



# One Page Sermon

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#### Fourth Sunday of Advent: Do with Love (John 1:1-18)

“In the beginning...” Many people recognize this as the first words of the Bible. These are the famous first lines of God’s creating action in the world. Genesis 1:3-4 continues: “Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.”

Fewer may remember that the words, “In the beginning...” also start the Gospel of John. The fourth gospel starts: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... What came into being through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn’t extinguish the light.”

Many call the first 18 verses of The Gospel of John the “Prologue.” More accurately, this opening section of John should be thought of as the lens. It is the lens through which the entire Gospel should be read. Starting on January 2, we are going to remain in the Gospel of John through Easter. We will have many weeks to dig into the most mystical and mysterious of the four stories of Jesus’ life. Throughout these weeks I will be going back to the ideas that were introduced in these 18 verses. Themes of choosing between light and dark, life and death, abiding with God and Jesus, and sight are four important themes that will keep popping up.]

The most important theme of this passage however, is found in verse 14 “The Word became flesh and made his home among us.”

The Word of God was a part of creation. In Genesis, God created by speaking words. God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. The Word of God was a part of the creative process. The Word—or in Greek, the *logos*—was an important concept. *Logos* was connected deeply to the Hebrew concept of *sophia* (wisdom). The wisdom of God is found in books like the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes. The *sophia* and the *logos* were similar concepts described in different languages. They were the essence of God, but applied to practically in the world. Studying the *sophia* or *logos* of God is the way to live with God in the world. Given all of this as background, John makes an incredible claim in verse 14.

The Word of God was made flesh in Christ and it is in his life that God is revealed. “The *logos* became flesh and made his home among us” describes what happened—not just at Christmas—but in the life, ministry, teachings, signs, suffering,



death, and resurrection of Jesus. To know Christ is to know God. To love Christ is to have life. Later in the story, Jesus gives us a command: To love me you must love one another. This is the Gospel of John in a nutshell: To know God you must know Christ. Knowing Christ is shown by loving one another.

Everything that follows: the story of Jesus and Nicodemus in the night, his conversation with a woman at the well, turning water into wine at a wedding, raising Lazarus from the dead, is about revealing that Jesus was the Word of God made flesh. In the way he lived, things he taught, signs he performed, and commandments he gave, Jesus revealed the way to life.

On this last Sunday before Christmas—the Sunday we light the candle of Love—we are reminded that God’s very essence is love. God is relationship—an eternal relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit. God is *logos* and *sophia* and an eternal dance of light and love.

God’s very essence was given a body and made its home among us. God’s *logos*, the same Word that was in the beginning at Creation, the same Word that breathed life into the universe and created light itself, the same Word that formed humanity in its image and called us good, became human and showed us the Way back to that Creative love and light.

In the new year we will begin a journey through the Gospel of John. These lessons of the prologue will be important to remember. We will go back to this passage often as it is the lens through which to understand it all. Jesus is the eternal Word of God made flesh. This is just the beginning.