

## SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Paradoxology | Truth in Contradiction

TITLE: The Jesus Paradox

SCRIPTURE: John 1:1-18; Colossians 1:15-20

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Following Jesus is not always easy. Most Christians want their faith journey to be simple and clear—either/or, black/white, yes/no. However, life with God is often found in both/and tensions or paradoxes. The essence of a paradox is bringing together two seemingly contradictory statements, and the Bible is full of them. God is one; God is three. Jesus is God; Jesus is man. To save your life, you should lose it. To be mature, you should become like a child. And following Jesus into tensions like these is where faith is meant to flourish. Embracing seeming contradictions like these leads to doxology—a life of intentional worship.

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If you've been around church for any length of time—I'm sure you've heard that *Jesus is God in the flesh—God with us*—but you may not have thought about this great doctrinal truth being one of those Bible Paradoxes that we've been looking at for the past several weeks. So today, we're looking at The Jesus Paradox—Jesus is fully God and fully man. *In other words—Jesus himself is a paradox. But what exactly does it mean that Jesus is fully God and fully man and why does it matter?*

The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is fully God and fully human.

I think most people in the world today have positive feelings about Jesus the man. Most people see Jesus as a great religious teacher, a wise spiritual guru, a wonderful, loving example of selflessness in the midst of adversity. We love to think that if he were here with us now, he would counsel us, comfort us, encourage us, heal us, and give us a boost to get through life. Most people today have great respect and admiration for Jesus the man.

However—when we start talking about Jesus as God, the conversation changes dramatically. To many people saying that Jesus is God is *crazy ridiculous*, and, it's *downright offensive* because if Jesus is God then *that would mean* that everyone should worship him as God and *that would mean* that all the other religions are false and that can't be—*it's too narrow, close-minded—offensive*. No, Jesus IS a great teacher, a wise spiritual guru—a wonderful example, but God—*no way!*

Krish Kandiah says—"Jesus may be the most popular man in history, but claiming to be the God-Man is the most controversial claim in history."—AND—It is one of the most difficult paradoxes to get our heads around, but it is absolutely fundamental to our faith. There's nothing more important to Christianity than understanding who Jesus really is.

And all the major heresies concerning the person of Jesus over the past 2,000 years involve emphasizing one side of this paradox to over the other—all the major heresies have whittled away at either Jesus' humanity or his divinity—to say—Jesus is more divine than human or more human than divine IS heresy.

The Jesus presented to us in the Bible is equally and indivisibly God and human. So as followers of Jesus—*both doctrinally and practically*—we have to live inside this mysterious tension if we're going to remain faithful to what the Bible teaches about Jesus

Read John 1:1-18 — Right off the bat, John tells us that Jesus is both fully God and fully man. First, John tells us that Jesus was fully God. He says, "In the beginning, Jesus was with God and Jesus was God. He tells us that he existed before "in the beginning," but also down in v.14 he tells us that the Word had a

beginning on earth at one particular moment in time. He then echoes the opening lines of Genesis, attributing the creative power of God to Jesus.

But John also tells plainly that Jesus is fully human—look at John 1:14-18. Also, all through the rest of his Gospel, John includes all the references to Jesus claiming that he was the “I AM”/Yahweh of the OT (Jn 8:58-59; 6:35; 8:12; 10:9; 10:11; 11:25; 15:1; 14:6). By constantly referring himself, “a mere man,” as “I AM,” Jesus was claiming equal status with the God of the OT. And it was for this reason, the Jewish leaders wanted him dead and ultimately did have him crucified (cf Jn 5:18; 10:33; 19:7). So what got Jesus crucified was that he claimed to be God in the flesh—fully God and fully man. But what exactly does that mean?

Read Colossians 1:15-20 — It means that Jesus is fully God, but God is also fully in Jesus the man. We hear several echoes in these verses from John 1—Jesus existed before the beginning, he is the Creator of all things—he is the image of the invisible God. But also, in v.19, we read—“for in Christ, all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in a human body.” It’s not just that Jesus Christ is fully God, but God is fully in Jesus Christ. In other words, all that the three-person God is, dwelt in Jesus. only Christianity teaches that God became—not just a human being— but a human being who was born into poverty—a human being who knew loneliness, rejection and betrayal—who new what it was like to be misunderstood and maligned—who knew suffering—who knew pain—who knew death. In other words— whatever you’ve gone through or are going through—Jesus—has been through it and he understands.

Two Practical Applications of The Jesus Paradox:

- First—Because Jesus is fully God, you must give him \_\_\_\_\_ over everything.
- Second—Because Jesus is fully human, you can \_\_\_\_\_ him with everything.

The bottom line: If Jesus is fully God and fully man, there is \_\_\_\_\_ in your life that Jesus can’t \_\_\_\_\_.

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*For Discussion —*

1. In what ways does John emphasize the deity of Christ in the opening lines of his Gospel (John 1:1-18)?
2. In what ways does John emphasize the humanity of Jesus in these same verses?
3. Compare John 1:1-4 to Genesis 1:1-3—How is John making the case that Jesus is God by attributing to Jesus what Moses tells us about God?
4. How do all the “I AM” statements in John’s Gospel underscore that Jesus claimed to be God?
5. In Colossians 1:15-20, what echoes do we hear from John 1?
6. How does v.19 take the truth that Jesus is God in the flesh even further? —“ For in Christ, all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in a human body?”
7. Why is it not possible to think of Jesus as simply a good man, a great teacher, or a wise spiritual guru?
8. Which of the two applications above, do you most need to apply to your life and circumstances right now?
9. What would you say to someone who says, “Well, if Jesus suffered and was tempted like us, it couldn’t really be like us because he was God too.” (cf. Philippians 2:6-8).
10. Why must we give Jesus preeminence over everything else in our lives?
11. Why can we trust Jesus with everything in our lives?
12. What is the ultimate implication that comes from believing that Jesus is both fully God and fully man?