



ENTER God's presence

- ¹ Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm *[strength]* of the LORD been revealed?
- ² He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
- ³ He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Isaiah 53:1-3

Lord Jesus, son of God and son of man, by your death and resurrection you have made us one with you and the Father and the Holy Spirit. Open our hearts, expand our minds, and satisfy our souls. Every day, by the waters of baptism, drown our old nature and raise us into new life. Transform us to be like you. Amen.



SHARE life together

Luther's explanation for the 2nd Article of the creed (in part):

I believe that Jesus Christ is my Lord.

He is truly God –

he has always been the Son of the Father.

He is also a real human being, the Virgin Mary's Son.

1. Where have you seen God's power at work in your life this last week?
2. Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?
3. That Jesus is fully God and fully human is an extraordinary teaching of Scripture. Discuss what the consequences of being fully God and, also fully human may be – for Jesus – and for us.
4. Keeping this in mind, what makes baptism so important?

"I'm only human." It's a phrase that we have heard often and maybe even uttered ourselves. A phrase that slips off the lips when we want to excuse an outburst, justify a failure, give a reason as to why we acted in a certain way. "I'm only human". But we are not who we are and the world is not the way it is because "we are only human" but because we are not human enough. As humans we are created in the image of God, a little lower than the angels, called to reflect the glory of God in this world. But we are not living into that calling, that reality.

Week beginning:
Sunday 24th October 2021

Worship series:
ANCIENT CREED: LIVING FAITH
I believe in God who is human
(#3 in series)



VERSE for the week

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



REMEMBER this week

God became truly human like us so that we could be truly human like we were created to be.

So God had to become one of us, to show us what it means to be truly human. When we confess that we believe in God who is human, we are confessing that Jesus is one of us...with a human body, with human emotions and a human will. Our God gets involved in our lives, in the frailties of human flesh, in the full scope of human emotions, in the struggles of our will to show us what it means to be created truly human. God is not afraid to get close to us. It's his deepest desire. He comes to redeem our humanness, to save our frail bodies, to heal our broken wills and to rescue our hearts so we can truly experience a life that is filled with love, truth and grace!



LISTEN attentively

Read Hebrews 2:14-18

5. **What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?**
6. **What do you hear this scripture saying to you right now?**
7. **Verse 17 says that Jesus had to 'be made like them' – that is, us. You've already discussed what it means for Jesus to be fully human. Consider what follows, and discuss what it means for living in relationship with God, other people and with ourselves because Jesus is fully human?**

The idea of Jesus being fully God and fully human may seem obvious for many Christians because we have heard the phrase many times. When we start to dig deeper into the idea, we will learn how astounding it still is. For the early church it was a mind-bending concept, not because the basic idea of a god in human form was new to them but because the God and Saviour of Christians did it with real power and for the transformation of the whole world. The ancient world knew all about gods who appeared as human. The Greek gods of myth often appeared in human form and even mated with human women to produce the heroes like Hercules and Perseus, the children of a wickedly deceived human mother and the lascivious Zeus. Not at all the quiet and gentle approach of the Holy Spirit upon a faithful, fully informed, willing, and consenting Virgin Mary.

The Egyptian Kings were worshiped and believed to be gods disguised in human form. The Roman emperors promoted themselves to the status of gods, from Julius Caesar onward. Men who created myths of themselves among an uneducated and superstitious populous. So, the essential idea was already in popular imagination, perhaps from a deep longing for a saviour who would lead all people out of poverty, suffering and pain. So, Jesus was conceived, by mutual agreement and consent, of the Holy Spirit of God and of Mary. Not a God disguised as a human, not an egotistical King pretending to be a god but, fully God and Fully human.

The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are essentially a love letter from God and a book devoted to relationships – love God, love your neighbour and love yourself. So, the love of God manifesting itself among us, depends equally upon Jesus' divinity and humanity. How do we get our heads around that? How do our souls take that in?

In the first few centuries the great teachers of the church began to develop language that described the relationship of Jesus with himself as divine and human. The first idea was conceived in the council of Nicaea. The idea is 'homo-ousios', meaning 'of one substance' with the Father, and this remains our universal confession to this day. Jesus and the Father are of the same stuff – from eternity. The same is true of Jesus and Mary. Jesus is also of our human stuff.

The other important word that was applied later, is 'perichoresis' [*peri-chor-eesis*] which means 'to create room around about oneself for others.' In Greek, word sounds very similar to another word which means 'to dance', and dancing requires us to make room for others. They go together and were often used as a rhyming pun. Perichoresis is the dance of the divine and the human in Jesus. It also became the way we define the relationship between the persons of the trinity. An intimate, divine dance of knowing and understanding each other. A dance of finishing each other's sentences and of knowing where and what next. A dance, by way of baptism, that Jesus has brought us into.

This is a place of eternal, joyful relationship where we *can* discover our full humanity in Jesus, in the Father and in the Spirit.

8. With this image of a dance of relationship in mind, what do you think it means that Jesus has reconciled us to the Father?
9. What does it mean for life today? How does it impact the meaning and purpose of life?



GROW deeper

Read John 1:9-13

10. Considering all that you have read and discussed to this point, what does verse 13 have to say to you?
11. Since the children of God are part of the family business and apprentices to Jesus in the mission of his church, how does all of this speak into God's purpose for you?



LIVE purposefully

Barb and I were part of Jaycees or the Junior Chamber of Commerce when we were newly married. Originally a Christian organisation, each meeting began with the Jaycee Creed. It began, 'I believe that faith in God gives meaning and purpose to human life.' Too many Christian people wander aimlessly through life with neither meaning nor purpose. Yes, we have been saved by grace, we have also been saved for God's purpose and in this purpose, we find the essential meaning of life. To live as those who are now, in Christ, truly human and are able, in Christ to make space around us for others so that we may join together in the sacred dance of the Trinity.

12. What does your dance look like at the moment? How easily are you moving with God and with others? Is Jesus waltzing or breakdancing right now?

You may like to spend time with Jesus this week writing personal mission and vision statement to clarify your meaning and purpose. Write them on a card and place it in your purse or wallet so that you can look at it daily. This way you will be working on your dance.

(Keep in mind the LifeWay values, as they are directly from Scripture and impact all of us.)



PRAY intentionally

- Praise God for bringing us into the fullness of life and of being fully human in Jesus.
- Intercede for all those who put their own health and safety on the line, our teachers, healthcare workers, police officers, emergency service workers and defence force personnel.
- Pray that God will inspire immunologists worldwide to find therapies for all kinds of diseases that go yet, untreated.
- Pray for those who have lost loved ones in any circumstance. Ask that they would receive comfort and a deep knowledge of God's grace as he sits with them, sharing in their grief.
- Thank God for all his good gifts. Ask for a thankful heart even when things look difficult or unfair.
- Ask God to reveal the people of peace in our community that he wants us to 'dance' with.
- Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest. *(This has become known as the Luke 10:2 prayer)*

REMEMBER:

God became truly human like us so that we could be truly human like we were created to be.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

[Name], Jesus became truly human for you. Amen.



Dance, then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the Dance, said he

Ronan Hardiman