

(1 Timothy) God Became a Man

by Brian Brodersen

The sermon explores the mystery of Godliness, highlighting Jesus Christ as the ultimate manifestation of God in human flesh.

Duration: 57:39

Scripture: Exodus 3:14, Psalm 19:1, Matthew 6:33, John 8:58, Acts 20:28, Titus 2:13

Topics: "Incarnation Of God", "Christian Spirituality"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on verse 16 of chapter 3, which states that 'great is the mystery of godliness.' The speaker emphasizes that God was manifested in the flesh through Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate manifestation of God. The speaker warns against reducing the gospel to a formula or a theological system, emphasizing the importance of introducing people to the living God, Jesus. The speaker encourages listeners to fix their gaze upon Jesus and meditate on him in order to become godly and spiritual.

Transcript

So we're picking up tonight in verse 16 of chapter three, and that's the verse that we're going to concentrate on this evening. Let me read it to you. Paul says, and without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness.

God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory. I'd like to quote to you from C.S. Lewis as we begin our study. He said this.

He said, I'm trying here to prevent anyone saying the foolish thing that people often say about Jesus. I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, they say, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say.

A man who is merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic or he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice.

Either this man was and is the son of God or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool. You can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God.

But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

Our text tonight. Is one of many that declare plainly that Jesus Christ is none other than God himself in a human body. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness.

God was manifested in the flesh. This statement that Paul makes without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. What does that mean exactly? Let me give you a couple of other translations.

The translation reads this profound is the divine truth of our religion. And then the New English Bible reads great beyond all question is the mystery of our religion. And that's what Paul is really saying here.

That undoubtedly. No question about it. These things are marvelous beyond comprehension, but they are the reality.

He speaks of the mystery of godliness. Paul uses the term mystery many times. It's used in a variety of places in the New Testament, not exclusively by the apostle Paul, but he does use it quite often.

He speaks of the mystery of the faith, the mystery of the gospel. Jesus spoke of the mystery of the kingdom. Paul spoke of the mystery of Christ, the mystery of God, and here he speaks of the mystery of godliness.

Now, the word mystery doesn't mean what we normally think when we hear the word mystery. When we hear the word mystery, we think of something mysterious, something that is unknown, something that you can't quite figure out. My wife is really into mystery movies, Agatha Christie and all of the different Agatha Christie series of mysteries.

She loves those things. And you just sit there and watch and wonder what's going to happen. And you're baffled.

You're confused. It's unclear. And when we use the word mystery, that's generally what we think.

But when we read the word mystery in the New Testament, that is not what it means. So it's important for us to understand what the word does mean, because we ourselves can sort of walk around thinking, well, hey, you know, I don't really know how to explain it to you. You know, the faith is all just a big mystery.

The implication being nobody really knows exactly what it's all about. But that's not what it means. It means really just the opposite.

The word mystery in the New Testament means something that was previously hidden, but has now been made known something that God alone knew that no man could find out apart from God revealing it. And so. The great mystery that Paul is speaking of.

Is God appearing as a human being? This is the truth that for so long was concealed from human view, but now revealed and constituting the fundamental doctrine of the gospel. This is the fundamental doctrine of the gospel, that Christ is not merely a man, but he is God who became man. And so.

Paul says God was manifested in the flesh. Now, if you happen to have a Bible tonight other than the King James or the New King James Version, your text does not read God was manifested in the flesh. There is a debate regarding whether or not the word God is in the original text.

If you happen to be using the NIV or the New American Standard, your text, you know, reads he who was manifested in the flesh. Now, the dispute is whether the text should read God was manifested or one possibility is which was manifested. The other possibility is who was manifested.

And so the NIV and the NASB, they simply state he who was manifested. This is all based upon a manuscript known as the Codex Alexandrius. And there was a point, and there are still many who hold to this, where certain scholars believe that this was the irrefutable text.

This text was absolutely accurate and any text that disagreed with it was to be disregarded. But in this text, there was a problem when it came to this passage, they couldn't quite make out based upon the manuscript whether or not this was the Greek word for God or the Greek word for. Who or the Greek word for which, because you see, in the early Greek manuscripts, what they would do is all of the letters would be capitalized and all of the words would run together.

There was no accentuation, there was no punctuation, it was just a string of letters. And of course, those who wrote that understood how to decipher it. But what they would also do is oftentimes they would rather than write out the whole word, they would abbreviate the word and they would inform the reader of an abbreviation by putting a line over the word that would indicate that this word was an abbreviation.

So when it comes to this particular word in that particular manuscript that we mentioned. It's unclear as to whether it is the abbreviation of God, the us and the Greek, or if it is the words who or which. Now, they went to the point of looking at the manuscript with a microscope to try to see if it was an abbreviation, if there was a line above it and they ascertained that, yes, there was a line above it, but somebody suggested that it was something that was inserted later.

And so there's this controversy that exists over this, and as is usually the case, unfortunately. And especially at the time of these translations, many of the scholars sort of had somewhat of a liberal bent. And so when it came to anything disputable, they taking the liberal position would throw it out and replace it with something that was more in line with liberal thinking.

So, of course, the liberal minded person. In the theological realm does not believe that God was manifest in the flesh. So they don't want something as clear as this statement.

In the text, because that goes against their. Aberrant view. But there's every reason to believe that as many of the other manuscripts clearly state that it is God and that probably even in that particular manuscript itself, the word is actually God.

There's no reason to doubt it because the the immediate context, I think, supports the word God much more easily than either of the other words. And then, of course, the larger context of scripture teaches us that very fact that Christ is God who is manifest in the flesh. And so we hold to this translation of the King James Version or the New King James Version, believing that that is the accurate translation, and as I said, it's consistent with what scripture teaches many, many, many places affirm what we call the deity of Christ or the fact that Christ was God.

God in human flesh. I want to give you just a few examples from the New Testament. This is not going to be exhaustive.

We could spend the whole evening looking at this particular topic, but I've chosen not to do that. Instead, I want to give you just four examples for other examples from the New Testament where it is clearly

demonstrated that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh. First of all, coming from the lips of Jesus himself in John 8, 58.

Now, this is interesting because people still to this day, skeptics, liberals and even cultists, they will assert that Jesus never claimed to be God, they say. They will say it might be true that his followers attributed that to him, but they will assure us that Jesus never made that claim at all. Well, they they're wrong.

He did. He clearly made it recorded in John 8, 58. You remember the story there.

Jesus is speaking with the Pharisees, is disputing with them. And Abraham comes up in the discussion and Jesus says to them, he says, your father, Abraham, rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and was glad.

And they said to him, they said, you're not yet 50 years old. And are you trying to tell us that you've seen Abraham? And Jesus said this, I tell you the truth before Abraham was I am. Now, Jesus did not say before Abraham was I was he said before Abraham was I am.

And in making that claim, he took to himself the very name of God, because if you go back to Exodus chapter three, verse 14. The story of God meeting Moses at the burning bush, and you remember Moses said after God commissioned him, Moses said, well, who do I tell the children of Israel? Who do I tell them sent me? And the Lord spoke and said, tell them that I am has sent you. So here Jesus takes the name of God to himself.

He says before Abraham was I am he claimed to be the one who spoke to Moses in the burning bush. And no Jew would have had any doubt of what he was talking about. As a matter of fact, because of that statement, they sought to kill him because they considered it blasphemous.

So John eight fifty eight is a declaration of the deity of Christ in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 20, verse 28. We read there about the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood. The Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood, how could God have purchased anything with his own blood unless Christ? Who shed his blood on the cross were God.

And so the only way to understand that statement is that Christ was indeed God in Romans, chapter nine, verse five. Paul is speaking of. His people, the Jewish people, he's speaking of the privileges of the Israelites, he's speaking of their long history and the patriarchs.

And then he says who, according to the flesh, Christ came, Christ came as a Jew, he came as an Israelite. But then he says this return referring to Christ, he says that he is overall the eternally blessed God. Christ is overall the eternally blessed God, you can't get a clearer statement than that.

In Titus two, 13, Paul referred to the glorious appearing of our great God and savior, Jesus Christ. So here are just a few examples of what the scriptures clearly teach that, as Paul says here. In verse 16, God was manifested in the flesh.

Christ is the ultimate manifestation of God. Now, prior to the coming of Jesus, God had manifested himself in. A variety of ways, God was manifested to some extent through nature.

And the psalmist, for example, recognized that he said the heavens declared the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork. Day and today utter speech and night and tonight shows forth knowledge, there's no speech or language in which their voice is not heard. So through creation, God had

manifested himself to a certain extent.

And Paul reminds us of that in Romans chapter one, where he says that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them for the invisible things, for the invisible things. Since the creation of the world. They are.

Clearly seen being understood by the things that are made. So, in other words, he's saying that creation is. A manifestation of the reality of God, what does nature teach us about God, what does nature tell us about God, nature tells us primarily that God is great, that he's glorious beyond description, that he's all powerful, that he's all wise, that he is the ultimate in creative power and creativity.

In the vast variety within the creation, so nature was a manifestation of God, but then there was also the manifestation of God within the heart and the mind of each man in the sense that man was given a conscience and the ability to discern between right and wrong. And so, as Paul said there in Romans one, 19. For that which may be known of God is manifest in them, it's inside of every man, every man has inside of himself.

A sense of right and wrong, as we talked about last week, ironically, even the people who deny that there are certain things that are right or wrong. The relativist, even they have a strong sense of things being right or wrong. They say that's wrong, that that shouldn't happen that way, but then in the next breath, they say, well, you know, people can do whatever they want because there is nothing that's right or wrong.

But there are certain things they're very passionate about as being wrong, things in society that should not be allowed, should not be tolerated. And it just goes to show that every man has innately within him that sense of right and wrong, which is indicative of the fact that there's a God who's put that there. So God revealed himself in nature, God revealed himself in man himself through his conscience, but the ultimate manifestation of God has come through Christ.

God was manifested in this one member of the human family like no other. And Paul tells us in Colossians 2, 9, in Christ, all the fullness of the Godhead dwells. So all of the fullness of who God is dwells in.

The man, Christ Jesus, as Paul said here, God was manifested in the flesh. But now Paul goes on, he doesn't stop with God being manifested in the flesh. He goes on and he says that he was justified in the spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world and received up into glory.

What does it mean justified in the spirit? Now, perhaps. It's the Holy Spirit that's referred to here. Jesus, of course, was anointed by the Holy Spirit.

You remember at his baptism how the spirit came upon him. We're told by Paul in Romans that. It's the spirit of holiness that raised Christ from the dead.

So when it says justified in the spirit, it could be a reference to the the word justified could be vindicate the vindication of the spirit, the spirit coming upon him, vindicating him as a son of God, the spirit resurrecting him, demonstrating to all that he is indeed God, the son. But perhaps it's a reference to Christ's own spirit as a man, and that's what there's sort of a division probably between the commentators as to which is actually the case. It might actually be that both are the case.

Justified in the spirit, if it is a reference to Christ's own spirit as a man. And what this would be saying is that Christ was the one and only man whose spirit was. Consistently, perfectly in harmony with God, and

that would be true.

Jesus himself did say, I do always those things that please the father. You see, Jesus was the only man who in his conscience, in his inner being, in his spirit, did not have any inconsistency. In regard to the will of God, he never had any guilt feelings, he never had a sense of failure, he never had to confess that he wasn't quite as passionate or diligent or any of those things in regard to his relationship with God.

None of those things existed in him because in his spirit there was a perfect harmony between him and God. One author from quite a while ago, he said this regarding this aspect of Christ experience, he said, no one has yet discovered the word Jesus ought not to have said. None suggested the better word he might have said no action of his has shocked our moral sense.

None has fallen short of the ideal. He is full of surprises, but they are all the surprises of perfection. You are never amazed one day by his greatness, the next day by his littleness, you are ever amazed that he is incomparably better than you could have expected.

He is tender without being weak, strong without being coarse, lowly without groveling. He has conviction without intolerance, enthusiasm, without fanaticism, holiness, without Phariseeism, passion, without prejudice. This man alone never made a false step, never struck a jarring note.

His life alone moved on those high levels where local limitations are transcended and the absolute law of moral beauty prevails. His was life at its highest. Just reading through that, thinking over those things, oh, how true it is, you know, for any of us.

Even on our best day, none of these things could really be said, could they tender, but not weak, strong, but not coarse conviction without intolerance, all of those kinds of things, you just the picture is that of a perfect man. And that is what we have in Jesus Christ, and so whether it be in the sense that it was in his own spirit that this vindication was going on or whether it was in the sense of the Holy Spirit vindicating him, either way, the fact of the matter is, he is the ideal person, he is the standard. And think about this, Jesus said when the Holy Spirit comes, he will convict the world of sin.

And of righteousness and of judgment of sin, because they do not believe in me of righteousness, because I go to my father, what does that mean? The Holy Spirit will convict the world of righteousness because I go to my father. In other words, what he's saying is the Holy Spirit is going to show people that the standard that one must attain. To enter heaven is the standard set by Christ.

He's the only perfect one. And so vindicated in the spirit, justified in the spirit, the spirit, the one bearing witness to his perfection. And then Paul goes on and he says that he was seen of angels.

This could be translated that he showed himself to angels. Now, just what exactly this means, we don't really know, but we do know this. We do know that angels have a keen interest in this thing called the church and human redemption and salvation.

This is all very, very intriguing to the angels. And Paul tells us in Ephesians that the manifold wisdom of God is being made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. In other words, the church is somehow demonstrating to the angels the manifold wisdom of God.

Now, the angels, of course, they're the ones who live in the presence of God. And they obviously have a relationship with God and they obviously have an understanding of God, but evidently there are things

about God that they don't know that they're learning through the church. And Peter tells us regarding salvation.

That these are things that the angels desire to look into. Think about that, you know, sometimes I think as people, we sort of can at times be envious of angels. Oh, I wish I was an angel instead of a human.

Oh, how much more glorious that might be, and oh, I would know God so much better and I would see him so clearly and I would be powerful and I could do all kinds of, you know, great feats and all of that sort of thing. And, you know, we sort of look at ourselves as inferior to angels. The scripture says angels are looking on at us saying, oh, wow, I wish I was a person.

I wish I was a human. I wish I was a descendant of Adam. I could be redeemed.

I could be, you know, it's amazing, but that's what's happening with the angels. And so he was seen of angels or he showed himself to angels, maybe meaning that he showed them something through his incarnation that they could not have otherwise ever known. You know, what do we see in the incarnation? We see just the utter graciousness and the humility and the love of God.

It's amazing to think of God, all powerful. Holy, righteous, just can do anything. There's there's no one that can resist him.

There's no one that can oppose him. There's no one who can challenge him or question him or say, why are you doing what you're doing? And all of his creatures, speaking of the human family, have all rebelled against him and turned their backs upon him and disregarded him. And instead of doing what any of us would do in similar circumstances.

Basically wiping out such a race of ingrates, God does the unthinkable. He comes down to earth as one of us. And he lives among us and he endures patiently with the pride.

The opposition. You know, have you ever been in a situation where you're talking to somebody who they just don't know what they're talking about? They're they're totally ignorant, but they are so full of pride. They think that what they're saying is right.

And and, you know, for a fact that. This is just nonsense, it's foolishness. And we as people, as human beings, we have a hard time enduring that sort of a thing, don't we? It's not easy when that kind of a thing happens, but here's God.

God comes among men and he's trying to tell them the truth. He's trying to get them to believe in him and they're arguing with him. They're basically disputing with him on every subject and they're in essence, they're telling him, you don't know what you're talking about.

Hey, we know what we're talking about. We're Moses disciple. You don't know anything.

And what does he do instead of doing what any of us would do? Basically, like, you know what, I am fed up with this. These guys are history. It's over.

Instead, he endures, he suffers long with them and he loves them to the uttermost. He goes and he dies in their place. And when they're nailing him to the cross and mocking him and scoffing at him, he says, Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing.

These are the things the angels wouldn't know apart from the incarnation, and these are the things that I'm sure they're marveling at. He was preached among the Gentiles, preached among the nations. Of course, up until.

When Jesus came, there was confusion, to say the least, about God, the true knowledge of God had been lost among the nations for the most part, and the true knowledge of God was to be kept by the Jewish nation. But they had they had confused the issue. But now Christ comes and the gospel goes out to all the nations because that's God's heart.

God wants to save all people. From all nations, he's not a respecter of persons, as we're told over and over again, and so he's preached among the Gentiles. It's a message for all people.

But notice this. The message is Christ. You see, you guys, this is something that I think we have got to get a grip on this once again.

The message is Christ. That's what we're to preach. We're not to preach the many other things that the church gets distracted in preaching.

We have to be so careful. The message is a person. The message is Jesus.

And there are tons and tons of people that are turned off by a message of morality, a message of ethics, a message of conservatism or whatever the case might be. And and this is where the church, I think, is making a huge mistake in that we are sort of being seen by many as just another aspect of conservatism. And that's not the message.

The message is not conservatism. The message is Christ. We're preaching a person.

We're not preaching a list of rules. And it's whenever the church loses sight of that. That's when the church becomes ineffective.

Because there are lots of people that just simply aren't interested in your opinion of morality. You know, that that is the reality I oftentimes I try to put myself back, I put myself in other people's shoes by, you know, taking myself back to where I was before I was a Christian. And, you know, for the person who would approach me and insinuate that my lifestyle was wrong and tell me I shouldn't be living this way or whatever else, you know, I didn't I didn't really pay attention to that.

I just dismissed it. It's like, shut up. Who are you to tell me what I should do or shouldn't do? And I think I was typical of the average person.

And so when the church has a message that's. Just that sort of a message. It falls on deaf ears.

People aren't moved by that, people are. Moved by life, though. They a life can impact a person radically.

And that's why God is, you know, he's always. Made it so that this gospel is going to be connected to lives. God was manifested in the flesh.

The word became flesh. The word could have just remained words. Here's a book.

Read it. Figure it out. But God doesn't do it that way.

That word becomes flesh, God becomes a man. And likewise, as we preach the gospel, a large part of our preaching is what you might call incarnational preaching. We're to be preaching a life, the life of Jesus Christ, a living person.

Someone said this, and I wholeheartedly agree. Evangelicalism has sometimes been ethically unimpressive and uninfluential because it substituted belief in a plan of salvation for union with the living Christ as Savior. And because when it conceived the living Christ, it was a theological abstraction and not as the concrete personality of the Jesus of history.

You know, I know God in his graciousness uses a lot of different things. But I think we need to be careful that we don't reduce the gospel to a formula. You know, I know God has used the four spiritual laws, but, you know, to just walk up to somebody and to shove the four spiritual laws in their face and say, read this, brother, or you're going to go to hell.

That's not the ideal way to go about preaching the gospel. See, God wants to connect a life with another life. And he wants to communicate his word through a life.

And he did that by sending the living Christ, we have a living savior, we have Jesus, we're not introducing people to a theological system. We're not bringing people into this institution that's just established upon these historical creeds. We are introducing people to the living God, Jesus, the living savior.

He's alive today. And, you know, back in what we call now the Jesus people era. You know, that's really what was going on.

People were meeting Jesus and then they were just going around introducing others to him. Christ is the message. We preach Christ.

And him crucified. Not morality, morality comes, it follows, you know, it's such a burden to lay on somebody, you've got to do this and you've got to do that and you've got to do this and that and then you get saved. That's backward.

You need to know Christ. And once you know Christ, guess what happens? He does all that stuff in you. That's what he does.

He comes into our life and he changes our lives. So even when it comes to some of the real, you know, hot issues of the day, if we spend all of our time preaching against those ills in society, those evils that are infiltrating and destroying our culture and all of that, I think we're going about it the wrong way. And I think in the end we won't have much success.

But if we just preach Jesus and trust him to take care of those other things in people's lives. When they come to know him, that's the right way of going about it. That's what he does.

And so he was preached among the nations and then Paul says, believed on in the world, believed on in the world. Oh, amazing. This Jesus of Nazareth, how could he be believed on in the world unless he were God manifested in the flesh? It just doesn't equate.

It doesn't make any sense. Unless he were truly God in the flesh and unless he truly did the things the New Testament attributes to him, there is no explanation for the fact that he's believed on in the world. Over one billion people in the world today claim to believe in Jesus Christ, closer actually to two billion.

But had he not been who the New Testament says he was, that, of course, could never have occurred. But he has indeed been believed on in the world. What it is considered, think about this, when it is considered that the Christian message was a stumbling block to the Jew.

Foolishness to the Greek, that instead of pandering to the lust and passions of men, it waged eternal war against them. And that at its introduction, it was opposed to the religious views and customs of the whole civilized and barbarous world. Well, may we wonder that it should have been received by any considerable number of men among the nations of the world.

If the gospel had not been from God, it must have perished from the earth long ago. You know, it's funny because when you think about that. Statement there, it seems to me like we're sort of back in that same place again, in many ways, the many of the religions of the world are reasserting their.

Their claims. You know, 20 years ago, 15 years ago, for that matter, did any of us know much of anything about Islam? Unless you were a student of theology or religious movements and things like that, you know, the average person didn't know a whole lot about Islam, hadn't really heard much about it. Islam was some thing that was over there on the other side of the world.

And we rarely heard much of anything about it. Did you know that Los Angeles County has the largest Islamic population in the United States? The second largest Islamic population in the United States is Orange County. The third largest is San Diego County.

Tied with Dearborn, Michigan. California has the largest population of Muslims. Of any state in this country.

And we see this resurgence and of course, with the immigration and all that we've had, of course, Buddhism has become a prominent to some extent in the culture because of the Asian immigrants that have come in Hinduism and these things. And so in a sense, my point is this, in a sense, we're sort of back at that same place where there's all of these religions and not to mention atheistic humanism, which is very dominant in the culture. Which will align itself, ironically, with Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism or any other ism just to try to destroy Christianity.

But, you know, we're just sort of back in the same place where. It just seems that. If you look at it merely from a human standpoint, it's an impossibility.

I've been reading in some of the different news reports about the Islamization of Europe. They're referring to Europe now as Eurabia, and they're talking about the different countries where they are being overwhelmed by Islam. And so we look and we see that here we are again.

With a message that is opposed to the religious views and customs of both the civilized and the barbarous world for Christianity and Islam are diametrically opposed, and so it is with Christianity and Buddhism, so it is with Christianity and Hinduism, so it is obviously with Christianity and humanistic atheism, were it not for the fact that this is God's gospel, we could have no hope of anything ever advancing. But here's the great news. It is God's gospel, and just as for the past 2000 years, people have been believing on him in the world from every nation, from every culture, from every religious background, we can expect that same thing to continue to happen.

You know, I'm not really bothered at all by the influx of Muslims or Hindus or Buddhists. I think it's just a blessing that God is sending the mission field right to us. The question is, are we going to see it for what it

is? Now, they've certainly come here on a mission, many of them, but.

I believe that God has orchestrated these things so that we would have an opportunity to bring the gospel to them and they in turn can perhaps impact their own countries with that. And so believed on in the world. And still this day.

Thousands and thousands of people today put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ all over the world, people coming to Christ. And then finally, he says, received up in glory. Jesus was raised up.

From the dead, received up at the ascension and is presently sitting at the right hand of the father, making intercession for us and waiting until his enemies are made his footstool. He's been received up in the glory, Paul says. Without a doubt, without controversy.

Great, glorious, profound, awesome. Is the mystery of our faith. He's really just sort of concluding this segment.

With a praise to God. And it's so good for us, you know, to. Often.

To get our get our eyes on God, get our eyes on the Lord, his greatness, his glory, his grandeur, all those things. And just to, you know, just to think on that, just to praise him. For who he is, it seems like we spend so much time down on that other level of, well, I need to do this and I should do that.

And and how come you're not do it? You know, it's kind of just a lot of times we spend concentrating on ourselves and our pitiful state and how we're not what we should be and all of those things. And, you know, the solution to that is get our eyes on him. And just.

Meditate on his greatness and his glory, because when you see Christ for who he is, that he's God manifested in the flesh, that he's justified in the spirit. That the angels are intrigued by all of this, that he's been. Preached to the nations, believed on in the world, received up in a glory, you know, when you're caught up with all of that.

That just consumes you, it just overtakes you and everything else just. Falls into place, you see, it's still the same thing I got saved, you got saved by looking to Jesus, not by looking at yourself. You got saved by looking to him and guess what, you grow and you progress and you mature the same way, not by looking at yourself and being introverted and introspective and always, well, what about this with me and that, but just by looking at him and understanding who he is because.

This whole idea of godliness, it's interesting, this is the only place where Paul uses the word in a different sort of a way he uses the word here, I think, as I've been teaching tonight, he uses it as a mean, as a descriptive for the faith. But every other time Paul uses the word, he uses it in the context of us living lives that are like the life of God. So how do I live a life that is like the life of God? Well, there's only one way that I can do it.

I can only do it because God was manifested in the flesh. You see, Jesus is the answer to my quest for godliness. You want to be godly.

You want to be a man of God, you want to be a woman of God, you want to be more spiritual. Here's what you do. Get out your pencil.

I've got a list of 15 things. I'm just kidding. No, that's the opposite of what we're talking about tonight.

You want to be godly. You want to be spiritual. You want to be.

me. Like Christ, look to him, just fix your gaze upon him, meditate on him, Jesus said. In regard to service, you're speaking to the apostles about them serving him as evangelist, he said, follow me, I will make you fishers of men.

You know what he says? The same thing about everything. He says, you want to be godly. The mystery of godliness is me, it's Christ.

It's Christ in you, that's what Paul said, Christ in you is the hope of glory. How am I ever going to be glorified? How am I ever going to be godly? Christ in me is the hope of glory. Christ in you is the hope of glory.

So just fix your eyes on Christ, steady him, meditate on his life. Just contemplate who he is. You know.

My wife, I love her so much, that's why I just keep mentioning her all the time. I'm trying to impress her, too, so she'll be nicer to me. I'm just kidding.

She's real nice, but she she's you know, she has her Bible reading and we talk about what she's reading and to tell her what I'm reading and so forth. But and I and I'm kind of, you know, I always know where she's at. And so she's telling me, yeah, well, in Mark, you know, I was reading this and that the other thing I said, well, I thought you were in John.

She said, I am. You see, in my regular reading, I'm in Mark, but in my new reading, I'm in John, because what she was telling me is that she made a decision a while back that she's going to always read through the Gospels, no matter what else she's doing. She's going to always just keep reading through the Gospels just to keep at the forefront of her mind who Jesus is and what he's done.

And, you know, my wife, she inspires me a lot. I never give her the credit that's due to her, but I got inspired by that. And I've been doing the same thing.

I haven't really told her that, but I've been doing the same thing because I realized that, you know, that's true. We so easily lose sight of Jesus. We've got to keep him right at the forefront of our minds, because the more we know him, the more we'll be like him.

And that's what godliness is all about being like Christ. We can be godly because he God became like us so we can become like him. Let's pray.

Lord, thank you that you, God, were manifested in the flesh. Lord, that you came so that we could be godly men and women. That we could bear the likeness of God once again that had been marred through sin, that you've restored that to us.

And that we are new men and women in Christ. Oh, how we thank you for that. And Lord, may we find ourselves just knowing you better, loving you more.

Lord, just seeing who you are more clearly. And Lord, as we see you, as we get to know you, that we would be more and more like you. Lord, we know that's your desire.

That's your will to conform us into your image. And Lord, you said that all of us, as we look at you, it's like beholding your glory. And we're being transformed from glory to glory as we look at your face.

So Lord, help us to gaze upon you and through that, change us and use us, Lord, to bring life and hope and salvation and truth to others. Lord, may we have opportunities to let people know about the living Christ. To introduce people to you, Jesus.

Use us, Lord. As we look at our world, we see a lot of confused people, a lot of angry people. A lot of people that are so confused.

And they've got a chip on their shoulder about religion. Oh, Lord, may they see that you're not religion. You're a person.

You're a person who wants to come into their life and fulfill their every dream and need. Use us, Lord, to impart that to others, we pray in your name. Amen.

Amen. Let's stand together.

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