

## The Glory of Grace and Truth

When He was conceived in Mary's womb, God the Son (Jesus) became flesh and revealed God perfectly as a man living on this earth. The Apostle John writes, "We have seen his glory" – the shining light of God's own self. Pastor Dan explains:

[In the Old Testament] God would meet His people (in the Tabernacle [tent]) through what is known as "the Shekinah"... "the Shekinah"—the visible glory of God's presence. And we're told in Scripture, that when this happened, it was both terrifying and wonderful, all at once. Why? Because God was with them.

So from this era in the Old Testament, fast forward then to the time of Jesus... When John says in chapter 1, verse 14, of His Gospel that, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us," the exact words he uses in the Greek language refer to this awe-inspiring experience. You could read this verse—"The Word (Jesus, God) became flesh and "tabernacled" among us." And the implications of that are mind-blowing: that the Shekinah glory that once-filled the Tabernacle was now present in this man, Jesus.

And John says that the glory that Jesus revealed was the glory of *grace and truth*. Not the glory of splitting mountains in half and calling down fire from heaven – though Jesus could have done both. No, in His first coming, Jesus came to seek and save the lost, to be the Lamb of God sacrificed to atone for the sins of the world. Grace and truth. Our "Mission" brochure defines these key words:

When the Bible describes what Jesus is like, two words are used together: grace and truth. Grace is God's description of His unfailing love. It is acceptance freely given, not based on performance, merit, or "what you deserve." Truth is God's description of His absolute standards. Going against the grain in today's age of moral relativism, we affirm that God is truth and determines good and evil, right and wrong. Putting the two together ("grace and truth"), we acknowledge that from a human perspective the words don't naturally seem to fit. But God's perspective is different: Jesus is 100% grace and 100% truth, and this is the Jesus that the world needs to know.

***What does your child think church is?*** Your kids need to know that Hopevale Church (and all Christian churches) is more than something like school or Kokomos. Our church represents Jesus on earth. We are *His* body! That can be a little confusing. You can use simple examples like your family or your child's body to explain what God says about the church. Have fun doing it acting out verses like 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27!

**A Community of Grace and Truth**  
*A Community of Grace and Truth series*

## What Is The Church?

*Who says we have to be bound by our past experiences and pulled apart by our personal preferences, all because we have these different expectations [of church] in the present? What if our approach to church is different?*

Pastor Dan

1. *What is the church?* How would many people in your neighborhood or at your workplace answer that question? (Check one or more.)
  - ◇ Something that supports me when life gets hard
  - ◇ Something I go to on Sunday mornings
  - ◇ Something that benefits its members
  - ◇ Other \_\_\_\_\_
2. What's right about these answers? Anything wrong with them? What would you say "church" is?
3. What do these verses tell us about what the church is and why it exists?
  - Matthew 16:18—
  
  - Ephesians 5:23—
  
  - 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27—
  
  - 1 Timothy 3:15—
4. How important do you think it is that we have a shared, biblical definition of what our church is? Explain.
5. Read John 1:1-18—focusing especially on verse 14—then skim the note on the back page of this *Connections*. Share a time when the Lord showed His grace or truth (or both) to you.
6. As part of the Body of Christ, how can your group grow this year as a community of grace and truth? Note your ideas and commitments in your group's *CG Ministry Plan*.

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.* John 1:14

**Our shared, biblical expectations of the church  
can create a future expectancy.**