

I had many things to write to you, but I am not willing to write *them* to you with pen and ink;
but I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face.

3 John 1:13-14

WRAPPED IN FLESH



Hansen Constantin

MORE OFTEN THAN NOT THESE DAYS, the term “flesh” is employed as a synonym for man’s fallen, sinful state—an antonym for purity or holiness. Flesh is weak, flesh stumbles, flesh misses the mark, flesh represents the worst in us—especially regarding our walk in and with Christ Jesus.

And [Jesus] came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Mark 14:37-38

At the same time, however, we find ourselves increasingly surrounded by cultural norms that illustrate what happens to a society in which there is a paucity of flesh—that is real, substantial, meaningful interaction between human beings.

There was the time a group of five or six women, some with children, were given seats at a large round table in the restaurant in which we were dining. Immediately upon settling into their chairs the center of attention for each of the women was not the companion next to her, or her child, but the electronic device cradled in the palm of her hand.

There was yesterday at the dentist’s office, and a waiting room of people all staring into their hand-held devices. There was the group of teenagers met together for the sole purpose of sitting next to each other while they each stared at the device in their hand.



God, the Maker of *all* things—including electronic devices—wrapped us in flesh for a reason. He could have wrapped us in plastic and glass, but those materials are not warm and pliable to the

touch. While they can *be* touched, they do not touch back; they do not hold, they do not cradle, they do not embrace.

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm *alone*?

Ecclesiastes 4:9-11



Years ago, when my aunt passed away, those few of us who remained were suddenly burdened with the details of death. There was the funeral to plan, flowers to order, luncheons to arrange. We had to meet with the lawyer, the pastor, the funeral director. Something had to be written for the notice in the local paper.

So in a small Midwestern town, when the family needed to run errands, yet at the same time receive well-wishers—both in person and by telephone—it was not a machine, but a flesh and blood neighbor who volunteered to sit in our home, attending doorbell and phone. It was warm, and real, and wildly inefficient.

It may be that today, with the ubiquitous mobile telephony at our beck and call, always able to be reached no matter where we are, such solutions would be an anachronism. But while we met our obligations for our aunt, instead of using a cell phone, voice mail or an answering machine, a loving and gracious neighbor gave of her time to sit at Mom's house to answer the phone and answer the knocks at the door.

Here was the grace of God played out in a fallen world: the homely mercies of one friend supporting another. In person. In the flesh. It was the face of God dwelling for awhile in a hurting home.



God designed human beings not for efficiency, but for communion—both with Himself and others. We are not machines; we are *people*. And when we abandon our humanity in favor of the cold, long-distance digital realm, we have abandoned part of what God has intended for our good.