

Time for God – Take 2

Purpose: To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service/passage.

Week beginning Sunday 5 January 2020 Word of life

Pray Thank God that he sent Jesus, his Son among us, not just for a brief period at Christmas but to abide with us, to fellowship with us throughout our lives in all the ups and downs. Pray that we might all have a sense of what it means for the “word to dwell among us” to “behold his glory”.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). John 1:1-18 esp 10-18.

Background Christianity was born in Israel among those who were Jewish. As time went on the disciples response to Jesus’ commission to take the good news out into the world led to many people from a gentile background taking an interest. John seeks to address readers with a Greek and philosophical background. He uses the term “word” which was terribly important to them and had a sense of the essence of life, what was at the vital core of their very existence – and he applied it to Jesus trying to bridge the divine and the human in a way that made sense of both. Without getting too het up about this thinking it is important that we recognise the significance of the Son of God becoming one of us and fellowshipping with us in a way that we can know him.

Possible questions/points to consider

1. Jesus wanted to make himself known to all manner of people and John makes strident efforts to reach out to people whose way of thinking was quite different from traditional Judaism. How do we become “all things to every one” without compromising our faith and losing the essence of the gospel? Given that so many people these days have much background of faith and Christianity how should we change our approach to make more sense to them? Can you think of examples of what in the past we might have taken for granted as being pretty well universally understood about Jesus but which can no longer be assumed?
2. Context is everything. We wouldn’t dream of talking the same way to a group of teenagers as we would a group in a nursery class. For decades missionaries have been trained to get to know the culture and practices of the people among whom they will be working. There are many sub-cultures even without our own community. Can you think of a few? How might we need to better understand these before we can hope to make any inroads with our faith? To what extent are we willing to put ourselves about to do this? How can we make sense of our faith among people who have little or know interest/understanding of it?
3. On Sunday we considered how we can be downhearted when Christmas is all past, the visitors are away, the festive food is eaten, the decorations are down and things are rather bare perhaps even depressing. And with the best will in the world we are down from the special celebrations of Jesus’ birth and presence among us. What steps can we take to go forward with the promise that Jesus is Immanuel, God with us – always – not just at Christmas? In “ordinary” times, on dull days and on days when we are under the weather or facing grief or challenge? How do we share and encourage without feeling that we have always to wear our heart on our sleeve?
4. Jesus intended us to enjoy an ongoing relationship with him. It is important that we grasp that he didn’t disappear or become hugely remote and aloof – certainly not that we downgrade our relationship with him until next Christmas? What steps might we take to encourage one another to maintain a fresh and ongoing relationship with Jesus throughout the year? Are there any particular steps that would be appropriate now, at the outset of the year?
5. Do have a think about anything else that might have prompted a thought on Sunday.

Prayer: Lord, thank you that you sent your Son into the world not just for the 12 days of Christmas but for all time. Help us to get over any sense of being downhearted after the high points and celebrations of Jesus’ birth and latch on to the “word made flesh who dwells among us” right the way through the year and throughout our lives. May we behold his glory and have the grace and insight to share it with others. Amen.