



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor  
July 22, 2018

## JOHN 1:14-28

John Series: Get a Life in Jesus

[PRAYER] ...what you've done in my heart this week in regards to this passage and how you're continuing to grow me and teach me. This gospel of John is just a great book for us to be in. So thank you. And Lord, I pray that you'd give me clarity of thought, but that your Spirit would override things that I say and penetrate the thoughts and hearts of each one of us in a new way so that we can go out of here with some new understanding of who you are and how to live for you. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

We're looking at the gospel of John. John is the book that we're studying verse by verse. As we go through the gospel of John (today we're in John 1), I think we have to ask this really important question. I know you ask this question. I try to ask this question. How can you be like Jesus? Or what does it mean to be Christ-like? When we become Christians, when we accept Jesus Christ into our life, He puts us on a path to become more Christ-like and we make decisions along the way as to how we're going to accept that opportunity, how we're going to allow God to fill us, and how we're going to move forward. So we want to become more Christ-like. But I think it's puzzling sometimes to know, given the day-to-day lives that we're in in the twenty-first century with technology and busyness going on, and of course each one of our own challenges that we're facing. What does that mean to be Christ-like? I don't think it's all that easy of a question to answer sometimes. And that's why I think it's important to study Jesus.

So we'll be studying Jesus through the gospel of John. We're learning more about Him. And we've already seen in the first 13 verses about how Jesus came and people can receive Him. So we talked about receiving Jesus already. But now we come to verse 14. I want to read verses 14-28 for you and for us before I comment on them so you can see where we are in the text and we can learn more about Jesus today.

So would you stand with me in honor of God's word as we read John 1:14-28.

Verse 14 says – *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'll see those words a couple times here – *grace and truth.*

*(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.'") 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 (those two words again) 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.*

*Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. Who is this? They want to know who John is. Who are you? He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."*

*They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"*

*He said, "I am not."*

*"Are you the Prophet?"*

*He answered, "No."*

*Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"*

*John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"*

I think we can all take on that testimony. We want to make straight the way for the Lord so that people can know Him.

*Now the Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"*

*"I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."*

*This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.*

You may be seated.

Now we know that Jesus Christ came and we regularly talk about how He came, He lived on earth, and what that does for us. When we celebrate communion, we remember the death of Jesus Christ and how powerful it was for each one of our lives. But I want you to think for me and just ponder for a minute what it must have been like for Jesus. Think about it, if you possibly can, from Jesus' perspective being God and coming down to be a person, a man. What was that all about? What was that like? He's 100% God and now He takes on humanity, so now He's 100% man. We can't even think about 100% two things. But what was it like for Him to be human? What is it that He took on or gave up or became like or something? What does it mean to be the God-man thing? What does that look like for Jesus?

We have a passage of scripture that gives us some idea of how to think about this. Let me read that and then I'll make some comments about what happened to Jesus when He became a man. But when it says *the Word became flesh*, what does that look like? It's kind of surreal to process that.

Philippians 2:6-11 describes what it was like a little bit for Jesus. It says this: *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing.* Those words, *he made himself nothing*, I'm going to come back

to because they are the key words in the whole passage. *He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

This is a famous passage, not just a passage for us that's famous because it's in the Bible. This was a passage that was used by the early church as a hymn or something they would quote. It's called a *kenao* passage after those words *he made himself nothing*. It can be referred to *emptied himself*. But this idea of *made himself nothing* is a good way to think about it. But what did that look like? What was it like for Jesus?

We know that He had supernatural qualities because as He was going around and meeting people and talking to them, He knew what they were thinking. Right? We know that He had supernatural abilities because He was able to do things like walk on water and even invite Peter out on the water who could walk on water for a little bit. He had these supernatural abilities to heal a man who had sores all over his body, leprosy, and that person's skin became whole instantly. We know He has these supernatural abilities because He knows the plan, the broad plan. He's going to the cross. He knows that. He's got this knowledge of what's going on. He was able to raise a young girl from the dead. So we know He has these God qualities, these supernatural qualities.

But when He became a man, He also took on humanness in a way that provided limitations for Him, or maybe I should say the pain of broken humanity. We're all broken people. And when you become a person, you experience brokenness in your life. So Jesus experienced hunger. He was thirsty. He was tired. He experienced pain, both emotional pain and physical pain. So Jesus somehow was able to identify with us because He experienced the brokenness that we experience.

You and I experience brokenness in our lives all the time. It's painful. It's hard. It's hard to live that way and to know what God is doing and how He's going to work in our lives. I think He does that in part because there's a feeling connection that happens between us and Jesus now. A connection that involves an emotional connection.

In fact that's what Hebrews 4:15 says. Hebrews 4:15 says this: *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.* So He was perfect because of His God-ness, but He also experienced the pain that we have in our lives.

We call this thing that happened, when Jesus came down and became a person, the incarnation. *Carne* represents flesh. So *He became flesh* is the idea. So we say He became flesh.

That's why it says *He made his dwelling among us* in John 1 in our passage today. It's the word He built a tent. He built a tent among us so that He could live with us, so that He could understand and feel the same things we feel. And because He lived with us, we can experience

that in our own lives and we can identify with Him because we know that He's experienced what we've experienced. So there's this connection that we enjoy. There's this incarnation that took place that God became man to connect with us. That's the idea of what happens when He made His dwelling with us. That's what He wanted.

Now here's the fun thing. He's called to be incarnational. We live among other people. Don't we? We have struggles. We live with brokenness and we're able to share Jesus with others because we're incarnational. We live in this incarnational way. Do you understand what I mean by incarnational? What that means is we come and live with other people. People we work with, people in our family, people around us, and it's that incarnational living that we take on that allows other people to get to know Jesus. That's what John is doing. He's pointing people to Jesus and to who He is. We can all do that.

I want to show you a short video of a missionary that's doing that. Greg and Rebecca are missionaries in West Africa. I don't know if it's Ghana or not. But they're in West Africa. Maybe you'll be able to pick it up as you look it up and tell us exactly where in West Africa they are. But she describes this really well, what it means to live incarnationally.

[Start of Video]

Classically in the circumstance, a woman becomes whatever religion her father or her husband is. If a woman marries a Muslim, she is automatically a Muslim. If a woman marries a Christian, she is automatically a Christian. And so we had people in the church, in fact half of the church, these women who were there because of their husbands. And they didn't have a deep understanding of really what it was. They were using a Bible that was written in the nearby trade language, Malinke. And we had some people who had studied Christianity and were more educated in the religion, but there was a lot of legalism. Mostly focused on things you do and don't do. And very little understanding of grace. You ask them what you have to do to be saved. "Well you have to be good. You have to pray." And those were the answers. We spent a lot of years doing Bible studies with people and just living with people, and those are not the answers they give anymore. In fact they are very theologically savvy about a lot of things and challenging in their understanding of things.

When Greg and I first came to our village here, we came as a couple and came with a lot of ideas. We were going to be Bible translators. But knowing that our village on the countryside, the nearest hospital is fifteen miles away and there's nobody in town with cars, and so we knew we were somewhat isolated. We were living every one equal here. Didn't have a car, we were living in a hut too.

The old preacher's daughter, he carried her to the front door and she had fallen into a fire (she was around ten) and had just been burned very severely and there she just went in shock right in front of our eyes. At that point we became medical missionaries and learned how to take care of burns and read the books as we went and just tried to be good neighbors. You're here as a Bible translator or you're here as whatever your title is, but you're really just these people's neighbor. You can choose your roles, but you're part of the community and you take on the roles that are needed and that you can do and that God gives you the ability to do.

[End of Video]

So when a missionary goes in and starts ministering, it's incarnational. They're in that environment and they take on, they live in that place, and they build relationships with those people.

Sometimes people ask me the question, "Why?" Why does God allow me to suffer with this chronic illness? Why does God allow me to have cancer and I'm going to die? Why does God have me in this relationship that's so difficult in a marriage relationship? Why does God not allow me to have the job I wanted to have? Why? Why? Why? We ask those questions and I just got to tell you, I don't have an answer for that. I do not know why God allows such things. But I do know what part of the solution is.

Part of the solution is this: When we get saved, God doesn't take us out of the world. He allows us to live in a world so that we can be incarnational. Do you know that there are other people who are struggling with the same kind of problem that you're struggling with? Whether it's an addiction or whether it's an emotional challenge or a financial challenge, other people are struggling and you are struggling. Yes, you are struggling with that, but you have something that helps you do that. You have Jesus Christ living in your life, empowering you to live in the midst of a struggle. That's incarnational living.

And so when we get to know Jesus more, we're able to understand what He wants for us. That God became flesh incarnate so that we could get to know Him, so we could experience the feeling connection with Jesus. Because we know that He's gone through these challenging things and He even died because of misunderstanding, because of lack of belief unfairly. So in our own lives as we wrestle with the struggles that we face, we too can experience God in His greatness and we can shine His light and we can share what that light is about with other people.

In our passage, it says these two things. I would suggest maybe this is a job description or maybe this is if you're going to be like Christ, maybe it's all summarized in these two words. Jesus *was full of grace and truth*. Two things. *Full of grace and truth*.

I like truth...sometimes. I like truth when I'm misunderstood. I like that. I like truth when it gives me something that empowers me and helps me to move forward in my life. I like truth that way. I sometimes don't like truth when it points out something that I'm doing wrong. Truth that makes me feel like "ah, I've failed again."

In the Bible we have the Ten Commandments, which gives this whole list of things. If we start thinking about those Ten Commandments because they're mentioned in the passage that we're looking at here, notice it says down in verse 17 – *For the law was given through Moses*. So we've got this law. The Ten Commandments represent the whole law, but there are only ten of the commands that are written in the whole law. And it's talking about them. What is the purpose of the law? Well the purpose of the law is really to help us become perfect so we could get into heaven or something like that. Okay? So Jesus says nobody is perfect. Nobody can keep the whole law. So really the law has this other purpose because none of us could keep it. It has this

other purpose and this other purpose is to point out our weakness. It's truth. It's truth coming to us to help us say, "I just do not have it. I do not have what I need here. I do not have the answers."

So Romans says these words in Romans 3:20 – *Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.* That's the truth that comes into our lives.

Sometimes I don't like truth because it points out things I need to change. Truth is hard sometimes. And that's why I need grace. And I like grace, sometimes. Grace is that forgiveness, it's that relationship, it's that context in which I can experience some wholeness and I appreciate what God is doing in my life. It's the connectedness part. It's the relationship part.

When we're working with children in our parenting ministry, we say you need two things. You need relationship and you need firmness. Firmness is the truth; relationship is the grace. We need those things as we're working with people. Right? God wants us to experience that grace. It's a great thing.

I like grace most of the time, except when I have to give it to someone else who really doesn't deserve it. Then I really don't like grace that much. It's hard for me sometimes to give grace to someone who for whatever reason I don't think they should receive that. They should receive truth. In fact I'm going to give them a piece of the truth. And sometimes we have to do that. But can we do it with grace? I like grace most of the time, but sometimes grace is really hard. I think that sometimes we come to this place in our lives when we're saying, "Yeah, I've got grace, I've got truth, but how do you do them both at the same time?"

The word 'how', that's got to be the most important word here. How. How am I going to forgive someone that has hurt me, but still keep them at arm's length so they don't keep hurting me? How do I do that? How am I going to confront someone who really needs the truth, but do that in a way that has the relational component too? How do I do that? I don't know how a lot of the times. I think 'how' is very helpful for us. I think if we can learn the 'how' and I think we try to find the 'how' out in our lives because when we got the 'how' then it gives us hope that we need to do what we need to do.

So we got the 'how'. But there are sometimes frankly I don't have that. Somebody asks me the question. I don't know. How do you raise these children? I don't know. How do you live this marriage relationship? I don't know. There's a 'how' part I don't know. It is hard to live. I think when we start asking the question 'how', we really enter into this deep spiritual state that I think God wants us to be in that is a humble state.

It's like I feel like I'm like the disciples when they come to Jesus with a problem and say, "Jesus, these five thousand people all around here are coming to hear you teach. It's been a long time. They haven't eaten any food. You should send them all away so they can go and eat." And Jesus says the 'what'. "You feed them." And these disciples, I can imagine how they felt. They're looking at each other like, "How? How are we going to feed five thousand people?"

The Bible says *pray without ceasing*. I say I got that. That's the 'what'. How am I supposed to do that? The Bible says *meditate on the Bible or the scriptures day and night*. How am I supposed to do that? I feel like there are times when we come to this place in our lives where we say 'how' and we are probably at that moment at the most sensitive, vulnerable place of humility that God wants us to be because we don't know how.

It's like when the angel came to Mary to tell her that she's pregnant. And so it reveals all this information. Do you remember what her first word was? "*How* can this thing be?" Just a humble feeling that she must have had that how can this be?

When we come to that place of 'how' I think we are at such a great place in our lives because I don't know how sometimes. Sometimes I know how and I just need to obey and I need to do what God, because I already know how. I just need to take the steps. But there are other times when it's just overwhelming and I go, "God, I do not know how to live this life you've called me to do in this particular situation." I think it's in those moments that we need something besides the 'how'.

So let's put the 'how' up there because I think that's what we're looking for and I think that's what God wants for us. But sometimes we don't have the 'how', so we have to rearrange the letters. And when you don't know how, then I think we need to go to 'who'.

And that's what's happening in the gospel message in John. These Jewish leaders, these religious leaders are coming and saying, "Come on, we want to find out the 'who' here. Who are you?" And John's pointing back to Jesus. "I want you to know who He is. I can't even tie His sandal. He's the one who's the great one." Here's the rest of the passage that we looked at. It's all about 'who'. They need to find out 'who'.

Sometimes someone comes to us and they go, "I don't know what to do," and we don't have the answers. I want you to know you don't have to have the answers; you just have to know who does. So we can take people to Jesus and they can experience those.

This 'how' thing is a hard thing I find sometimes in life. I failed this week. I'll just tell you about this. I went to Staples to get some printing done. I know the guy's name at the Lawrence Shopping Center and I have a good relationship with him. We've talked often. So I'm in here and I'm one of the first people in there. But shortly after I'm in there, there's about ten people trying to get his attention. There's the self-service people that want his attention, there's other people who are coming in with jobs, and all kinds of things happened at that desk. So he's running my job and I'm waiting for forty-five minutes waiting for my job to get done because there's all these things going on.

While I'm waiting, there's people who are wanting help. I'm talking to people doing things, but this one couple over here is trying to do a self-service thing at the computer and they're stuck. It's self-service. I thought, "Well maybe I should go over and help them out. Well maybe not. I don't think I will." And the guy is kind of upset. "Can anybody help us here?" he's saying to everybody. So he's getting kind of unruly.

So I'm standing there and he says, "Hey, can you help us?" Talking to me!  
I said, "Well I do know a little bit about computers and I do work the systems, so I can try to help you if you want. No guarantees."

He said, "Okay, will you come over and help us?"

I said, "Fine." So I got over there to help them.

They're creating a business card. So I see the business card and the business card is for psychic greeting. Now I got to tell you, I stay far away from anything that has to do with Ouija boards, psychic, horoscopes. I hate that stuff because I know that Satan can use those things to get people sidetracked and derailed. So I am totally blown away by this.

Furthermore, there's a bunch of misspellings on her little business card. So I said, "You know there's supposed to be a space there between 'Tarot cards' and 'success'." And so here I am helping this person create a psychic reading business card. I'm totally floored. I don't really know how to do this except keep going and try to help her. It said 'specializes in romance and success.' I said, "Do you see that you spelled 'specializes' wrong there? Would you like me to correct the spelling?" "Oh yeah that would be really helpful."

So I help her create her business card and I have no idea what to say because I'm just so shocked by this thing. Here I am. I'm a Christian helping somebody develop a psychic business card! I'm just so taken aback by the whole thing I don't even know what to do. I am paralyzed in this except to help the lady.

I come back and tell my wife this story and she of course is much wiser than I am. She says, "You should have just said, 'Oh you're interested in spirituality? So am I! Let's talk about this.'" Well that would have been really smart! It never occurred to me in the moment! In the moment I'm thinking, "Oh brother, here I am helping Satan and I don't know what to do about that."

So I get the whole business card done and off and running and I say, "Okay fine." I'm kind of crouched down in my little hole again thinking, "God, I don't know what I'm doing here. And we're doing the Five-for-Five thing. Lord, I know we're supposed to be doing that, but I don't even know what number one is here. This is crazy."

So I get all done, she's happy, and she comes back to me a little bit later. It's like salt in the wounds. She says, "Hey, thanks so much. If you ever want your palm read..." I'm going you've got to be kidding me! I said, "Thank you very much." I didn't know what to say.

My wife said to me, "Here's what you should have said. 'Oh do you want to know the future? I know a lot about the future. I can tell you all kinds...'" Now why didn't I think of that? Next time I'll be ready. Okay? If I ever have that experience again, I'll know what to say in order to bridge the conversation gap. But at this point I was paralyzed. I didn't know how. I was stuck. I didn't know how.

So Jesus is looking at Peter and Peter says, "Lord, can I come out on the water with you?" Jesus says, "Yeah, come on out here." So Peter comes out on the water, but he doesn't know what he's doing. He doesn't know how. So he starts looking around at the waves and the wind, and what

happens is he starts to go under. He doesn't know how. What did he need to do? What he needed was to keep his eyes on Jesus and let Jesus do that work in him. I don't know because I've never been this way before. That's the idea.

I've not been in that situation. And my experience is an isolated experience. It happened once. It probably won't happen again. But your experience, I know some of you live in the daily, "What do I do today? I've got to face the same problem again today?" You're wrestling with yourself with the people, and it's just struggling. You get up in the morning and you're going, "Lord, what am I going to do today?"

So the Israelites got up in the morning on the day they would finally cross over into the Promised Land. I imagine that our lives are like that. We get to go into the Promised Land. We get to enjoy life and the fulfillment that God wants, all the blessings that He has for us. We get to go there every day. And it's like those Israelites they get up in the morning and they're getting ready to go into the Promised Land.

I love what happens in that period of time as they're getting ready to cross over the river. Listen to what Joshua and the leaders say to the people. The first part says – *Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. After three days the officers went throughout the camp, giving orders to the people, saying what I think God wants us to hear. This is what he says: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before."*

Every morning when we get up, we can say, "Lord, thank you for this day, but I have no idea what's going to happen. I have my plans laid out here, but I do not know what's going to happen in this day."

You see the ark of the covenant was this piece of furniture that was in the portable tent. This tent was this place that was parked in the middle of the people with three tribes on all four sides, being twelve tribes of Israel all around there. And it was right in the middle because it was the tabernacle among us. This is how God spoke to the people, through the tabernacle. It represented the presence of God in the middle of the people. That's the tabernacle. And you need to watch that. You need to pay attention to what's going on. That connectedness there is going to guide you in the course of your day. Now it comes to John 1 and John is going back and he's saying *he made his dwelling among us*. He built His tent among us so that we could connect with Him.

He's *full of grace and truth*. We need that. How are you going to get that? How are you going to balance those two things? It's hard to know how to do that. But we're going to do that because Jesus Christ is right in the midst of this. He came to be a person, live among us, so that we could experience Him, we could see the glory. The glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father. We could experience the glory.

In the Old Testament there was a tabernacle and in it it had the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The Shekinah glory was there that represented the very presence of God among the

people, and it was a holy place. In fact that very, very distinct place was the Most Holy Place that Shekinah glory was there. It was in the middle of the people. They would experience that and they would just help them to know what to do as they followed the cloud around. They would get manna in the morning. They would go through their day. But they knew that the Shekinah glory was there.

In the same way when Jesus Christ came down to be a person, to take on human likeness, He tabernacled or He tented with us so that we could connect with Him emotionally. There would be this emotional connection that would give us this ability to have grace and truth in our own lives because we know Him and He'll give us the ability to pull those things together. We've never been this way before. We're going to follow Him and we're going to take this grace and this truth that God wants us to have, and we're going to ask Him for the wisdom. Because when we pray, we don't know what to do. We could pray and He would give us that wisdom to know how to respond. It's that glory of Jesus Christ that is so powerful in our lives because He came to be one of us. And we can enjoy that.

I just want to encourage you today. First of all, let me say if you're a Christian today this is not just a message for people who aren't Christians. This is for us as believers. We need to know that God is with us and that He's carrying us through the day. He experienced what we experience and we can embrace that. And then we can know from Him directly how to put the grace and truth together, how to live the life that He's called us to live. That is amazing.

If you're not a Christian yet, if you haven't accepted Jesus, well obviously that's what you want to do. You want to accept Jesus Christ into your life because He's going to transform you from the inside out. He came to become a person so He could identify with your challenges and my challenges. We can go away from that saying, "yes." Religion isn't about the 'what'. It's about the 'who'. And I need the 'who' inside of my life. Amen?

Why don't you stand with me and let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we come before you now and ask that you would give us wisdom to live our lives each day. Lord, the challenges that we all face here are different and unique, painful. There's brokenness just because we're humans. Not only in ourselves, but the people around us that bring pain to us because the things they're doing and the pain they're experiencing. Lord, we just need you. I am so grateful that you came to earth to be our high priest who experienced humanity so that I can identify with you and you can connect with me. I'm just so grateful for that. Lord, I pray for each person here that you would help them to not feel alone in their pain, but to experience you in the midst of it. Not just when they get out it, but in the midst of the pain that you would be resident in their lives, tabernacling, tented in their lives. We're asking that you would show us your glory. Show us who you are. Empower us with your Holy Spirit to live the life that you've called us to live. And we ask this in Jesus' name (and all God's people said), amen.