

(John) the Tabernacle of God Is With Men

by Brian Brodersen

Brian Brodersen's sermon explores the profound connection between the incarnation of Christ and the Old Testament tabernacle, emphasizing grace and truth as essential for spiritual life.

Duration: 37:59

Topics: "Gods Grace", "Divine Redemption"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of grace and its significance in the Christian faith. He references a sermon by Alexander McLaren, who states that in order for us to receive the divine fullness, the Word needed to be made flesh and sacrifice was necessary. The speaker then reads from John chapter 1, highlighting verses 1, 14, and 16-18, which emphasize the Word becoming flesh and the grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that we are all disqualified for heaven and cannot save ourselves through good works, but instead need God's grace, which is His undeserved favor. The speaker explains that grace is not just a word, but the power of God supplied to us through Jesus Christ, enabling us to live for God's glory.

Transcript

John chapter 1, I'm gonna read you verses 1 and then verse 14 and then verses 16 through 18.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth and of His fullness we have all received and grace for grace for the law was given through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ no one has seen God at any time the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father he has declared Him we have seen thus far in our study of this first chapter of John's gospel we have seen that there are many allusions to the early chapters of Genesis but interestingly as we come to verse 14 we have now an allusion to events recorded in Exodus chapter 40 let me read to you a couple verses from Exodus 40 it says then the cloud

covered the tabernacle of meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle and Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting because the cloud rested above it and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle now you might be saying okay what does that have to do with what we just read well this is it we read in verse 14 and the word became flesh and dwelt among us that word dwelt literally means to tabernacle among or to pitch one's tent among and so the word became flesh and he set up his tabernacle among us and then we beheld his glory notice there in the quotation from Exodus 40 it's talking about the

tabernacle and what happened the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle and so here John is once again making a connection in his gospel with the early books of the Bible

and you know to me this is such a fascinating thing to see the correlation to see how there's this relationship between the various books of the Bible you know there are 66 different books that make up what we call the Bible and the amazing thing about these 66 books is that they're all connected to one another they are harmonious in all that they have to say about God and his nature and about his work and those kinds of things and here you see John just weaving this into his gospel now interesting most Bible commentators and scholars over the years haven't made too strong of a connection between John's gospel and John's Jewish heritage or even the connection so much to the Old Testament but the more you study the gospel of John the more you realize John's Jewish heritage plays a major

role in his presentation of Christ and there is a serious link between this gospel and the Old Testament of course there would be because the gospel is the fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament you know many years ago there was a famous rabbi who was the head of a rabbinical school and he had many students under his care and one day in his classroom he noticed that there was a young student reading a small book and he went over to see what it was and he found to his dismay and consternation that this book was a copy of the New Testament and in anger he grabbed that little New Testament out of his student's hand and he just hurled it across the room never thought twice about where it landed never went to look for it just left it at that scolded the young man and went back about

his business many many years later this same man he was troubled because of the rise of anti-semitism in Europe where he was living and he began to wonder why do they hate us why is there such a hostility and of course he lived in what seemed to him to be a Christian nation and he didn't understand why there was so much animosity coming from what he perceived to be the Christian world and so as he was contemplating these things one day as he was there in his classroom and as he was just sort of tidying up he came across that little New Testament that he had thrown out so long ago and he thought to himself he thought maybe if I read this I would begin to understand why they hate us so much and of course in his mind this was a forbidden book because this was the basis upon all upon which

all of the anti-semitic activity was taking place so he thought so he opened up that New Testament and he read the very first words of the New Testament the gospel of Jesus Christ the son of David the son of Abraham he was absolutely stunned he thought what the son of David the son of Abraham David was Jewish Abraham was Jewish and he was so intrigued by that he read the entire New Testament and at the end of it he became a Christian he realized that the New Testament was the true Judaism that the New Testament was the fulfillment of the Old Testament and that what he had been involved in his entire life and had been an instructor in was not the real Judaism but it was a false Judaism you see there is that organic link between the two covenants and you really can't separate it at all and

we see that here with John in chapter 1 as we've mentioned all of those allusions to Genesis that we've been considering and now here this interesting allusion to the tabernacle Jesus tabernacling among us the word becoming flesh and living among us now the tabernacle as we go back into the Old Testament this little tabernacle that was constructed by Moses was constructed as a dwelling place for God and it was a picture it was there was a prophetic element to it was a picture of what John is writing about here the word becoming becoming flesh and dwelling among us but when you look back on the tabernacle there are several ways in which it typified Christ and I want to point out just a couple of those to you tonight as you look back at the tabernacle you notice that the tabernacle was a

temporal structure it was a temporary building in which the presence of the Lord dwelt and the worship of God would occur and so when Jesus tabernacled among men his stay was a brief stay he was here for just a little bit more than 30 years now as you looked at that tabernacle that was constructed by Moses outwardly it was quite humble really and in many ways fairly unattractive it was made of different types of wood and things but then it was covered by animal skins and so I don't think it would have been the most impressive tent around it might have been interesting but I think it was fairly unattractive in many ways but yet this is also a picture of the Lord Jesus the divine majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ was hidden under the veil of his flesh and Isaiah said prophetically concerning

him that he had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him and nothing in his appearance that we should desire him so Jesus just from the physical standpoint was just a very ordinary looking man there was nothing striking about him necessarily there was you know with his features and all there was nothing majestic the way he looked there was nothing that people would be drawn to him by his appearance Isaiah said the tabernacle was God's dwelling place it was the place where the presence of the Lord resided and we know from the writings of the Apostle Paul that it was in Jesus Christ and it is in Jesus Christ that all the fullness of God dwells bodily so we see there a similarity the tabernacle was a meeting place between God and men it was actually called in the Old Testament that the tent

of meeting it was the place where people would go to meet with God and of course Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and men he is the meeting point with God if a person is going to meet God if a person ever hopes to meet God they cannot possibly meet God apart from Christ he is the meeting point between God and men and then finally he is the place just as the tabernacle was it was a place of gathering for worship Jesus is the one that we gather around in our worship of God and we're told in Hebrews by him by Jesus let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name and so as we look at these things we see that there was indeed a prophetic element to that old tabernacle and it was speaking of the time that John is

writing to us about when the word would become flesh and dwell among us and then he said and we beheld his glory now you see the one thing about the tabernacle was that the glory of God resided on it and that of course is what made it what what it was as far as its significance and so with Jesus although you might have looked at him physically and not been all that impressed by his stature and just physically speaking there was of course the glory of God that would emanate forth from him and that was seen through his miraculous deeds and as Jesus would perform miracles people would acknowledge God has visited his people God is among us they sensed his glory as he ministered in the power of God and then of course the transfiguration here was a place where the veil was sort of pulled back

and the glory of God shown through the humanity of Christ and you remember there was Jesus on that mount of transfiguration and his appearance was like light and his clothing was white as snow and Peter and James and John were there and they knew that they were having this experience with God himself and so here was a moment when the glory was seen it was also seen slightly but significantly and powerfully in the garden of Gethsemane you remember when they came to arrest Jesus in the garden and they said we're looking for Jesus of Nazareth and Jesus said I am and we read that they all fell to the ground and it was that demonstration of his power it was that manifestation of his glory and so the word became flesh and tabernacled among us and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of

the Father full of grace and true full of grace and truth now we read a little bit further down that the law was given through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ now John is not implying that truth

did not come from Moses he's not implying that the law wasn't true but the law only revealed part of the truth you see what John's point is is to show that Jesus brought God out into the clear he brought God's plan out into the clear there's no longer any ambiguity everything is very clear to us now so that's what he means the law came through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ you see the law only told part of the truth it only told of the inflexibility of God's requirements and the judgment that would come upon those that sinned but you see it didn't fully

disclose that God would put himself under those very requirements keep them perfectly and then give his life as a sacrifice for those who sinned that was all hidden in the law that was hidden in the Old Testament but it wasn't fully disclosed so Jesus comes and he brings all of this out now into the open you see apart from the New Covenant and the revelation of the New Testament the Old Testament is a riddle it is an unsolvable riddle it you you can't really figure it out and and thus the Jewish people to this day are in that place of not really understanding God's plan not really knowing what it is that God is doing or what was he doing in the past we thought he was doing a certain thing but evidently maybe you know maybe he stopped doing it and the whole thing about God and his covenant

all that to the Jewish mind today it's all a big mystery because you see the missing piece of the puzzle is the New Testament and because they've rejected the New Testament they don't really understand what their own scriptures are saying Jesus he's the missing piece and so grace and truth have been brought to us through Jesus Christ now think about these two things grace and truth grace is man's greatest spiritual need our greatest need spiritually is for grace because all have sinned all have sinned we have all of us already become disqualified for heaven we're already disqualified it's not a matter of I might be getting close I better watch out I better turn in a new direction and try to do more good things than bad so it'll all work out in the end no it's too late we're already all of

us disqualified for heaven we can never undo all the evil that we've done it's an impossibility so what does that mean it means that any hope of saving myself or any hope of working my way into God's favor is out of the question what does that tell me tells me I need grace I need God's grace what is grace grace is God's favor undeserved that's what grace is it's the favor of God poured upon a life of a person who does not deserve it that's every person nobody deserves the blessing of God grace is quite often referred to as unmerited favor favor that you do not earn unmerited favor but somebody said and I think they're right it's more than unmerited favor it's favor against merit because it's not only that we haven't earned salvation we have actually earned damnation we've earned just the

opposite but God through Jesus Christ he has brought us grace man's greatest spiritual need is for grace man's greatest practical need is for truth think about that you cannot live without truth now lots of people are trying to live without truth that's why life is so miserable for them that's why life is so frustrating for them that's why they are making everybody else's lives miserable that's why the world is such a mess and it's getting more messed up each and every day because people disregard the truth they say there is no truth we just do whatever we want whatever feels good to me is what I do whatever feels good to you you do that now if people really start living like that in the total sense you have utter social pandemonium you can't even have society if people really truly

embrace relativism and take it to its extreme it results in anarchy you see we need truth we need to know the truth about God we need to know the truth about ourselves we need to know the truth about life and how it is to be lived and of course that's all the stuff that God has communicated to us through his word and Jesus has brought to us this grace and this truth and we read here in verse 16 and of his fullness we

have all received and grace for grace now remember he was full of grace and truth and now John says and of his fullness we have all received grace for grace so Jesus comes full of grace and truth and John says we who believe in him we have received that grace that grace that he's full of that fullness we have received the picture is that of an endless supply of grace now

here's something that we have to understand about grace you see grace we use that term a lot we sing amazing grace and you know we've got all kinds of songs your grace is enough how many songs tonight did we sing with the word grace in it but we have to understand that grace is not just a word it's not just a theological term grace is the power of God that is supplied to us through Jesus Christ abundantly so we can live to the glory of God see that's the beauty of the Christian life the Christian life is not like any other religious system in the world every other system of religion basically has a moral code and ethical code a list of rules commandments things that you should do and not do and so forth that's not Christianity that's not the essence of it anyway although there are those

elements to it that's not the essence of it the essence of the Christian life is that the power of God lives inside of me and flows from me and enables me to live the kind of life that God requires me to live and there isn't another religion on the planet that has that as a part of its system every other system puts the person in the position of doing their best to try to attain to the standard that is set there but the scriptures tell us in advance that all of our best efforts fall far short of what God requires but that God has done something he has come and he's brought us this endless supply of grace and he infuses that grace into us there's something that happens like Fred was saying tonight when he was talking about his life where he was before and where he is today there's only one

explanation for that it's called the grace of God not a theoretical term but an actual power that came into his life and you know that for yourselves many of you and I know that for myself and that's what we're talking about here an endless supply of grace and here's the idea that you come back to be replenished over and over and over and over and over again all throughout your life as often as you feel you're running low on grace you just go back to the Lord and say Lord fill me up I need a new filling of grace and he's there to do that of his fullness we have received you know you don't have to worry about God running out of grace for you you don't have to worry about emptying the supply you can go over and over and over again all of us can all of our lives of his fullness we have all

received I was reading a sermon by a man named Alexander McLaren and he said something that I thought was quite profound I want to read you a paragraph in regard to of this fullness we have all received he said this he said in order that the divine fullness might belong to us there was needed that the word would be made flesh and there was further needed that incarnation should be crowned by sacrifice and that life should be perfected in death the alabaster box had to be broken before the house could be filled with the fragrance of the ointment the sack the course spun sack of Christ humanity had to be cut asunder in order that the wealth that was stored in it might be poured into our hands God came near us in the life but God became ours in the death of his dear son incarnation was

needed for that great privilege we beheld his glory but the crucifixion was needed in order to make possible the more wondrous prerogative of his fullness have we all received God gives himself to men in the Christ whose life revealed and whose death imparted him to the world through the death of Christ he has given us himself and you see that's what we're talking about here we're talking about his fullness and this grace that has come to us and this truth but you know it's not disconnected from him it's in him it's all part of him and what we really have is again it's this relationship see that's what we're talking about we're

not talking about church we're not talking about duty we're not talking about a bunch of rules we're talking about a relationship with a person the greatest person

in the universe all of us probably have a person or two or three or however many that you really like to be with you just love being around that person they're so fun and they're so witty and they're brilliant and they're you know all of the things that make our relationship enjoyable well Jesus Christ is the greatest person in the universe and beyond nothing can match him he's God and that's what we've received we've received him and we have this relationship with him and we can cultivate this relationship with him and we can have experiences with him we can spend time with him and he talks to us and he reveals himself to us you know sometimes I have to confess that in the ministry I just get so caught up in all the duties all the things that I do oh I got to do this today I've got to

see those people I've got to call this I've got to go do that I've got you know and all of this stuff and it's easy to just sort of get wrapped up in all of that and forget about the person and then you come back and you think man I'm exhausted I'm worn out I'm I'm so weary and Jesus is there all the time saying come to me you who are weary join yourself to me I will give you rest you see it's a relationship that's what is being described here and then John goes on and he tells us this he says no one has seen God at any time the only begotten Son is our translation but a better translation interestingly is not the only begotten Son but the only begotten God is literally what the Greek says the only begotten God who is in the bosom or who is in the heart of the father he has declared him

so here this statement John says no one has seen God at any time now that creates a bit of a dilemma because you go back to the Old Testament you find that there were occasions when people saw the Lord Abraham set and had lunch with the Lord you can read about it in the 18th chapter of Genesis and Moses saw the Lord and the prophets saw the Lord at least it seemed that they did but when he says no one has seen God at any time he's talking about seeing God in his essence you see what they saw was a manifestation of God but they never did see God in his essence because as Paul said no one he said God dwells in the light that no man can approach and Moses in chapter 34 of Exodus he says to the Lord at one point he says Lord let me see your glory he was asking I want to see you in your

essence I don't want to see just an image of you I want to see you and you know what God said to Moses he said Moses I'll put you in the cleft of the rock and I'll cover you with my hand and I'll pass by you and you will see my afterglow that's where we get that term afterglow he said but you can't see me Moses because nobody can see me and live and that's what John is telling us no one has seen God in his essence but the only begotten God here's a clear statement again referring to the deity of Christ he's the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the father who is in the heart of the father he has revealed him declared him Jesus Christ has brought God out into plain view that's what John is telling us here the word declared or revealed is a word that means just that we have terms

that we use in regard to Bible teaching and preaching we have a term exposition we have a term exegesis to exposit the scriptures means to bring them bring them out into the open help people to understand them exegesis means a similar thing that's the word that's used here in the Greek regarding what Jesus did he brought God out into plain view that's what John is telling us so that we need not be puzzled today about who God is or what he's like oh so many people are curious I wonder what God is like what do you think God is like if I could ask God a question I wonder what he would say about this or that well look no further Jesus Christ has brought God out into plain view and when you look at Jesus you see God when you listen to Jesus you hear God when you worship Jesus you're worshipping

God he's the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father and just as the tabernacle was a foreshadow of Christ first coming so the incarnation the word becoming flesh and dwelling among us is a foreshadow of something yet in the future turn with me to revelation 21 will close with this remember the word became flesh and set up his tabernacle among us and we had that experience those men had that experience for that brief period of time there he was tabernacling among them and of course by the spirit he is with us today but listen to revelation 21 in verse 1 now I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away also there was no more sea then I John saw the holy city new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride

adorned for her husband and I heard a loud voice from heaven saying behold the tabernacle of God is with men and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people God himself will be with them and be their God and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes there shall be no more death nor sorrow nor crying there shall be no more pain for the former things have passed away you see there's coming a day in the future when the tabernacle of God will be permanently erected amongst men and we will be there with the Lord dwelling in his very presence forever but in the meantime until we get there the Lord is with us today and because he pitched his tent among us of course he ascended back to heaven but remember when he ascended back to heaven he sent the spirit Jesus said I'm not going to

leave you as orphans I'm going to send another helper just like me and of course that's the Holy Spirit he sent the Holy Spirit who is with us and who brings us that experience of Christ his fullness that grace and truth that experience with him that knowledge of him and that all begins by embracing him receiving him asking him to come in and take over your life like Fred did 36 years ago and like I did several years ago and like many of you did and but if you're here tonight and you have not done that if you haven't met the Lord Jesus Christ if you haven't received his salvation or maybe you've received the Lord but you're not walking with him and somehow you just ended up here tonight I received a phone call from a guy the other day was asking questions on the radio and he just was very

blunt he said you know I'm not walking with the Lord I'm you know kind of off doing my own thing and I encouraged him to get back with the Lord but maybe that's you tonight maybe you're here and you need to get your life right with the Lord either way if you've received him but you need to get your life right with him or you've never received him we want to give you an opportunity to do that and at the end of the service this room over here is the prayer room and there are people in there they'd love to pray with you lead you in a prayer to get that relationship established with the Lord to get it reconciled if need be but isn't it a wonderful thing that the word became flesh and tabernacled among us and that we've beheld his glory and that that grace and truth are there in him and they

flow out abundantly to us let's just keep coming back to the Lord over and over maybe tonight maybe you feel like you know you've come here you're kind of condemned you failed you've had a bad week or a bad month or maybe a bad year and you're maybe you're just thinking you know it probably isn't really any grace left for me not me you know maybe somebody else but not me don't you believe it there's an endless supply and you just come back to Jesus and say Lord forgive me and pour that grace upon me and he'll do that for you tonight let's pray Lord we thank you that you are full of grace and truth and Lord that's what we need in our lives tonight we need a fresh dose of your grace to be poured upon us and Lord we need your truth to be established in our lives and to guide us as we walk

through this mixed-up world and so Lord pour that grace out upon us tonight and Lord I pray for anyone that doesn't know the Lord or is maybe away from you draw them back to yourself help them to get out of

that seat and make it over the prayer room to be encouraged and so Lord we give you ourselves we pray that you would fill us up with your life and Lord help us to know you not simply knowing about you but to know you like you desire to know us we pray these things in the name of Jesus amen

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