

Sermon Title: The Word Made Flesh

Reference Scripture: John 1:1-14

- The sermon reflects on the significance of John 1:1-14 outside of the Christmas season.
- Explores the symbolism of the evangelists in Christian art and focuses on John as depicted by an eagle.
- Emphasises John's Gospel for its explicit portrayal of Jesus's divinity.
- Examines the order of God, creation, and the importance of viewing and relating to creation incarnationally.
- Discusses the concept of detachment from creation, emphasising its distinction from indifference.
- Illustrates the difference between misusing and properly using creation through materialistic and ascetic perspectives.
- Highlights the paradox that detachment enables a deeper capacity to serve and love others.
- Grounds the spiritual life in recognising our complete dependence on God, encouraging humility, obedience, and loving service.

Discussion Points / Points to Ponder:

1. **Seasonal Significance:** How does the sermon challenge our perception of the seasonal appropriateness of John 1:1-14, and what insights does it offer for the time between Christmas and Easter?
2. **Symbolism in Gospel Representations:** Explore the symbolism of the evangelists in Christian art. Why is John represented as an eagle, and how does this symbolism align with the themes of his Gospel?
3. **Divinity in John's Gospel:** Discuss the explicit portrayal of Jesus's divinity in John's Gospel. How does this aspect contribute to our understanding of the Incarnation?
4. **Detachment from Creation:** What is the sermon's definition of detachment, and how does it differ from indifference? How can we practically cultivate detachment from the material world while maintaining a genuine love for creation?
5. **Misusing vs. Properly Using Creation:** Reflect on the examples of materialistic and ascetic individuals. How does each approach either misuse or properly use creation? What can we learn from these perspectives?
6. **Detachment and Service:** Explore the paradox that detachment allows for a more profound capacity to serve and love others. Share personal experiences or examples that resonate with this concept.
7. **Grounding in Humility and Obedience:** How does recognizing our complete dependence on God contribute to a life of humility and obedience? In what ways can this recognition shape our interactions with others?
8. **Living Out the Spiritual Life:** Consider practical ways to walk in humility, obedience to God's will, and the loving service of Christ in our daily lives. How can we actively apply the truths highlighted by the light of the incarnation?

Alternative Questions

1. Considering that the opening of John's gospel is often associated with Christmas, why do you think the sermon suggests that it holds relevance outside of the Christmas season? How might the themes of the Word becoming flesh be applicable to our lives throughout the year?
2. The sermon mentions that John is often symbolised as an eagle in Christian art. How does this symbolism reflect the content and focus of John's Gospel? How might this influence our understanding of Jesus's divinity in the text?
3. According to the sermon, John emphasises the order of God and creation and warns against making creation our primary attachment. How can we cultivate a healthy detachment from material possessions without being indifferent to the world? How does this relate to John's message in the Gospel?
4. Drawing from the examples of materialistic and ascetic individuals, how does the sermon suggest that one can misuse or properly use creation? How can detachment lead to a more genuine love for creation and service to others?
5. The sermon proposes that detachment enables us to more fully serve and love others. How does this paradoxical idea align with the teachings of Jesus in the Gospel? Can you share personal experiences where detachment has led to a greater capacity for serving others?
6. The basis of the spiritual life, as mentioned in the sermon, is recognizing our complete dependence on God. How does this recognition translate into living a life of humility, obedience to God's will, and loving service to others? How can we practically apply these principles in our daily lives?