

20<sup>th</sup> December 2020 – Fourth Sunday in Advent

## Word

**“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.”**

*Bible, John 1:18*

On this fourth Sunday of Advent, the words with which I begin are from one of the most beautiful pieces of writing I know. They're found at the end of the prologue to John's Gospel, a reading which is often the closing Lesson in a traditional pre-Christmas service of Lessons and Carols.

John's Gospel, the latest of the four Gospels, appeared many decades after Jesus lived. It's full of theological interpretations of the meaning of Jesus' life in order to make a greater impact than the simple retelling of events might do. Right at the start, the writer sets the context of what is to come, and in the language of the King James version it is, to my ear, quite wonderful ... "The Word made flesh ... full of grace and truth".

Marty Haugen, a contemporary hymn writer, has an amazing sentiment built into his beautiful hymn, *Let us build a house ...*

*Let us build a house where all are named,  
their songs and visions heard  
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed  
as words within the Word.*

If "The Word" dwells among us, full of grace and truth, is there not an obligation on us, in accepting that Word, to live it out in who we are and what we do? The songs and visions of loved and treasured people should be "taught and claimed" as "words within the Word" again.

The letter of James in the New Testament is believed to have been written by the brother of Jesus, as he was taking the Gospel to Jewish Christians scattered beyond Israel. He was writing around the time John's Gospel is reputed to have appeared, so he may even have been familiar with John's words. Perhaps that's why he wrote:

*Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only.*

In a house "where all are named" uniquely, if we are "doers of the Word", living examples of the "Word made flesh", then the grace and truth of Christ *will* be seen in us through Christmas and well beyond.

### **A prayer for today**

*Lord, let your love come alive in who I am and how I live. Amen*