

## SERMON

John 1:14-18

We have Seen his Glory

Nunawading and Waverley, 2-1-22

Dear friends in Christ,

If I put a mask on my face, you will not see me as I am. We are used to thinking of God's Son in this way. **The Word became flesh and dwelt among us** gives us the idea that the flesh of Jesus was like a filter held up to the Sun. Some light came through, a greyish sort, but the full brilliance was neutralized by his humanity. The glory of God, then, is ahead of us and won't be revealed until the resurrection, when we can see him face to face. All this is true and yet John and the other eye-witnesses of Jesus were quite clear that they had **seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only from the Father.**

Of course, they did not mean the undiluted glory of the Father who **dwells in unapproachable light.** The Testaments stated that in his naked form, God is **a consuming fire.** His majesty would be too much for mortal eyes. What the disciples meant was that the character of God was made clear in Jesus and even some of his power but not his full dazzling brilliance. Some of that glorious light and beauty were there on the mountain when Jesus was transfigured but for the most part, his flesh covered it up. What excited the early disciples was that Jesus was able to reveal the heart and mind of God, and could do so easily because he was from his side or **his bosom.**

There are many exceptional individuals. You might have been in the presence of a truly funny person. At high school, I remember a 200m and 400m specialist running so fast the rest of the field looked like they were stationary. The presence of a really brilliant person or a figure like Desmond Tutu makes us feel like very ordinary people. However, they all have feet of clay and their at-home version can be a let-down. They have weaknesses as we all do. God warned us about this, about **trusting in princes** and in the strength of men and women.

The fact is that we do hope for better from each other in our community but then are disappointed by an off-hand remark, or a

shady deal, a poorly executed job or the person is unavailable to assist means that the Lord is steering our eyes towards Jesus. And yet, over and over again the world is looking for a hero, a leader, someone true and authentic and always being disappointed. Our Father has created us this way for a good reason, so that we would seek him and find that he is our true Saviour.

We can join the disciples of Jesus and say, **we have seen his glory.** Real glory that you cannot find anywhere else in this universe can be found in the person of Jesus. I guess we should try harder to search for it but it certainly is there and can be found by us. It is proclaimed in the word and as we move deeper into it, more of that glory is revealed. We discover exactly what John spoke about, that Jesus is **full of grace and truth.** This is the same as him saying: **All of us have received from his fullness, grace upon grace.** Then, the Apostle repeats a second time: **The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.** What our Lord Jesus managed to do was to show us the core of God himself; his very heart. John was saying that whenever anyone encountered Jesus, they discovered in him the fullness of God's love, the fullness of his mercy, the fullness of forgiveness, the fullness of his wisdom and just, and fullness of God's word; these things are called **grace and truth** here.

Everything in life will move towards dissolution; our energy flags, our lives soon reach their end, earthly resources run out, the Sun will use its hydrogen, space will relentlessly head to near absolute zero degrees. What if you met someone from whom you could draw kindness and mercy so that the more you took of his forgiveness and love, the greater that kindness and mercy grew? And that is how it was with Jesus. People could come in droves for healing but they never exhausted Jesus' compassion. The more dreadful a person had lived, the greater was his acceptance and divine forgiveness.

His enemies amongst the chief priests sent legal experts; there were deputations from King Herod, Pharisees and Sadducees but though harassed and persecuted he never changed his message or softened it. He never lied or took advantage of a situation, and not once displayed a personal fault or ethical transgression. What separates Jesus from every other human being are these words: **fullness, grace and truth.** He has truth that grows, grows deeper in insight

and revelation until we see the outline of God and his beating centre for us. We see his grace that grows wider, embraces when it should reject, heals when it should curse, and covers over when it should expose. We protect our time and what we can offer; Jesus' is so full he can give himself completely up to death for us and yet grow stronger and more full of life than ever. We know this to be true and, therefore, we can say, **we have seen his glory.**

Let us praise God for his glory in Christ.