

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, we beheld His glory, we were given the privilege of being the audience of His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of truth and grace.

This verse is the most concise statement in the Bible regarding what we call the Incarnation. Incarnation means God becoming man through the person of Jesus Christ. Four words have tremendous meaning. The Word became flesh. God took on humanity. The infinite took on finite. Eternity entered into time. Everywhere present bound Himself to space.

God had revealed Himself through creation. More specifically, He has revealed Himself through the prophets. Most clearly, He has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ.

The verse takes on Old Testament significance. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He dwelt among us. The New Testament word has the inclination to mean tent. He pitched His tent among us. The tabernacle in the days of Moses was a tent that sat as a physical reminder of the presence of God with the people of Israel. John declares that they had God “tabernacling” among them in the form of humanity.

The verse goes on to say what has to obviously happen. If God is in the place, His glory will be revealed. Since it will be revealed, then it will be observed. It will be seen. His glory will have an audience, and even a subject to whom His glory is revealed.

His deity shrouded by humanity. Yet, at moments, His glory was revealed.

It was revealed through the healings.

It was revealed through the feedings.

His glory was revealed through the raising of the dead.

His glory was revealed in the sign miracles we will see as we journey through John.

Wouldn't it be great to be able to see what John saw in person?
Wouldn't it be great to see God do miracles before our eyes?
Wouldn't it be great to see His glory revealed?

Well...The word now may not dwell among us in flesh, but He does dwell in us through the Holy Spirit. We have the ability to behold His glory in us, through us, and around us.

I wonder if the glory of Christ is shrouded that we can't behold it. If we are not seeing His glory revealed, what is shrouding it?

This is what the Lord has revealed to me that are shrouds covering the glory of God from us.

Not Being a true Christ follower

The Bible says that those who are not true followers of Jesus are spiritually dead. They cannot really see the revealed glory of Christ. You are able to know God's existence. God reveals Himself in creation. As we see the complexity that is our created world, if we don't try to fool ourselves, we know that this is the result of an intricate designer. You can sense God's Spirit speaking to you, for He longs to draw you into a relationship with Jesus Christ, but a non-believer is unable to see the full glory of God. When a non-believer does see glimpse of Glory of God, it draws them to the realization of their spiritual poverty and their need for Christ as forgiver of sin and Lord of their lives.

Sin

Sin will shroud the glory of God. Sin is an energy drain. Sin is a murderer. Sin will kill the fellowship. Sin will drive a wedge between family members. Sin will kill the unity of a church. Sin

will stunt the spiritual growth of a church. Sin will not allow the glory of God to manifest itself as fully as God wants. It isn't God who moves. It's us.

There are certain sins that will bring disruption to the fellowship of a church: Gossip, bitterness, resentment, harbored ill feelings, spirit of unforgiveness. It may not be sin you personally commit, but sin of others that affect the rest of the body.

Don't think one person's sin will not affect the whole body. That is what many of the early churches were faced with. The church of Corinth was affected by one man's sin. The whole nation of Israel was affected by the sin of Achan.

Acknowledge sin. Agree with God that it is sin. Confess it. Ask and receive forgiveness.
Forgiven and forgiveness.

Encumbrances

Hebrews 12:1 says, "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²^[a]fixing our eyes on Jesus, the ^[b]author and perfecter of faith,

The cloud of witnesses are those of Hebrews 11, people who endured and were people of faith. In essence, they fixed their eyes on Jesus, even though they did not know His name, but knew that something greater was in the future of the world.

We dealt with the sin issue as being a shroud to the glory of God. What about encumbrances? What is that? Encumbrances are not necessarily sin. They are, however, stuff that tend to grab our attention and drain our time, and our energy from the fellowship with Christ that God wants us to have. They slow us

down in our pursuit of growing in Christ. They are distractions. It's like the guy focused on running the marathon, but something on the sideline gets his attention. What are those things? I cannot name them. However, I do see that they will shroud us from seeing the full glory of Christ. They will cause us to draw us away from being full of Holy Spirit.

In Nathan's high school days at Conway, he was asked to be on the track team to run long distance events. About 2 weeks into the season, the team received their warm up suits. They were sharp looking. They were green with gold trim, and the Conway emblem with tigers on it. On the pants, they had those zip up things going up the legs. The team was proud of their warm-ups. Well, the first night they had an event, it was a cold evening. The sprinters, when it came time for their event, ran in their event with the warm-up suits still on.

As soon as they were finished, Coach Parsley jumped them ferociously about running with the suits on. I can still hear him yelling. Why was he mad? It is simple. The warm-ups added resistance to run. They were an encumbrance.

Will you allow the Holy Spirit to inventory your life to see if there are any encumbrances that is slowing your spiritual growth?

Unhealed wounds from a past injury done to us

This can go along with a spirit of unforgiveness. When we refuse to let something go that happened to us in the past, it robs you of joy, of growth in Christ. Robs our church of being what God wants us to be. You may be at a place where the one who wronged you will never apologize to you. I believe that you can still forgive them and be released of your responsibility of harbored feelings. I'll forgive, but I won't forget. If that is your attitude, you haven't forgiven. Listen, I have to sit in the pew with you to hear this myself. I have enough of my grandma Kent

in me that I sometimes have that bent toward harboring resentment. If I don't let go, I will keep rob myself of God using me.

I am still learning to let that go.

The unhealed wounds may be wounds of circumstances. Losses are wounds that take a long time to heal. Depression can easily set in. Cave in, withdraw, and not even let God in. We really cannot see His glory when we do that.

Can I be honest with you? Those are some things I sense are present in this room: people not Christ followers, sin, bitterness, resentment, not acknowledging sin as sin, encumbrances, and tender or unhealed wounds. These will shroud the glory of Christ.

The Word became flesh and tabernacle among us. The Word became flesh and is now tabernacling in us. On this table are elements that are representative of the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.

His body was broken for our brokenness. His blood was spilled for our forgiveness. It is time you take that which keeps you from knowing the full glory of God and let it meet grace. He dwelled among us, we beheld His glory, full of grace and truth. He is speaking the truth of the condition of your spiritual life. He is longing for you to meet him at his grace.

God give us mercy—not giving us what we deserve.
God give us grace—giving that which we don't deserve.

It is time to take it to Jesus. Before you come to this table, you need to approach His cross. Lay it down. Lay it down. Don't be inhibited. I think God grieves for our inhibition, our holding back and not responding as He wants us to. God is telling you what you need to do. Do it.

Surrender your life to Him as Lord and Savior.
Lay burdens at the feet of Jesus.
Making the first step toward forgiving or being forgiven.
Now is the time.