

V.O.C. – September 2017

September 17, 2017: The Word of God – a word of flesh

Dear Listeners,

In the past two weeks I have taken you along to that most wonderful account of the gospel, the 4th gospel, written by John. It is the gospel of the glory of God who has revealed Himself in His Son, Jesus Christ. We have seen Him as the Word of God through whom the Father created all things. He was in the beginning and all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. He was in the beginning with God and He was God. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. Hence we looked at Him as the Word of God, and we saw in Him a word of life and a word of light. Then today we hear John say, “And 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.”

The Word became flesh, John writes. Remember, dear listeners, that this is the Word that was in the beginning, the Word that was with God, and the Word that was God. That Word, John says, became flesh. In other words, God came in the flesh; the Son of God came in the flesh. He is the life and He is the light of God! The living Word, and the Word that makes alive, in Him is communion with the Father again! To us, the word is a means of communication; we speak with one another, using the word. Due to the fall into sin, this communion and communication with God was broken. God, however, wants to restore this communion and communication and, as we have seen, God did so by speaking to Adam. Also after the fall into sin, God spoke to Adam again, and His Word was a word of life, a life-giving word, when He promised that the seed of the woman would be born to crush the head of the serpent, of the devil. Now John tells us that the moment had come that this Word of God was fulfilled, that He came to restore life and light, restore communion and communication. He came into the flesh for it!

“The Word became flesh,” John says, and this means that God the Son, the Word from the beginning, became man, came into the flesh. What that means? Well, the word ‘flesh’ denotes man in his state of weakness, his state that was affected by sin, a mortal man, a man in a life of sickness, ailments, trouble, and a constant death. God the Son, in short, came into our life as we experience it in all its brokenness. That’s how the Son of God, Jesus Christ, came into this world, our world. He who was the Creator and who was from eternity, uncreated, He became a creature like us. In Romans 8: 3 Paul writes, “By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, God condemned sin in the flesh.” That’s a very strong expression. No, then Paul doesn’t mean to say that Jesus, the Son of God, became a sinner; rather, He came into our weak and troubled nature and flesh, this broken life, so completely and totally that He became one with us, except for sin. Incredible! Yet, it is true, though we cannot fathom it!

Why did the Son of God do this, dear listener, and why did the Father send Him to become man in the flesh, like us? Because God wanted to restore the communion with man; He wanted to lift us up out of this mortal and broken life, and make us immortal

and give us a new life in communion with God! God had to come to us for that purpose, because we would never be able to come to God as a new man. There is only one way of salvation: in the one name of Jesus, in the one way of Jesus, who came from God in order to lead us back to God. Hence, today too, there is only one way from us to God: the way of the Word, the way of the Son of God, in whom God speaks to us. It came from heaven to the earth in order to bring our flesh from the earth to heaven! And that's how it is today, indeed: after Christ completed His work, restoring us to God, He ascended into heaven, taking our flesh into heaven! We have it there as a pledge, a deposit, and as an assurance that He will bring us into the communion with God the Father as well, so that we can live again in the presence of God, in the flesh, in the new Paradise of God! It was for that purpose that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us!

The communion with God, dear listeners, and God's dwelling with us, has changed a lot thanks to Christ's coming to us in the flesh and "dwelling among us." God with us, He was called as well. In the OT God dwelt among His people Israel in a tabernacle at first, in a temple later on. They were separated, however, by the veil, which would hide God from His people. Once a year, the High Priest entered the Holy of Holiest with the blood of animals; to make atonement for the sins of His people. With the coming of Jesus in the flesh, this separation was undone, had changed: God among us, Immanuel, when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us! He came to be with us, live among us, walk in our streets, right in the midst of this world and life that was broken and affected by sin! He spoke to us, the Word, the Son of God, and made known to us the Father. He spoke the Word of salvation; He came to bring us salvation, the deliverance from sin and death, and the forgiveness of our sins! That's also how He showed us His glory: in His grace and mercy, in His wonders and miracles, and in His saving death!

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," this also means, literally, dear listener, God *tabernacled* among us! John uses this unique expression to indicate that the kind of communion with God in a tabernacle or temple was coming to an end. God Himself was the tabernacle in His Son, Jesus Christ, dwelling among us in a man of flesh and blood. The blood of animals that was being shed in the sacrifices and offerings in the temple could not make atonement for our sins; God sent His Son to dwell among us in the flesh so that He could be the sacrifice of flesh and blood, taking our place and making atonement once for all! It was the only way in which atonement could be made, satisfying the justice and truth of God. That's why He came, and was like us in all things!

Does He ever know our life, dear listener! He knows all about it, about your and my life! He was a baby, a toddler, an adolescent, and therefore knows what we experience at every stage of life! He knows our struggle with sin and temptation, our fight against the powers of the flesh, the devil, and the world! He knows the life of the adults, even though He didn't get old; yet, He knew what the decline of the body entailed, tiredness, pain, trouble, you name it! In it all He bore our sickness and pains, our griefs and sorrows, our afflictions and ailments! Yet, He did so in order to deliver us from it, to save us from our sins! Indeed, He was and is the Word of God who came into the flesh for

that purpose; hence this Word of God also is a word of flesh, that it may comfort you! He knows you, He knows your needs, and He knows what it took to reconcile you to God! And so He did, by coming into the flesh, and He promised to be with us till the end of the age! Believe this gospel, dear listener, and you will be saved!