

# **Hornsea URC – Journeying with John**

## **Chapter 1 : 17<sup>th</sup> January 2021**



### **WELCOME**

Good morning and welcome to our worship service this morning. Last week, Mark set us up for our next series, Journeying with John. I have the pleasure of getting us started today in John Chapter 1. We could spend a whole year just looking at this chapter and looking at verses week by week. Our approach however will be to take a chapter each week and try to bring to you the part of the chapter that has been placed on our heart by the Lord.

This morning I will be focusing on John 1 vs 14:

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

We will look at this more later.

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

As we come together it is good to prepare ourselves for worship – to prepare to hear and respond to God's word as we gather this morning. Our call to worship is Psalm 98. We are going to listen to this sung by a songwriter who has composed songs for all the Psalms – Ian White. This is one of my favourites

1. Sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvellous things;  
his right hand and his holy arm  
have worked salvation for him.
- 2 The Lord has made his salvation known  
and revealed his righteousness to the nations.
- 3 He has remembered his love  
and his faithfulness to Israel;  
all the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.
4. Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth,  
burst into jubilant song with music;
- <sup>5</sup> make music to the Lord with the harp,  
with the harp and the sound of singing,
- <sup>6</sup> with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—  
shout for joy before the Lord, the King.
- 7 Let the sea resound, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it.

8 Let the rivers clap their hands,  
let the mountains sing together for joy;  
9 let them sing before the Lord,  
for he comes to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world in righteousness  
and the peoples with equity.

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

### **HYMN**

As we consider John Chapter 1 this morning, one of the things I am hoping to bring out is the Grace of God through Jesus Christ. We will sing about that Grace in our first hymn "Yet not I but through Christ in me"

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

### **OPENING PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, as we gather this morning, thank you for this opportunity to worship you and listen to your word. Thank You that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made flesh and came to dwell among us as the unique and only begotten Son of God, who alone qualifies to be our Saviour. Thank You that He was born into the human race as a Man - fully God yet fully Man, so that by His death and resurrection, He could become the singular substitute for the sin of the world. Thank You that by grace through faith in Him we have the opportunity to be redeemed - to Him be all praise and glory, AMEN.

We say now together the Lord's prayer:

Our Father  
Who art in heaven  
Hallowed be thy name  
Thy kingdom come  
Thy will be done  
On earth, as it is in heaven  
Give us this day our daily bread  
And forgive us our trespasses  
As we forgive those who trespass against us  
And lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil  
For thine is the kingdom  
The power and the glory  
For ever and ever  
Amen

### **HYMN**

Our second hymn helps to prepare our hearts as we come around God's word, Speak O Lord

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

## READING

### **The Word Became Flesh (NIV)**

*1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

*6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.*

*9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

*14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*15 (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") 16 Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 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.*

## SERMON

"I'll be back soon," a World War II soldier told his wife before leaving her and their infant son. Four years of war and fighting went by. The young mother would show her boy a portrait of the soldier and say, "See, that's your daddy. One day he's going to come home." In reality, she didn't know what to expect.

One morning the boy said, "Mum, wouldn't it be great if Dad would just step out of the picture frame?"

In a sense that's what God did 2,000 years ago. As part of his eternal plan, he stepped out of heaven and became a man so you and I could look at Jesus and say, "That's what God looks like."

The apostle John described the stepping out in Chapter 1 of his Gospel, "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 1:14 NIV). This verse is the climax of John's opening sentences as John completes his introduction of Jesus by proclaiming his humanity in the midst of his divinity. Without this verse the rest of the story has no meaning. John 1:14 tells us what really happened 2000 years ago- and what it means to us today. The key words I suggest are **grace and truth**.

This verse reveals four great certainties: Jesus became human; Jesus lived among us; Jesus revealed his glory; Jesus invites us to himself.

## I. Jesus became human

John states, "The Word became flesh." Notice the link with verse one: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1 NIV). The Word that always "was" (v. 1) now became an actual event at a point in history. Furthermore, the Word that "was God" (v. 1c) now came into being as flesh, that is, he exists as a human being. We often say that Jesus is God. That is true. But here's an incredible statement: God became Jesus of Nazareth!

When he stepped out, Jesus Christ became the visible expression of the invisible God. He became a visual aid, as it were, to reveal the nature of the Father. He was God in a suit of flesh. He was God expressing himself in a language that we could understand. He was God announcing to the world: "I have come!"

Theologians refer to this action as the Incarnation. This is a hard concept for us to understand. In fact, many debates transpired in the early church as to what it really meant. Some people said Jesus wasn't really a man; he just looked like a man. Others said he had the body of a man but he didn't have a human soul. Still others said Jesus was two people in one body-sort of half-God and half-man. And unbelievers said it was all nonsense-that Jesus wasn't God at all. They claimed he was an ordinary person like you and me with a sin nature just like everyone else on planet earth.

All of those ideas are wrong. When Jesus stepped out, the infinite God took on the form of a tiny unborn baby boy. The Son did not cease to be God when he became a man. He added humanity but he did not subtract deity. He was fully God and fully man- the God-man.

Ponder that for a moment. The Almighty of God moved in a human arm. The love of God now beat in a human heart. The wisdom of God now spoke from human lips. The mercy of God reached forth from human hands. Jesus was God wrapped in human flesh.

When Jesus stepped out he was God with skin on. God became a man in human flesh.

## II. Jesus lived among us

Notice the next phrase of John 1:14, it reveals the residence of God on earth, ". . . and made his dwelling among us." The word dwelt literally means "to pitch a tent;" or as theologians define it as "to tabernacle." In fact, the Tabernacle was sometimes called the Tent of Meeting because it was the divinely-appointed meeting place between God and man. In the same way-but in a much deeper sense-Jesus is the place where we meet God today.

The Message Bible paraphrases this verse, "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood" (John 1:14 MSG). For thirty-three years God moved onto our cul-de-sac. He walked down our street. When he stepped out, Jesus lived among us.

Why? "Pitching a tent among us" implies that God wants to be on familiar terms with us. He wants to be close. He wants a lot of interaction. If you come into a community and build a huge mansion with a wall around it, you're probably saying that you don't really want to be bothered by people. But if you set up a tent in my back garden, you will probably use my bathroom, eat often at my table, play with my kids. This is why God

became human. He came to pitch a tent in our human back garden so that we would have a lot of dealings with him.

### III. Jesus revealed his glory

Next John speaks of the manifestation of God's glory: "We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father."

When Jesus stepped out, when he walked on the earth, people could see, and gaze upon, God's presence shining through him. They saw the importance of God in their lives. And, just so there was no mistake John recorded seven signs or miracles that openly declared the glory of God. When Jesus turned the water into wine at Cana of Galilee, John tells us that "He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him" (John 2:11 NIV).

Jesus was not invisible nor was he obscure. When you look at Jesus, you see the face of God. God wants to be seen and to be known in his son. When you hear Jesus teach; you hear God teach. When you come to experience Jesus; you experience God. In Jesus we see God.

### IV. Jesus invites us to himself

Finally, this verse ends with a powerful word of invitation. It tells us that Jesus came to the earth "full of grace and truth." The Message says he was "Generous inside and out, true from start to finish."

When he stepped out, Jesus offered grace and truth. These are the final two great pair of words of John's opening sentences in this chapter as he introduces Jesus.

**Grace** is an irresistible compulsion to give men more than they deserve which springs spontaneously from the generosity of God.

**Truth**, on the other hand, has roots in God's determination to be consistent, predictable, and thereby trustworthy in dealing with mankind.

These two words explain why Jesus stepped out, coming to the earth. Because he was full of grace, he died for you and me while we were yet sinners. Because he was full of truth, he was able to pay for our sins completely.

Here is the good news for people like us. Because Jesus is **grace-full**, we can come just as we are to him. We don't have to clean ourselves up first. Because he is **truth-full**, you can come in complete confidence knowing that he will keep his promises. When he promises a complete pardon for your sins, he means it.

The one present the world needs is grace and truth. We find it in Jesus Christ.

As long as humans have existed, we have sensed that we were not something that we ought to be. As long as we have been wounded by family, friends or strangers, we have doubted our worth.

The cure for all the fractured suffering of the human heart, all the terror we visit upon one another, all the guilt we bear with bent spines our whole lives, all the horrible, condemning voices, is the fact of grace.

We have just celebrated the birth of the author of grace (Jesus). He came to Earth worthless and was born into oppression and domination. He came to a place and people broken, and in the end was broken himself. The author of grace was told by many that he was no good, that he was a liar, that he was useless, deluded and mad. Finally, he received the ultimate rejection and insult, and paid with his life.

He was broken for the broken and hated for the hated. He was "despised and rejected," so that the despised and rejected would have a hero and comforter. And yet, in all of it, he announced the cure of grace.

He told us what we already knew; that we were broken and needed repair. He told us the repair would be free for the taking, that we were all loved in spite of the voices in our heads, the words of our enemies and cruelties of our families and friends.

In bringing us grace he changed the world. He said that we could never do enough to be truly good; but we could share his goodness and accept the gift he offered. In that fell swoop, he negated any other contingent therapy for the misery of humanity. No wealth or position could cure our loneliness; no rule or law could overcome our weakness; no plan or good deed could earn our healing. Only the gift he brought. Only himself.

At Christmas, Jesus shouts down the voices in our ears with: "You are worth everything to me! I'll make you good! You don't need to die. I came to do it for you. Then you'll really live!" At Christmas, the cure of grace embodied came for all.

Brokenness was broken at last.

## V. The Implications

What does all of this mean for us? The fact that Jesus came, he stepped out, he was God in human flesh, has several implications.

### A. Jesus is here

Jesus came in the midst of the loneliness and the horror of a world gone mad. Yet in the chaotic and confusion Jesus announced that God is here. Where in the world is God? God is here in Christ.

### B. Jesus is real

The word truth in John 1:14 literally means "that which is open to view, that which is unconcealed, that which is transparent."

When Jesus became a man he showed that God was not merely a principle but a person. Not a myth, but a man who was God at the same time. Not a figment of someone's imagination, but a living presence. Jesus was not an idea of God, not a picture of God, but God himself in human form. He was real.

### C. Jesus wants to be involved

Jesus is not like some distant relative that you see every couple of years. He wants to take of residence in your life. He wants to be the "go-to" person of your life. He wants to be engaged and involved. Most often we think of God as being up there, far removed from the cares and concerns of this created world. But because Jesus became a man God came down here, living in our midst. We could never reach him up there, but in love he came down here to us. He became touchable, approachable, and reachable.

#### D. Jesus identifies with our pain

In the act of becoming human he identified with our pain. The pain of loneliness, he felt it. The hurt of rejection, he felt it. The sadness of losing a loved one to death, he felt it. The scars of mental or physical abuse, he felt it. When Jesus became a man, he understood us, he identified with us, he felt our pain, and he hurt.

#### E. Jesus offers grace

In other words, the one gift we all need for all of eternity can be found at only one source. The gift is salvation. The Giver is Jesus. He is the One present you can't live without. The One who met the conditions of God for the payment for your sins and now offers forgiveness on the basis of his grace.

Jesus stepped out of heaven, coming for you and for me. He brings with him the amazing gifts of grace and truth.

Jesus came. He personally comes to each of us offering grace and truth. He didn't stand off at a distance. He is personally reaching out to you. Will you reach out to Him?

### **HYMN**

Before we come to our Intercessory prayer, this next hymn reminds us in the chorus :

For His arm is mighty and His love will endure  
His plan is perfect, His victory is sure  
And His anger is righteous but His grace is free  
Oh what a saviour is He

Let's sing O what a saviour. [CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

### **INTERCESSORY PRAYER**

Let us pray:

This is the time in our service when we think about our concerns for the world.

We look at the world Lord and see the devastation caused by coronavirus.  
People ill and dying  
Medical staff are exhausted.  
Scientists are fighting against time to find vaccines and treatments.

We know there are places in the world.  
where there is conflict and oppression  
where people don't have enough food or clean water  
where people are homeless, refugees, lonely.

We think of the situation in America and the forthcoming inauguration of the new President.

We think of Christians across the world unable to meet and worship together because of coronavirus or persecution, who are like us, finding new ways of being 'together'. And we know they are praying for us as we pray for them.

We think of our local community here in Hornsea  
of businesses closed and schools shut,  
Coffee mornings and social hours cancelled.  
People worried about paying bills, arranging childcare,  
People are feeling lonely and isolated.

We remember those in our prayer book this week and those on our hearts. In a moment of silence we bring them before you and ask for your surrounding love and grace in each situation.

We bring all these concerns to you Lord Jesus Christ, full of Grace and Truth,  
We pray that you will show us ways to help where we are able.  
And we pray that You will be present in every situation and bring your love and healing.  
Amen

## **CLOSE**

We are going to close with the hymn Joy to the world – Steven Knapton advised us in our Lessons and Carols service a few weeks ago that Carols were our favourite tunes sung at Christmas, telling us about the love of God.

This hymn expresses so well what we have heard today, proclaiming that Jesus has come, and rules with Grace and truth. I make no apology for singing this in Mid-January

## **HYMN : Joy to the world**

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

## **BLESSING**

May the Lord bless you and keep you.  
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you.  
May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Amen