**John 1:1-14**

**Don’t listen to this sermon!**

I’m going to give you the greatest Christmas present you could ever receive this morning.

 What’s the greatest present? I’m going to preach A Really Short Sermon!

 Look at all your faces lighting up!!!

 And what’s more, I don’t even want you to listen to this sermon. It’s a complete waste of time – a waste of your time and mine.

 This morning, don’t listen to my sermon because I don’t have a word worth listening to.

 In actual fact, as I thought about preparing this sermon over the last few days, I realized that a sermon on the first Chapter of John really is superfluous. Because what does John say here? “The Word became flesh…”

 So if the Word, the Ultimate Word, the Eternal Word, the godly Word has become flesh, why does anyone need to hear my words talking about *The* Word?

 What words could I possibly say that will illuminate *The* Word?

 I may just as well try to tell Usain Bolt how to run faster or give Dave Gilmour a guitar lesson or give Simon Cowell some hints on how he can earn a bit more money.

 What words can I say about *The Word?*

 So don’t bother listening to this sermon – it’s a waste of time.

 In fact, I should have taken a cue from John himself as he started his Gospel. Unlike Matthew, Mark and Luke, he didn’t tell us the Christmas story at all, he didn’t tell us about angels and shepherds and kings and flights into Egypt and no room at the inn and virgin births and all the rest of it. John didn’t bother giving a sermon at all: he simply said, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us”.

 And I’ve got nothing to add to that, so don’t bother listening to this sermon – don’t waste your time.

 Don’t listen to my words. Listen to The Word.

 John doesn’t even give us the name of Jesus’ parents. All he tries to do is capture the spirit, the essence, of Christmas. He tells us *What is happening* – God is coming to earth as a human being. He tells us *Why it is happening* – because the world that has fallen into darkness needs light. He tells us *Who is affected by this* – everyone because Jesus came for the whole world.

 The What, the Why, and the Who are the important things to illuminate for us The Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us.

 What else could we possibly need to know?

 What can my words possibly add to The Word?

 Nothing. So forget my sermon this morning

 All you need to know is this: That our world has fallen into darkness and that you and I experience that darkness both personally in our sufferings and in our community, where there is loneliness or shootings, or anger or loss and in our world, where there are wars and famine and hatred. And so God has refused to remain a remote figure and has become one of us, so that he can get his hands dirty and sort out our mess, deal with our pain, and bring healing to our broken hearts. And there is no-one, not one single human being who is beyond God’s reach and care.

 God loves every single one of us and will do all he can to bring light into our darkness. He speaks to each one of us through His Word.

 His Word has become flesh at that first Christmas and he dwells among us.

 God’s Word is love.

 God’s Word is forgiveness.

 God’s Word is healing.

 God’s Word is compassion.

 God’s Word is acceptance.

 God’s Word is Jesus.

 So don’t listen to this sermon because my words are not The Word that you need to hear today. The only Word you need to hear today is Jesus and he will speak to you words of love, forgiveness, healing, compassion and acceptance.

 Listen to The Word – not my words.

 This Christmas-time, let God speak his Word to you:

 Let God tell you how much he loves you.

 Let God tell you how he wants the best for your life.

 Let God tell you that he wants you to follow him for the rest of your life.

 Let God tell you that you are forgiven.

 Let God tell you that he accepts you and loves you just as you are.

 Let God give you an experience of his compassion and care.

 Let God mend your broken heart.

 Let God minister to you through his Word – Jesus Christ, born at Bethlehem that first Christmas and crucified for you in Jerusalem that first Good Friday.

 Listen to God’s Word – don’t listen to my words.

 In fact, on second thoughts, I don’t think I’m going to preach a sermon at all this morning. Because God’s Word is all we need to listen to if we really want to experience Christmas this Christmas.