

**Sermon Study Guide Based on
Pastor Glen Weber's Message of December 7, 2008
"Jesus, the Carpenter"**

[During this time of Advent, we need to focus on Jesus “becoming flesh” and how that impacts our relationship with him.]

[Topics: Incarnation, Humanity of Christ, Carpenter, Our Relationship to Jesus]

Excerpt: Today we want to talk about how do we relate to Jesus on a personal level if he’s this awesome being sitting at the right hand of the Father. People tend to view Jesus as untouchable just like they view the Father. Was Jesus really fully human? And how does that impact how we think about him?

Today we’re going to talk about Jesus’ humanity. And what that looked like and how it impacts each and every one of us. You know by the end of the first century, people were teaching that Jesus wasn’t really God in flesh. And so John had to address who Jesus was.

Let’s notice this in **1 John 4:2-3. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God** – John is asking them to analyze what people are saying. And if they say that Jesus didn’t come in the flesh, you need to realize they didn’t come from God.

3) but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. It’s a spirit that tries to devalue Jesus Christ and who he is. People today say the same thing – Jesus was just a prophet or others are saying Jesus didn’t even exist.

Before and during the time of Christ, a philosophy developed called Gnosticism, which basically promoted the idea that flesh was not good, that flesh was evil. This is from the Catholic Encyclopedia:

A collective name for a large number of greatly-varying and pantheistic-idealistic sects, which flourished from some time before the Christian Era down to the fifth century, and which, while borrowing the phraseology and some of the tenets of the chief religions of the day, and especially of Christianity, held matter to be a deterioration of spirit, and the whole universe a depravation of the Deity, and taught the ultimate end of all being to be the overcoming of the grossness of matter and the return to the Parent-Spirit, which return they held to be inaugurated and facilitated by the appearance of some God-sent Saviour.

So to put this in plain language, the concept is that all matter is a fallen lesser type of being. There is this wonderful spirit and then this horrible matter. The idea is that at death, we leave matter and flesh behind and become spirit. The same concept is with us today. Many people today will say of someone who died, “That person is an angel now”!

This is the dualistic philosophy that flesh is evil and spirit is good and never the twain shall meet. Docetism, Manichianism, and Arianism are different versions of that whole same concept that flesh is somehow bad. And many of us today think the same thing – that our flesh is bad.

But the flesh isn't bad – our problem is the mind and our nature, which causes the flesh to go the wrong way. It's not the flesh of itself that's the problem. Is matter or flesh some gross thing that must be avoided? Is it true that the sooner we get out of the flesh the better? What does God say?

Gen. 1:26, Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And then told them to go out and multiply and fill the earth. The reason God said that is that he would have a whole bunch of people who were in his likeness and image.

31) God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning – the sixth day. So God created matter and flesh and said it was very good; it was beautiful; it was wonderful. Now sadly we know that Adam and Eve went astray. They chose to reject God and decide for themselves what was good.

But it wasn't the flesh that was the problem; it was the mind. It was the decision making process. Now, of course, the flesh had a part in it because Eve looked at the tree and said that it looked good. That was her flesh talking but it was the deception in her mind that caused her to sin. And Adam comes along and decides he wants to follow Eve. So he knew the choice he was going to make.

So we as humans turned away from God at that point. But the source of the problem is not the flesh. Now Jesus was born flesh. He was born human. If flesh were irreparably bad, Jesus wouldn't have taken on flesh. Jesus became flesh, but he had the heart and mind of God, so he could control the flesh and human thoughts.

Jesus spent 30 years living in the flesh with God's help. Jesus was participating in life. However, we kind of believe that Jesus was this super human that never cried that he never got hurt as a child like stubbing his toe or falling off a log. We got this picture of him that he was enveloped in a bubble and went around life in a perfect condition where he never cried, where he never suffered discomfort.

That picture is incorrect – Jesus was one of us. He went through life like we do. He enjoyed being in the flesh. And he still does. That's why he chose to remain flesh sitting at the right hand of God. It wasn't that Jesus couldn't wait to get rid of his flesh. We need to think about that.

Jesus experienced life like we do. And he wants us to fully experience being human. Jesus isn't embarrassed by humans. He loves being human. He loves you being human. He loves experiencing humanity through you because he's in you and you are in him. And he enjoys you being human. Now he wants you to be a godly human, so he came to help

change you. But he wants Christians to fully live life and to experience all that God has for them. Sometimes we tend to think that to be spiritual we have to give up all that stuff of life. How many of you gave up hobbies when you became a Christian, because they were perceived as carnal and a waste of time? And that there were better things you should spend you time on.

Now that's how Jesus expresses his creativity. It's through us. And as Jesus lives in us, he wants our teen ages to understand not to go and do sin, but there's a lot of stuff you can do that is life. God wants us to live life to the full and enjoy it. He wants all of us to participate in sports, hobbies, music etc. and when we do that God expresses his creativity through us. And by doing that, you can be all God wants you to be. So the question is, how do we let Jesus express himself in those things?

Now in **Matt. 13:55**, we read, "**Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?**"

Mark 6:3 says, "**Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?**"

Yes, Jesus was a carpenter out working with his father in society, being a part of life. When Jesus was a child in Nazareth, carpentry was very common. You see, the next village down the road was Sepphoris, which had burned to the ground. So they were rebuilding this village. That means Jesus was involved in building a lot of buildings.

Jesus was probably involved in masonry because most of the buildings were made of stone. And then they had the wood door and window frames. Now in Israel at that time, everyone, especially the Caesars, named a building after themselves that they built or had build. Except Jesus. We have nothing named the "Jesus building" because Jesus was humble.

Justin Martyr wrote, "Jesus was a maker of plows and yokes." So it's not such a surprise that Jesus asked us to "take up his yoke"? He was very familiar with yokes, because he made them with his hands. Jesus wasn't afraid to be a part of life. Yes, Jesus was God in the flesh and he came to enjoy this physical life. Jesus wants us and our children and teens to enjoy life because this physical life is valuable.

Jesus did all kinds of physical things in his life. He made wine. He made bread and fish to feed 5000 people. He was always picking up physical things and working with them. He was always using physical things such as water, a fig tree, coins, mud etc to teach spiritual lessons. He even picked up children and taught lessons about the kingdom. Now if physical things were evil, Jesus would have said to stay away from these things and not to touch them.

This earth and every thing in it was Jesus' creation; that's what shows who he is. And now God expresses himself and his creativity through each one of us today. Pastor Glen then showed slides and items on display in front of the stage that represented the creativity of many of our members. This shows God loves what we do. We also express who he is through our creative talents.

And God wants us to use these talents to connect with other people. We can teach young boys and girls various skills that we've developed because of our hobbies. We can use this as a connection point to build relationships. Our denomination has been emphasizing the past few years that we need to learn to plant, cultivate and reap. One of the ways we can cultivate is by building a relationship by some of the things we do and inviting others to be a part of that.

We need to let the creativity of Jesus flow out of us to them. And then after awhile, you can plant a seed and tell them that it's Jesus that gives you these gifts. And hopefully out of this seed will germinate a crop, which can be harvested. Too many think that the only connection point is the Bible. Use whatever you like to do as a connection point.

It's not only that Jesus came to shed his blood for us, but he also came to live in the flesh so he could fully experience flesh as Hebrews tells us. **Heb. 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil –** we need to focus on the first part of this verse and not just the last. Jesus shared in our humanity! He wants us to enjoy life. Pastor Glen shared a story about he and his wife went skiing with his son and future daughter-in-law on Mt. Hood last year while it was snowing. It was so enjoyable that Glen said to himself, that this has got to be heaven. We need to enjoy these moments, because Jesus enjoys those moments with us as well.

15) and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. 16) For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. God doesn't help angels. They are helping to serve him and are to help us.

17) For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18) Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. So Jesus goes through this physical life with us. And that includes the difficult times, the challenging times.

Now Dr. Roger Newell, George Fox University near Portland writes about Apollinarianism, which is a theology that devalues the humanity of Christ. Dr. Newell points out that it's very important that we focus on the fleshly Jesus – living and suffering with us.

If Jesus is looking through my eyes when I'm skiing, what do you think he's doing when I'm going through temptation? He's looking through my eyes and saying – don't go there. He's giving me the power to turn away. But I could ignore him. When you or I am going through a trial, he experiences that pain with us when we're experiencing that pain. Jesus is in our physical life – during the good times and bad. He's in our marriage; he's in our relationship with your children. He's in all of these things.

But he also realizes we suffer, and he's also in that. Jesus is not far off somewhere. He's residing in you and me. When we are having a difficult time or experiencing the death of a spouse or child, he's there right there connecting with you. He's praying for you. He's reaching out to help you.

Now in **Luke 22:19** , it says, **And he(Jesus) took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."** Jesus did this to give us that connection point with himself and to the Father. He's saying – I'm suffering for you; I'm broken for you.

20) In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. And so Jesus sent us a ceremony to help us remember that he was flesh. He experienced flesh with us. And he still does and by some miraculous way, he still meets us at this table.

And we partake of the bread of his broken body and the cup of his shed blood. And we're reminded of that as we come to the table and partake of the elements. When we come, please remember that Jesus was truly flesh and he's still connecting to us.

Key Scripture: Matthew 13:55, " Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?"

General Group Question: What is it important for us to know and understand that Jesus has come in the flesh?

Additional questions for the entire group or in groups of two or three of the same gender (15-20 minutes). If appropriate, please pray for each other's needs afterwards.

1. Is flesh itself inherently evil or is there another aspect that causes us to sin? What caused Adam and Eve to sin?
2. If flesh were irreparably bad, would Jesus have become God in the flesh?
3. Did Jesus experience all the emotions that we experience while living in the flesh or was he immune to them? Briefly explain.
4. Do you think that Jesus enjoyed or detested living in the flesh? Briefly explain.
5. As Christians, does Jesus want us to live life to the full and enjoy things or does he want us to deny ourselves and live restricted lives? Briefly explain why or why not.
6. What is the nature of Jesus today seated at the right hand of the Father? And why is this so important to us?
7. Does Jesus go through this physical life with us including our good times and our difficult times? If so, how is this possible and what should be our response?