

Pleasant Springs Church

WDGW? — *What Does God Want?* • Lesson 4 of 6

Lesson 4 — Jesus -- God With Us

Tuesday, June 23 -- 6:00 PM

After Michael S. Heiser, *What Does God Want?* · Septuagint (LXX) & ESV side-by-side

KEY TEXTS

John 1:1-3, 14 - Luke 1:31-35 - Philippians 2:5-11 - Romans 5:6-11 - Colossians 1:15-20 - Hebrews 2:14-17 - 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

THE BIG IDEA

If God has been pursuing a family from Genesis 1 onward, then the central moment of the story is the one in which God Himself becomes a member of the human family. Not a messenger sent from outside, not an angel deputized, but the eternal Son taking flesh, born of a Jewish virgin, dying a human death, rising in a human body. The incarnation is not a stunt. It is how the family gets rebuilt. **God with us** is the answer to what God wants — because what He wants is us, near Him, forever.

INTRODUCTION

Lesson 3 ended with a single family chosen as the rescue mission for the world. Lesson 4 asks: who is the rescuer? The answer is breathtaking. The rescuer is the eternal Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, the Word through whom all things were made. He does not stay outside the story. He enters it. He becomes one of us. He dies one of our deaths. And He comes out the other side, alive forever, as the firstborn of a new humanity.

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PART ONE

The Word Became Flesh

John 1 - eternity steps into time

John 1 opens with the most audacious sentence in any religious book. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* John is rewriting Genesis 1 with one new claim: the Logos who spoke creation into being is a distinct Person, and is Himself God. By verse 14 that same Logos has put on human flesh and pitched His tabernacle (*eskēnōsen*) among us — the verb deliberately echoing the Tabernacle in Exodus, where God's glory dwelt at the center of His people's camp.

The incarnation is not God appearing to look human. It is God taking *real* human nature into Himself, without ceasing to be God. The early church wrestled with this for four centuries before settling the language at Chalcedon (A.D. 451): one Person in two natures, truly God and truly human, the natures distinct but never separated.

KEY INSIGHT

eskēnōsen. John 1:14 says the Word “dwelt” among us. The Greek verb is *eskēnōsen* — “tabernacled.” Anyone who knew the LXX heard it instantly: the Tabernacle in the wilderness, the place where God's presence rested in the middle of His family. Now the tent is a Person. The Presence is a Galilean man.

John 1:1-3, 14 - The Word Became Flesh

Greek New Testament

¹Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος, καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος.

³πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν.

¹⁴καὶ ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν.

English Standard Version

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

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PART TWO

Born of a Virgin

Luke 1 - the new Adam comes through a new Eve's yes

Mary's *fiat* — “let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38) — is the human reversal of Eve's grasp. Where Eve reached out her hand, Mary opens hers in trust. The Holy Spirit overshadows her, and the child born is called *holy* — *the Son of God*. This is the language of the Tabernacle (Ex. 40:35) and of the divine council (Job 1:6) at once: God's glory and God's Son.

The virgin conception is not a fairy-tale flourish. It is a theological necessity. The new Adam cannot inherit the old Adam's broken line. He has to come from above, but be born from a woman, so that the family He rebuilds is really human. He has to be from us, and not *only* from us, at the same time.

Luke 1:31-35 - The Child Will Be Called Son of God

Greek New Testament

³¹καὶ ἰδοὺ συλλήψῃ ἐν γαστρὶ καὶ τέξῃ υἰόν, καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν.

³⁵πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι· διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς Θεοῦ.

English Standard Version

³¹“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

³⁵The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son of God.”

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PART THREE

He Emptied Himself

Philippians 2 - the divine descent

Paul cites what looks like an early Christian hymn in Philippians 2: the One who was “in the form of God” (*en morphē Theou*) did not grasp at equality with God as something to be hoarded, but emptied Himself (*heauton ekēnōsen*), taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. He humbled Himself to death — even death on a cross.

Read this against Genesis 3, where Adam tried to grasp at being like God. The Son of God does the opposite. He *refuses* to grasp. He lets go. He takes the lowest place in the family He came to rescue. And because of that descent, the Father exalts Him to the highest place, that every knee in heaven, on earth, and under the earth might bow.

KEY INSIGHT

The Adam contrast. Adam grasped at being like God and lost everything. Jesus refused to grasp at His equality with God and won everything — for us. The shape of salvation is the shape of the incarnation: descent before ascent. If you want to find your life, lose it in His.

Philippians 2:6-11 - The Christ Hymn

Greek New Testament

⁶ὃς ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ,

⁷ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος...

⁸ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ.

⁹Διὸ καὶ ὁ Θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν...

English Standard Version

⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him...

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PART FOUR

The Cross -- the Family Bought Back

Romans 5 and Hebrews 2 - what the death of Jesus accomplished

If lesson 2 named what went wrong, the cross is what makes it right. Paul summarizes the gospel in Romans 5 in some of the warmest words in Scripture: *while we were still weak... while we were still sinners... while we were enemies... God shows his love for us in that Christ died for us.* The cross is not God lashing out at Jesus. The cross is the Triune God absorbing in Himself the cost of bringing the family home.

Hebrews 2 names a second purpose. Jesus took flesh and blood so that *through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death — that is, the devil.* The cross is the place where the second rebellion (lesson 2) is judged: the principalities and powers are stripped, publicly disgraced, and led in Christ's triumphal procession (Col. 2:15).

KEY INSIGHT

Romans 5:8. The most important word in the verse is *while*. God did not wait until we cleaned up to die for us. He died *while* we were still ruined. There is no version of you that has to qualify for this love. There is only the version of you that has to receive it.

Romans 5:6-8 - While We Were Still Sinners

Greek New Testament

⁶ἔτι γὰρ Χριστὸς ὄντων ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν ἔτι κατὰ καιρὸν ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν ἀπέθανεν...

⁸συνίστησι δὲ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀγάπην εἰς ἡμᾶς ὁ Θεὸς ὅτι ἔτι ἀμαρτωλῶν ὄντων ἡμῶν Χριστὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀπέθανεν.

English Standard Version

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

⁸but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

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Hebrews 2:14-15 - That He Might Destroy the One Who Holds Death

Greek New Testament

¹⁴ Ἐπεὶ οὖν τὰ παιδιά κεκοινώνηκε σαρκὸς καὶ αἵματος, καὶ αὐτὸς παραπλησίως μετέσχε τῶν αὐτῶν, ἵνα διὰ τοῦ θανάτου καταργήσῃ τὸν τὸ κράτος ἔχοντα τοῦ θανάτου, τοῦτέστι τὸν διάβολον.

English Standard Version

¹⁴Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.

¹⁵and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

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PART FIVE

The Resurrection -- the Firstborn of a New Family

1 Corinthians 15 - the family's first morning

Paul calls the resurrection of Jesus the *aparchē* — the “firstfruits” (1 Cor. 15:20). In the Torah, the first sheaf of the barley harvest is brought to the priest as a pledge that the whole field is coming. Jesus' resurrection body is the first sheaf of the new humanity. The rest of the field — us — will follow.

This is why Paul lists the witnesses (1 Cor. 15:5–8). It is not mythology. It is history. Cephas, the Twelve, more than five hundred at once (*most of whom are still alive*, Paul says, as if to invite anyone to go ask), James, all the apostles, and last of all to Paul himself. The family has a Risen Head. Death is no longer the last word for anyone joined to Him.

KEY INSIGHT

Without the resurrection there is no gospel. Paul will say it plainly in 1 Cor. 15:17: if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. The Cross without the empty tomb is a tragedy. The Cross with the empty tomb is the founding of a new humanity.

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 - The Gospel Paul Received

Greek New Testament

³παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφάς,

⁴καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη, καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς,

⁶ἔπειτα ὤφθη ἐπάνω πεντακοσίοις ἀδελφοῖς ἐφάπαξ.

English Standard Version

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,

⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...

⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive.

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DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

1. John 1:14 says the Word “tabernacled” among us. Why is that vocabulary important? What does it claim about Jesus?
2. Mary's *fiat* — “let it be to me” — reverses Eve's grasp. Where in your own life are you grasping when you should be receiving?
3. Philippians 2 says Jesus did not *grasp* at equality with God but emptied Himself. What does that say about the shape of true greatness?
4. Romans 5:8 says “while we were still sinners” Christ died for us. Why is the timing of God's love so important?
5. Hebrews 2:14 says Jesus took flesh and blood to destroy the one who holds the power of death. How does Jesus' victory over the devil reframe your fears?
6. Paul calls the resurrection of Jesus the “firstfruits” (1 Cor. 15:20). What does the metaphor mean for what is coming for those who belong to Him?
7. If God Himself entered our family in order to save it, what does that say about what God wants?

A PRAYER IN RESPONSE

*Lord Jesus Christ, eternal Word of the Father, you did not stay outside our story. You took our flesh, walked our roads, bore our sins, and rose with our nature glorified at the right hand of the Father. Thank you for not despising the womb of a virgin or the wood of a cross. Thank you for being God-with-us so that we could be people-with-God. Bring every member of our family into your family, and keep us until we see you face to face. **Amen.***

SOURCES & FURTHER READING

- Michael S. Heiser, *What Does God Want?* Blind Spot Press, 2018.

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- Septuagint Greek text: Rahlfs-Hanhart, *Septuaginta* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft).
- English text: *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Crossway Bibles.