

The JESUS we never knew x50. Sunday 10 December_2017.

(PP1). (Read: JOHN 1: 1 - 18.)

Our AIM for this year and this theme is for each of us individually and all of us together to become better friends with JESUS. (This is not presumptuous since Jesus himself has said “*I call you friends*” *John 15: 15* – Christian disciples are those who *love and obey Jesus*). That is the real Jesus – not the Jesus of sentiment or others invention. (Which is depicted so much at Christmas with certain cards and films – lots of schmaltz often). Aim to know both the historical Jesus and to know Jesus experientially now.

It is the clear understanding of Christians that we encounter God **in the person of Jesus Christ**. (As revealed in Scripture and in person).

Here is what John in his Gospel prologue records Jesus is: the eternal LOGOS (word) who becomes a human being (v14). In a scripture which greatly resembles the Genesis of the OT John is eager to talk about what happened *IN THE BEGINNING*. He takes us back therefore both to the very beginning of time when the LOGOS was active with the Father God and Spirit in creation and also the moment in time when the LOGOS comes to redeem all of the broken creation and to begin making everything new. The very source of light (v4) comes as the bringer of “light to humanity” who has been living in the dark. “LOGOS” means not just the word that God has spoken but also the very ideas and thoughts behind God’s Word.

(V10) - The world did NOT recognize the eternal light for who and what he is. Not all welcomed the light but some did receive the light as the person Jesus of Nazareth

When we thought about encountering Jesus and focused on *2 Corinthians 3: 18* we said **God’s GLORY** (according to Paul) is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. God represents his image to the world in the face of Jesus Christ. Jesus made God known to the world – he is the revelation of what God is like. The shekinah GLORY – means the visible presence of God and so here John declares that Jesus is God’s glory or visible presence.

In John’s prologue in v16 he declares Jesus to be the blessing of God – one blessing after another comes in Jesus. This Jesus, this blessing of God is FULLNESS of GRACE and TRUTH in combination – not a half or partial measure – but FULLNESS. Jesus is FULL (v14) of grace AND truth. Both not one or the other. (V17 It is memorable indeed that God gave the LAW through Moses their great patriarch and hero but of greater note is that grace and truth came through Jesus the Christ). There is more to sing about, write about, and tell about in every way about JESUS!!!!

For those who have discovered the LIGHT there is a totally different orientation to our lives and topic for our speech. Light is not a peripheral issue. The light draws us, calls us to live in its ambience. (Live in its character and quality). Light is defined as and visibly seen “full of grace and truth” – in the person of Jesus. John and others have physically seen Jesus – theasthai. Jesus he says is from God and yet in the line of

Moses: the word of God became a human being. For the Greeks this was unthinkable since the material body was considered evil (not so in Jewish and Christian tradition).

Verse 14 is an amazing statement: *William Barclay wonders if this is not the greatest single verse in the whole of the NT. (p66 The Daily Study Bible).*

Jesus did not come just to speak about God like a great teacher or even a prophet but to SHOW US God's glory in visible presence – the God who is full of grace and truth. God in Jesus does not have a small measure of grace and truth – God fills up Jesus materially with grace and truth. They are overflowing.

FULL of GRACE and TRUTH:

Grace has 2 basic ideas within it. – Something that is totally undeserved and can't be earned or achieved. Grace emphasizes our poverty and the limitless kindness of God's love. It also conveys beauty and loveliness of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Truth John is always concerned about truth. Jesus declared himself the truth (14:6). He embodied truth. Jesus also communicated truth that brings human beings into the freedom that embracing truth brings. (8:32)

The **COMBINATION of BOTH of these is important**. God is not a despot – God both loves us when we don't deserve it but also embodies and communicates truth and calls us to live in both grace and truth.

JESUS overflows grace and truth so that we can drink of and experience his loving kindness even though we do not deserve it and we can drink of his truth through his words and his presence. Grace and truth can spiritually and materially fill US.

The truth is not always easy to receive as you know....It is often resented and we don't like to be exposed as humans. The lies we tell ourselves and the half truths about our motives are painful sometimes to hear from Jesus. They can cause us shame and we want to turn away, even run away from God who is truth. We want to hide in the darkness of denial about ourselves.

BUT God's GRACE is able to make us want to hear truth and to be free. God's patient love and kindness, God's promise of forgiveness and cleansing in Jesus and a new start everyday – make us rejoice. It is the combination of grace and love in Jesus that draws us. And he is full of both truth and grace – he is overflowing and can teach us to drink of him. (Many times this Christmas you will be offered a drink – maybe of coffee or tea, maybe of mulled wine or a Baileys or a whisky Mack. BUT what a shame to miss out on a daily dram of God's grace and truth.

The Jesus we never knew x50 Sunday 10 December_2017. **Jesus full of grace and truth**

Timothy Keller — 'Love *without truth* is sentimentality; it supports and affirms us but keeps us in denial about our flaws. Truth without love is harshness; it gives us information but in such a way that we cannot really hear it. God's saving love in Christ, however, is marked by both radical truthfulness about who we are and yet also radical, unconditional commitment to us. The merciful commitment strengthens us to see the truth about ourselves and repent. The conviction and repentance moves us to cling to and rest in God's mercy and grace.'

Warren Wiersbe — '*Truth without love* is brutality, and *love without truth* is hypocrisy.'

Truth without grace crushes people and ceases to be *truth*. *Grace without truth* deceives people and ceases to be *grace*. Reference: *The Grace and Truth Paradox*, 2003, Used by Permission from **Eternal Perspective Ministries**, www.epm.org

Jesus became a human being and showed us God's glory. He is full of grace and truth.