



John 1:1-18 - Hope enters

Start by discussing whether you think the church (in general) adapts well to the changes in society. Why or why not?

As we start to look to the future at Latechurch and the Village Church, it's important for us to understand why we're doing the hard things we're doing, and what we're going to be on about as we do them. And there's no better place to be reminded of this than John 1.

1. In the first few verses, John deliberately takes us back to Genesis 1:1. Describe what John says about the character and nature of the Word from verses 1-4.

These first couple of verses of John seem strange to us. John gives us a very dynamic picture of the Word. In one sense it's separate from God and in another sense it's one with him. God's word actually makes things happen... God's word is a powerful force. God's word is almost... personal. Take a look at these Old Testament ideas:

Psalm 33:6 – By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.

Isaiah 55:11 – So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

It's interesting to note that in the early translations of the Jewish Scriptures (our Old Testament) into other languages, the Jewish people sometimes replaced God's name with alternatives, including 'the Word'. As one example, a translation of Exodus 19:17 reads:

Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet the Word of God.

From all of this we can see, to say that the Word was with God and the Word was God is perhaps not as strange as we first think. (Or, at least, it may be strange to us, but may not have been so strange to John's first readers.)

2. So knowing what the Word is like, what does John tell us He did in verses 14,¹ 16-18?

3. Now things aren't all roses and puppy dogs. What is "the darkness" spoken about in verse 5? (You might want to have a look at Genesis 1:1-3 but also John 3:19, 8:12, 12:46).

4. Just to confuse us, there's another guy named John. What is John the baptists role? (Verses 6-9) And what does this look like? (Verse 15)²

¹ The word "dwelling" in verse 14 is literally the word "tabernacling" - the same idea as when God lived among Israel in a tent when they were wandering around the desert before going into the promised land. This time though, God was clothed in flesh not drapes.

² Considering John was older than Jesus (Luke 1:24, 26) and began his ministry before Jesus did (Luke 3:1-20) this was a big statement for him to make.

5. So even though John forewarned the world about the Word coming, what kind of response did the Word receive when He arrived? (Verses 10-11)

6. As if there aren't enough things in this passage to blow our mind, we come to verses 12 & 13 - the reason for the Word becoming flesh, God becoming man. But before you note down and discuss these verses, let's just summarise what John has said so we see the amazing events that led to this possibility:

- Jesus, who is God, created the world.
- He entered and became like His own creation, so they would know what He was like.
- And even though the life they had was given to them by Him.
- When he came to his own creation...they rejected Him.
- (Fill in the finale in verses 12-13)...And yet...

What John is saying here is truly mind blowing. God entered into his creation, allowed them to mock and kill Him, all so they would have the chance of becoming one of His children. It would be ludicrous if it wasn't true. But it is, and we need to stop and be thankful for all that we are because of all that he did.

Now when this comes to who we are and what we do as God's people, we have no better model. We see here compassion, mercy, love, forgiveness, grace and truth - towards people who didn't deserve it. And no matter where you stand with Jesus, you still fall into that category - people who didn't deserve it.

But we can now also fall into another category. People who have been given the opportunity to become children of God. And if Jesus is our model, what does it look like to walk in the footsteps of our God and saviour, so that those in darkness have the same opportunity that we've had - to become children of God?

7. What does Jesus becoming part of his creation model for us as we deal with our friends, colleagues and the people in our community? (i.e. how we adapt, how we love them, what it should point to etc.)

8. What is the end point we want to be aiming towards in all our relationships? How are we going to achieve that?

9. How can we as God's people, saved by Jesus, help each other, support each other and keep each other accountable for these things?