

There are two statements in the prologue of the Gospel of John that I want to highlight today. The first verse; “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Then the first part of the last verse; “No one has ever seen God.” These two verses give us the context for God.

Here are the thoughts of Nancy Hastings Sehested on John 1.1 as she wrote for Sojourners magazine when she was serving as pastor of Prescott Memorial Baptist Church. “If only the Word could have stayed a word, then we could have completely controlled it with a doctrinal statement or a theological assertion. If only this Word had stayed a word, then we could have encased it in a book and guarded it as holy. But no, this Word took the unmanageable turn of becoming flesh.”

She goes on to say this, “Historically, the church has always been tempted to lean toward thinking of Jesus as Spirit. It has been too close for comfort to think that Jesus really was human. After all, so many of us are, too. Since the beginning, God has paced the corridors of heaven, burning with the hope that we would see the world as God sees it. God made gardens. We did not get it. God sent floods. We did not get it. God sent prophets. We did not get it. God sent laws. We did not get it. Finally, finally, God sent flesh, God’s own flesh, so maybe we would get it.”

Sehested continues, “Through the body of a woman, in the body of a man, God sent God’s own son. For God so loved the world –this crazy, messed-up, haven’t-gotten-it-right-yet world – that God’s Word became flesh and moved into our neighborhood to live among us. Surely God thought that now, now we would get it. Maybe now we could understand a love we can touch, so full of grace and truth.” God, in the flesh, moved into the neighborhood – or as the kids say, ‘hood!

Finally Sehested gives us this communion point to ponder, “And what did God’s own flesh do while dwelling among us? He touched broken bodies with healing. He fed hungry bodies. He hugged children's bodies. He led rejected bodies back into community. He laughed. He wept. He sacrificed his own body. And he left us with the words, “This is my body, broken for you.” With this we know that God is in our hearts.

Though we will celebrate the sacrament of communion today at the end of worship it leads to the beginning of another week of service to God. And so we also look at the first sentence of John 1.18, “No one has ever seen God.” But when you leave this place will you take God home with you? Finally, a follow up thought, when you leave here and go into the world will others see you? And when they see you will you show them the face of God through living and serving your life following the example of Jesus? We must live our lives so that when we hear this verse, “No one has ever seen God,” we can say, “That is true, but they’ve seen us. They have seen God in our ‘hood, in our home, and in our heart.”