The Word Became Flesh

John 1:1-18

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May God our Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord, give you grace, mercy, and peace. Amen.

Many of us have heard the song “What if God was one of us.” One of the lyrics in that song asks the question, “If God had a face, what would it look like?”

***And the word became flesh and lived among us.***

What does God look like?

No other word stirs up the imagination more than the word “God”. Even children raised in non-religious homes, understand the concept of God, and when the children are asked, they will draw you a picture—usually of an old man with long hair and a beard.

But as children grow into adults, their pictures of God often evolve into abstract images of clouds and sunbursts as they attempt to integrate the properties of a reality they cannot see.

Author Carl Braten says that “God is never more divine than when He becomes human, never more true to His inner being than when He loves the world in the gift of His own beloved son Jesus Christ.”

***And the word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood. (The message).***

What does God look like?

In/car/nation – our belief that God is revealed in human reality in the person and work of Jesus Christ. John’s Gospel proclaims this mystery boldly. It is the event we anticipated during Advent, the event we celebrated on December 25, and that’s the event some people have already begun preparing for at the beginning of this year.

Think about it. It’s more than just an ordinary “birthday celebration”. Our scripture tells us Christ already existed. But it was God’s act of compassion, God’s act of love, God’s act of sacrifice, God’s willingness to do anything to make Himself accessible to us.

During my sermon preparation, I often pray that God will give me practical insight for the scripture that I am studying, but I really didn’t mean at 1:15 a.m. in the morning. Some years back, my twelve-month-old granddaughter just could not seem to get to sleep.

She whimpered and whined, and she just had to be held. My mind immediately went to Jesus as a baby. And very early that morning, the flesh I was holding had immediate needs that warranted my attention.

I thought about how Jesus probably had those same needs as a baby, a dry bottom, a warm bottle, and gentle rocking in loving arms. Like other children growing up, He probably stumbled and fell, bumped his head occasionally and cut his finger messing with His father’s carpentry tools.

Jesus really was like us. He looked like us. He felt joy and delight like us. He participated in everyday activities. He attended a wedding; and dinner parties were given in His honor.

He felt sorrow like us, visiting the grave site of a friend, shedding tears and feeling the emptiness of loss. He even felt conflicted when faced with carrying out God’s plan. Jesus was like us. And maybe, that is why, as the scripture tells us, “His own people did not accept Him.” The folk He walked among day in and day out did not approve of Him. He did not meet their profile for a Savior. In their eyes, He was nothing special, just a regular ole’ fellow.

***This one-of-a-kind- God-Expression, who existed at the very heart of the Father, has made Him plain as day. (The Message)***

It was hard for the folk in Jesus’ day and sometimes even difficult for us to imagine that someone who looked like us and lived like us and behaved like us and experienced life as we do was somehow “God”.

It is also even harder for us to imagine that God loved us so much, that in spite of our sinfulness, our unworthiness, that God would reach down to us in this most personal way. But in truth, God did. The Creator became like His Creation.

Jesus was fully human, and yet fully Divine. We affirm this fact each time we say the Apostles Creed. “He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary”.

The book of Hebrews reminds us that Jesus is One who is in touch with our reality. He has been through times of weakness and times of testing, and has experienced it all, all but sin. God has come among us, has committed Himself to us, to labor with us, to walk beside us, to live within us. God, through Jesus, embraced what He was not, so that we could embrace all that He has for us.

Jesus faithfully reveals God’s great love and grace for us.

The One who ate bread and fish, is the same One who blessed and multiplied bread and fish to feed over 5,000.

The One who grieved at the grave of Lazarus, is the same One who raised Lazarus from the dead.

The One who in a moment of prayer struggled with His calling as the Sacrifice is the same One who willingly submitted to be crucified on the cross, died and is raised to be our Eternal Hope.

What does God look like?

***And the Word became a human being, Jesus Christ, and actually lived with us, for us and for our salvation.***

And for that, we say, Thanks be to God.