesus was not fully God, because that's a heresy called Arianism.

We can't say that Jesus was not fully man, because that's a heresy called Docetism. And we cannot say that Jesus was not, or was two persons that were separate.

[15 : 36] One person here and then one person there, because that's Nestorianism. It's all proven heresies that diminish the act of God's saving work for humanity.

It matters a lot, church. And so you see, what John is saying here is that Jesus, in Jesus, God was fully revealed, and humanity was fully represented in Jesus Christ.

God was fully revealed, and humanity was fully represented. John unites his theology to echo the language that we read in Exodus 34, when he adds that Jesus came, in our verse today, full of grace and truth.

This is what Moses heard of God describing himself as John now applies to the identity of Jesus Christ.

This is where God's revelation to humanity finds its emphasis, finds its peak in history. All throughout Scripture, God appeared, God spoke, God descended, God passed by, but only here, only here, do we discover that God became.

[17 : 07] God became. And his becoming is greater than John the Baptist in verse 15. John's saying, right, Johnny adds, the apostle John, the author of this gospel, actually inserted a commentary to make sure that people know.

John bore witness about him and cried out that this is, this was he of whom I said, he comes after me. He who comes after me ranks before me because he was before me.

So it's very important for us to see this elevated status, this climax of history, actually unfolding in the gospel of John. And there's something about this grace, right?

A grace that doesn't merely visit in a cloud, but becomes flesh, lives in our midst, and lets us see what only Moses could long for.

Because the eternal word became flesh and dwelt among us, we experience joy, not in a distant God, but in the grace of God who has come near to meet us in our humanity, in our darkness, a longing that all of our hearts feel at one point or another.

[18 : 34] Not only that, we see something else unfold. See joy in grace that never runs dry. And we see that from verse 16 to 17.

If we saw a progression of God's grace from dwelling in fabric to now dwelling in flesh, John is making known another escalation in his gospel.

Another escalation. And this relates to the function of the law to the function of Christ's life. So the function of the law to the function of Christ's life.

Thinking back to Exodus 34 that we saw this morning, earlier in our time, Exodus 34 makes this clear. God proclaimed his abounding love and faithfulness immediately before giving the law.

The law was a gift for God's redeemed people. It was a gift for them and a guide to shape them in understanding his gracious character.

[19 : 48] However, in the scope of redemption, the grace of the law was merely preparatory. Preparatory, right? It's kind of preparing us for a greater grace in Jesus Christ.

There's a trajectory in mind. And the grace of the law was just a preparatory means. But this means that it revealed God's holiness.

It revealed God's character. It revealed our need all in one. And it pointed towards a greater revelation to come. This is progressive in nature. And so here, once again, in Jesus Christ, grace reaches its climax.

Its climatic expression. The law that was engraved on stone is now embodied in the flesh. The very words that were on the stone are now literally living and breathing in Jesus Christ.

Verse 16, we see grace upon grace. And the best way to understand this is just thinking of one wave after another, all of which flow from God's fullness.

[20 : 56] Where do the waves come from? The grace, the waves of grace coming in our lives, where do they come from? Where do they originate from? From God himself. Jesus Christ's fullness.

From Jesus Christ's fullness, we have received grace upon grace. And this is good news. Isn't that? Because just as waves that faithfully hits the shores of the ocean, you can't tell the waves to stop.

They'll keep coming. It's out of your control. Just as they will always faithfully hit the shore of an ocean, they will never cease to flow to the shore of our lives.

That is God's grace. What a joy to realize God's grace is steadfast, just as steadfast as the waves upon a shore that just overwhelm us like a flood in Jesus Christ.

Grace upon grace. You feel that wave hitting you. This means grace isn't fragile, right? Grace isn't something that comes once and then is taken away later.

[22 : 11] It's not dependent upon what we do or who we are, but upon what? God alone. Grace upon grace. Grace isn't fragile at all.

Grace is not fragile. It doesn't fluctuate with our performance. And so for those living in anxiousness or maybe faithlessness or a state of exhaustion, your experience in that is not because of the absence of grace, but because we are living as if grace is scarce.

Because we're not understanding God's grace as waves. See, the God who became flesh is the God whose fullness pours out grace upon grace, upon grace, upon grace.

grace. Maybe you're here today and you're thinking, well, of course God would give me grace. I'm not that bad of a person.

I've tried hard. I've lived decently. I've stayed respectable. But if that's you today, grace that you can earn is no longer grace.

[23 : 38] That actually kind of unravels the whole point of grace. And if you are trusting in your goodness, you are not resting in Jesus Christ, actually.

You're competing with Him. Or maybe on the other side, you're thinking here today, well, this can't be for me. I've failed way too much.

I've gone too far. I don't even belong anywhere near God's fullness. If that's you, if grace only flows to the worthy, then the cross was unnecessary.

Jesus wouldn't have to have come. So the question is not, do you deserve this grace? That's what makes grace, grace, because we don't deserve it.

So the actual question is, will you stop resisting God's grace today in Jesus Christ? Will you stop resisting?

[24 : 48] I would invite you to have faith in Jesus Christ Christ and His work, His life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. And He's coming back for a church and He will come back.

And until then, it's just grace upon grace through our faith in Jesus Christ. What a reminder even for believers, right? The gospel's for believers too, isn't it?

Grace upon grace means that the supply will never run dry. No matter how much you mess up, God's grace will still come pouring in like a flood.

There's something about this grace, isn't there? A grace that doesn't stop at Sinai, doesn't break under our failures, and doesn't arrive once, but a wave after wave after wave.

Something about this grace. And because grace flows from Christ's fullness rather than our performance, believers can live with joy that is sustained by an unending supply of grace upon grace.

[26 : 01] And finally, we see in this last section joy in grace that makes God known in verse 18. John ends his prologue of his gospel by reopening the ache and the longing of Exodus 33.

It says, no one has ever seen God. This was the longing of Moses in Exodus. So, because of God's holiness and humanity's corruption because of sin, no one could ever look at God, see God fully, and live to tell the tale.

Moses hid in the cleft. Israel saw his glory in a fire, a pillar of fire by night, a pillar of cloud by day. But all throughout history, revelation of God was veiled, was partial, was mediated.

Similarly, the one veiled in flesh is distinct in person, but equal in essence. This essence veiled in flesh is indeed the only God in Jesus Christ, the eternal Word that has no beginning in essence.

The one God has made known in Jesus Christ. In other words, John doesn't say that the Son is moving toward the Father or he's not growing into divinity.

[27 : 42] Like, yeah, he's just got to kind of work out some kinks in his corrupt nature. You know, maybe once he hits those adolescent years and learns from his mistakes.

No. He was not growing into divinity. Jesus Christ was divine long before conception, in conception, and long after his death.

He was divine. The essence veiled in flesh is indeed the only God, the eternal Word, the one God has made known.

Now, we may overlook the significance of this essence, and so we really need to understand this translation here. Like, literally, verse 18 can be understood as the only God who is in the bosom of the Father.

Of the Father, he has made him known. There is closeness in this language here.

[28 : 52] That's English. Praise the Lord for English translations, but how much more depth you have in the original Greek, it's amazing what you have there.

And so John doesn't say that the Son is moving toward the Father or growing into divinity, but the Son is eternally springing from the Father as the Son.

Theologians may say that's eternal generation. Absolutely it is. It protects us and guards us from heresy. You see, the Son is not created.

Jesus Christ, the Son, was not created. He was not adopted. He was not inferior to God. He was God.

And this is an essential to Christianity. Y'all want to be saved from your sins? Well, Jesus Christ is the only way. He was God, fully God.

[29 : 58] This is not abstract theology. This is how you know that Jesus Christ can sufficiently be trusted. Paul wrote in Colossians 1 that he's the image of the invisible God.

Then the author of Hebrews 1 says that he is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature. And so Jesus Christ alone can reveal God because he alone has seen God fully.

And in fact, John uses a striking verb here. He has made him known in this passage. Literally, Jesus Christ is God's exegesis, a critical interpretation, examination of God, a revealing of meaning of God the Father.

Jesus isn't just a footnote of God. He's literally the entire commentary. You like that one? I hope that hit. You see, where else can we find joy?

Y'all want to find joy in a full Christmas stocking? Having stuff in this world? Are you kidding me? Nothing in this world compares to the joy that we have in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

[31 : 20] Not a single thing. Our whole life could be going to hell, but we still have Christ. And if we still have Christ, we can have joy.

This is unfathomable truth. This is where the heart begins to swell in worship. The God who once said, you cannot see my face and live, has now shown us his face in Jesus Christ so that we may live.

He's turned it all upside down. What grace of God that makes what is invisible and unfathomable visible.

What grace of God. There's something about this grace, isn't there? The grace that lifts the veil, answers Moses' ancient prayer and request, and lets us see the Father in the face of the Son, Jesus Christ.

Because the Son has fully revealed the Father, our joy is anchored in truly knowing God as He is, not as we imagine Him to be.

[32 : 39] He has revealed who He is. I'd like to leave you with two implications this morning of this passage, how this kind of translates into our lives.

Number one, we can come out of hiding and live honestly before God. We can come out of hiding and live honestly before God.

Our sin and failure can be unmasked. In fact, you can just leave your mask. There's a trash can for that reason out at the threshold there.

We throw our mask away. We're all sinners. We've fallen short of the glory of God, and to some degree or another, we're all struggling in our lives. We all have a reason to really take this prayer of confession we do to heart, right?

We can come out of hiding. We don't have to hide our weakness. If you're thinking SVC institutes, yeah, that's going to reveal some weakness. Well, praise the Lord, because we all need help growing.

[33 : 52] We're all in this progression from our new birth to the end of our lives, and there ought to be some growth in that. Even the smartest person alive right now has room for growth.

we don't have to hide our weakness. We don't have to minimize our disappointments or pretend in some strength that we actually don't have.

No, grace welcomes honesty, church, because God has already drawn near to us in Jesus Christ. For some of that, some of you, honesty looks like resting in grief, resting in your grief, and in that burden that feels heavy, especially during the holidays, of many loss of loved ones, the empty seat that was filled by grandma or grandpa or mom or dad or brother or sister.

For others, it means admitting the quiet ache of our longing for spiritual healing within your own family or maybe your marriage or for physical healing of your body.

Or for some, this coming out of hiding may mean acknowledging that God will meet you in your family dysfunction, in the issues that reside in the hearts of your children around the holidays or in your marriage.

[35 : 21] You see, the God who made Jesus Christ known, He knows you deeply. He knows you intimately. don't live your relationship with Him or exist within the church that's all built upon a lie.

Come clean and live honestly. The second implication is that we can anchor, we can anchor our joy in a person, not a circumstance.

We can anchor our joy in a person, not a circumstance. We don't have to live anxious, defensive, and exhaust ourselves.

We have to stop living as grace is scarce, church. We have to stop living as grace is scarce. So our joy is enduring. It's quite durable, isn't it?

Grace upon grace, even though life may still get harder, as it is for many Christians around this world. So as we carry prolonged burdens relating to our health, we acknowledge the one who actually is carrying us through them, if that's in your life.

[36 : 40] Or maybe you're dealing with a high risk pregnancy that you don't know how the outcome is going to be. You're kind of living ultrasound to ultrasound, hoping and praying that everything is okay.

well, he'll carry you through that high-risk pregnancy with grace upon grace. God alone will sustain you. And in all seasons that the Lord ordains, our joy is not fragile, because grace is not fragile, right?

Our source of joy is not fragile. And so you are not slipping through God's fingers. You might be going through a living hell, but you are not slipping through God's fingers.

But God is holding you carefully. The grace that chases us sustains us. So I'll leave you with this.

I want us all to stand before this grace the way that Moses did. I want us to stand before this grace that Moses did. Awed at God's grace, humbled by God's grace, and if the Lord wills, just completely undone by this grace.

[38 : 09] What Moses could only imagine, we now behold in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The word became flesh.

Grace keeps coming. The Father has made him known. So come to him, draw from him, and rejoice in him, because this grace has a name, and this grace is Jesus Christ.

Amen. Let's pray. up.