

John 1:14

Sermon #6

Glory – Grace - Truth

Slide Children’s Time – Ask children to come up to the front.

THEME: Keeping centered on what is most important in our life.

SCRIPTURE: ³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” ⁴¹ “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:38-42 NIV)

Do you ever get hungry during church? Sometimes I get so hungry that I just don't think I can make it through my sermon. This was one of those mornings, so I went to _____? and got a hamburger. If you will excuse me, I am going to eat it right now. (Begin removing the items from the paper bag one at a time, commenting on each one as you take it out. When all of the items have been removed from the bag, show surprise and concern that something seems to be missing -- the hamburger.)

Can you imagine that? I got so interested in getting all of these things to go with my hamburger, that I forgot the most important thing. I forgot to get the hamburger!

You probably think I am pretty foolish to have forgotten the hamburger. After all,

that was the most important thing. But, I am not the only person to ever do something so foolish. That is what our Bible lesson is about this morning.

As Jesus and his disciples were traveling, they came to a town where Martha lived with her sister Mary. The sisters welcomed Jesus into their home and Martha immediately began to work very hard to get supper ready for Jesus. While Martha was busy preparing the meal, her sister, Mary just sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to his teaching.

Martha was upset that her sister was not helping her, so she went to Jesus and said, "Do you see that my sister is not helping me? Tell her to help me."

Jesus answered, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about too many things. Only a few things are important, perhaps just one. Mary has chosen that one thing and I will not take it away from her."

Many of us make the same mistake that Martha made. We get so busy working, going to school, playing, or watching television that we often forget the most important thing. We forget to spend time with Jesus! We must be very careful that we don't get so busy doing good things that we leave out the very best thing! After all, Jesus is the most important thing!

Dear Jesus, help us to remember that you are the most important thing in our lives. Don't let us get so busy with other things that we forget to spend time with you. Amen.

Go back to your seats and I will now speak to both you and your parents.

Slide It is good to read the Bible and study it over and over – growing deeper in our understanding of God and enabling us to grow in our relationship with Him.

However, I wish as times I could read scripture of the awe of new discovery. This morning is one of those times. When John chapter 1 verse 14 was written it would have been startling and yet for us here this morning who have read this verse many times. We can read it thinking - Oh, yea that's right. While I read John 1:14 please sit back close your eyes (no peeking) and let the words build a mental picture. Here we go, now close your eyes, **“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”** Wow! Is that not an incredible image? You can open your eyes now. This one sentence explains why the whole Gospel according to John was written.

Apostle John tells us in clear language that God – the God that created the entire universe – became a man. If you had just read this for the very first time you would be startled and amazed. This was an amazing thought, a new concept; the Word of God could enter into time and history as a man so that mankind could see God in a man. In Jesus - mankind could behold God's glory in a way that even Moses on the Mount Sinai never did. **Blank**

I think as John wrote this verse he was working to get people to understand this new paradigm shift by using the wandering of the Jews in the wilderness for 40 years.

The phrase in verse 14 that reads, **“the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us”** Literally this means, *“to dwell in a tent.”* The verse could as easily read, “The Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us.” Or, in a more Jewish understanding it would read, “The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us.” This would be meaningful to the Hebrews for it was the portable wilderness tabernacle that was

the center of their worship and was the most important object in the camp of probably over 2 million people.

Everything about the wilderness tabernacle - its dimensions, furnishings, colors and function were given by God to communicate spiritual truth. Many of these elements of the tabernacle gave truth about Jesus the Messiah who was to come in the future. Jesus would come and pitch His tent among us. Let me compare 6 things about the wilderness tabernacle that I believe also relate to our Lord, Jesus Christ. For remember as the children learned this morning in the story of Martha and Mary – it is Jesus that is the most important thing.

Slide 1. **The tabernacle was the center of Israel's camp.** In the Book of Numbers it outlines the position of each tribe. In Numbers 2:17 we read, **Slide** “The tent of meeting, with the camp of the Levites, shall set out in the center of the camps.” (NRSV) So, too, just as the tabernacle was the center of the lives of the Hebrews, Jesus is the center of the Christian encampment, He is our gathering place, He is to be the center of our community. **Slide** Jesus said, “when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”³³ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.” (John 12:32-33) Jesus was speaking of his crucifixion. Jesus was raised up on a cross and it is the Cross of Christ and what it symbolizes - the death and the conquering resurrection of Jesus that Christians now gather at the foot of the Cross of Christ.

Slide 2. **The tabernacle was where the law of Moses was preserved.** The 2nd set of stone tablets with the 10 Commandments or Law was placed inside the Ark of the Covenant within the Holy of Holies. Jesus lived without sin and keep all of the law and being God incarnate He was the Holy of Holies. Psalm 40 verse 8 spoke of Jesus,

Slide “I delight to do thy will, O my God; Yea, thy law is within my heart.” The Law was kept in the heart of Jesus and He lived it fully and perfectly.

Slide 3. **The tabernacle was the dwelling place of God.** This was symbolized in the tabernacle by the Holy of Holies and within the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant and on the lid of the Ark was the 2 Cherubims with their outstretched wings and in the center was the Shekinah Glory that symbolized God’s presence. God very God was revealed in the flesh of Jesus the Messiah. Jesus is the Shekinah Glory, He is the light of God. In John 8:12 Jesus says of himself, **Slide** “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

Slide 4. **The tabernacle was the place where God dwelt among His people and it was also the place of revelation.** The tabernacle was also known as the Tent of Meeting because this is where people gathered to learn what God had revealed to Moses. The second tabernacle, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the place where God meets with people today and speaks to them. God told Moses in Exodus chapter 33, **Slide** “²⁰You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!” Yet, God is now revealed perfectly to all mankind in Jesus and it is in Jesus that we see the Father.

Slide 5. **The tabernacle was where sacrifices were made to God.** The Book of Hebrews tells us what was true for the Jews and is true for us today, **Slide** “And according to the Law ... all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” (Hebrews 9:22) Today it is the same – no one may approach God except through faith in the sacrifice provided by Jesus Christ His shed blood, who in the tabernacle of His flesh offered up the perfect, complete and last sacrifice needed. Jesus died in our place. He is the Lamb of God that takes away the

sin of the world. Based on the sacrifice of Jesus we who were once children of wrath become God's children and may approach God the Father and more than this - we may have a relationship with God through Christ.

Slide 6. **The tabernacle was the place where the people of Israel worshipped.** The people of Israel brought their sacrifices to the tabernacle, they gave gifts there and asked questions of God there. We worship in the second tabernacle, which is, in the presence of Jesus, God the Son. We gather around the person of our Lord and it is Christ and the revelation of God the Holy Spirit that regulates our worship and receives our praise.

Let me read the passage that makes this clear. Beginning in **Slide** Ephesians 2:8 let me highlight this passage ending in verse 18, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast...¹⁶(Jesus) might reconcile (*us*) in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the (hostility).¹⁷ AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;¹⁸ for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father." When we accept Christ, God the Son, as our Lord and Savior we are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit and this gives us access to God the Father. **Blank**

Just as the tabernacle held the Ark and between the wings of the Cherubim was the Shekinah Glory symbolizing God's glory and light – Jesus came and pitched His tent, His tabernacle among us and He did so in order that men and women might see Him and by believing in Him people would know God – this is what John meant when he wrote, "we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father." Paul wrote of this in 2 Corinthians, **Slide** "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror

the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18) Have you, my beloved, beheld the glory of the eternal Son of God. He is here! He is among us this very minute. He chose to come and tabernacle with us. **Blank**

This leaves us with the last two elements of verse 14, “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, **Slide full of grace and truth.**” This gives me great comfort for I know that it is because of the Word who became flesh, my Lord Jesus, that I am able to know God and that this crazy universe and world I live in has meaning and God is in charge. The first thing that John says is revealed in Jesus is He is grace. By this then we also know God is gracious for Jesus is the perfect image of God. This then poses the question, “What is Grace?” Simply put, grace is the unmerited favor of God towards mankind. **Slide** Harry A. Ironside wrote, “Grace is the very opposite of merit ... Grace is not only underserved favor, but it is favor shown to the one who has deserved the very opposite.” This is also expressed well by Apostle Paul in Romans 5:8, **Slide** “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” It is God alone who awakens our souls and spiritually renews us by His grace. **Blank**

All mankind are recipients of God’s grace and this is referred to as “common grace.” Let me explain the common grace of God this way. When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day's pay for his time that is a wage. When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his victory, that is a prize. When a person receives appropriate recognition for his long service or high achievements, that is an award. But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award—yet, yet receives such a gift

anyway--that is a good picture of God's unmerited favor. This is what I mean when I talked about the "common grace" of God. It is by God's grace we have air to breathe. You see, when mankind sinned in Adam, then all mankind came under judgment. Mankind deserved nothing and God owed nothing to humanity. If anything, mankind deserved judgment for eternity. If God had cast Adam and his wife into the Lake of Fire He would have been just. When God brought the flood and wiped out the entire human race with the exception of Noah and his family, God was just. This is an important truth to understand – God owes mankind nothing.

All the blessings that people enjoy are the result of God's common grace and mercy. As wonderful as this understanding God's common grace for mankind is, the grace given by Christ is even greater. Jesus' grace is "saving grace" for those who believe in Jesus are not spared the judgment of God for a period of time, but they are saved and redeemed for eternity. When one believes in Jesus is when they move from being children of wrath to being the sons and daughters of God.

The last element of verse 14, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." Jesus is truth itself! God's nature is truth and this also is revealed in Jesus Christ. Truth is a major theme in John's writings because truth is important to God. John knew the Old Testament was based on God being truth. **Slide** In Isaiah 65:16 we read, "Because he who is blessed in the earth will be blessed by the God of truth; and he who swears in the earth will swear by the God of truth ..." The opposite of truth is what God says He hates and God makes this clear in Proverbs 6:16 to 19, **Slide** "16 There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: 17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent

blood, ¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, ¹⁹ a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers. All of these are untruths. Jesus who lived as the only one who never sinned also reflected perfectly the truth of God and because He was God He too was truth. In John we read, ^{14:6}“Jesus said ... **Slide** ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life.’ ^{4:17} Jesus said of Himself, I am **Slide** ‘the Spirit of truth.’ Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, God the Father and Himself, **Slide** ^{15:26} ‘When the Helper (Holy Spirit) comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is the Spirit of truth* who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me.’ **Slide** ^{16:13} ‘But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth...’ Jesus said speaking to God the Father, **Slide** ^{17:17} ‘Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.’ Truth is the very character of God and as children of God we do not deal in the opinions of men. What we deal in is the truth of Christian doctrine. **Blank** I have had other pastors ask me if I will preach the scriptures if the government determines that some of what is written in the Bible is by man’s standards a hate crime? My answer is without hesitation – Yes! For a world that lives in the gray – neither living in light nor total darkness, where truth is relative – we, my beloved, are out of tune with the world, but we are in tune with God the Creator. What happens often when you testify to the saving power of Jesus? Have not all of us had someone say something like, “That is good and fine for you. I am glad it helps you, but, after all, what you are saying about Jesus is only relatively true – Jesus is not the answer for all. What helps you is good and what I find that helps me then is best for me.” I wanted to read to you a passage out of **Slide** C. S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters*. However, after mens group on Saturday morning I went to my office and found they had rekeyed the building and I could not get in. I could not get into my office to get to my books. I love holding books, the smell of books and feeling the pages of books. I guess I struggle

giving myself totally to the electronic age of the digital. But, praise the Lord I was able to go online and find the passage from C. S. Lewis' book that I wanted. In Lewis' book the senior devil named Screwtape gives some basic instruction to a junior demon named Wormwood. I quote, "I note what you say about guiding your patient's reading and taking care that he see a good deal of his materialist friend. But are you not being a trifle naïve? It sounds as if you supposed that argument was the way to keep him out of the Enemy's (God's) clutches. That might have been so if he had lived a few centuries earlier. At that time the humans still knew pretty well when a thing was proved and when it was not; and if it was proved they believed it. They still connected thinking with doing and were prepared to alter their way of life as the result of a chain of reasoning. But what with the weekly press and other such weapons we have largely altered that. Your man has been accustomed, ever since he was a boy, to have a dozen incompatible philosophies dancing about together inside his head. He doesn't think of doctrines as primarily 'true' or 'false,' but as 'academic' or 'practical,' 'outworn' or 'contemporary,' 'conventional' or 'ruthless.' Jargon, not argument, is your best ally in keeping him from the Church." **Blank**

For the most part, I believe this argument is true. In our Bible colleges, seminaries and books of theology the truths of the Bible and Christian doctrine are being presented not so much as true, but as helpful. This watering down the truth of the Word of God or making the scriptures suggestive instead of true is absolutely diabolical and gains what Satan desires, which is to keep a person's focus on anything but the Bible and the one and true God. For me, a person who came out of a cult of false man-made doctrine the truth is vital. When I came to the believing faith in Jesus it was partly because I spent so much time trying to disprove the Bible as I had the Book of Mormon and after months of hard work I came to the only sane conclusion – the Bible is the Word of God and is true – all of it is true. I came to

believe that God's truth is eternal and unchanging. It does not have to be tweaked to be relevant to today's society. That concept that scripture needs to be updated is from the pit of hell itself.

One might ask, "What are these truth?" The easy answer is read the Bible. But let me take time to look at just one example. Here is the true about man, about you and me, and about every person on the face of the earth. We have been hearing for generations now that man is getting better and better, and that given more time man will continue to improve and become right and solve all our problems. Let me ask you how do you think this going? Hear of any wars lately or about people suffering because of the evil of their fellow man? Given enough time things will turn out exactly as they have been turning out since the fall of Adam. Technology has changed, but the heart of man has not. The reason for this is that there is something wrong in the hearts of men. The Bible is clear – it is called sin. The Bible may also call this problem: rebellion, selfishness, pride and a number of other things, but all of these come down to one thing – man is broken and cannot heal himself. Men carry their sin wherever they go. So you see the truth about the problem of mankind is that mankind is the problem. People say, "How can a loving God allow the terrible things to happen in this world?" The answer is that even though God owes nothing to mankind who has rebelled against Him, He loves us deeply. How deeply? Turn in your Bibles to **Slide** Romans, chapter 5. Let me, in closing, read from the Book of Romans.

⁸"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This is clear and amazing, but Paul is not done. He adds depth to verse 8 with what he says in verse 9, "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." Even though this

life is very difficult at times, we have been saved from the final and eternal wrath of God. The next verse goes on to explain that because we are born as sinners we are enemies of God. But Jesus solved this problem. Let me continue in verse 10, “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. Jesus was not the temporary sacrifice that the Israelites offered in the tabernacle. Jesus was the eternal sacrifice and God sees us as holy by Christ’s shed blood. Since Adam, man has been separated from God the Creator and man has been working hard to find God and to make things right with God. But man is incapable of doing this because we are sinners. However, we read what solved this problem in verse 11, “And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.” Jesus brought us back into fellowship with God. There is no other way to be reconciled back to God – it is only through Jesus the Christ! Truth is found in God and His written Word, the Bible and His living Word, Jesus – nowhere else! Amen.