

Everyday Christmas

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-14

Introduction:

Tonight each one of us has come to this Christmas Eve service for many different reasons.

Perhaps you have come because you like to sing Christmas carols,

or perhaps you have come because you feel obligated to, it's part of your responsibility or duty to attend a Christmas Eve service,

or perhaps you have come because you realize that Christmas is more than just about presents, it is about the birth of Jesus and so you want to honor and worship Jesus,

or maybe you just feel some strange tugging on your heart to be here and you are not sure why you've come.

We all come for many reasons, but what I hope we can each take away from tonight as we look at God's Word is that it doesn't matter why you are here, as much as it matters what you will do about Christmas every day of your life.

God is happy we can be here tonight to celebrate his Son's birth, but what God is more interested in is what this child means for every day of your life.

How does a child born in a manger over 2000 years ago change every day of your life?

That's why we go to John's gospel to understand what difference this child makes in our life.

John doesn't mess around with a lot of details.

No angel visitations,
 no traveling from Nazareth to Bethlehem,
 no manger scene.

Instead John gets right to the point of Christmas and so he summarizes the whole birth story by saying this, "***The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us*** (1:14),"

or I like the way the paraphrase of the Bible called the Message says it, "***the Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.***"

Jesus is the Word, and what John is telling us is that Jesus, the Word was around long before the child was laid in the manger,

in fact Jesus was there in the beginning of time,

He was a part of creation with God the Father,

and John even goes so far as to say ***the Word, Jesus, was God. Jesus is God come in the flesh.***

This is more than just a human child, He is God come to earth.

God had come in the flesh to walk among us, to experience the same ups and downs we do,
the same temptations,
the heartbreaks,

even to experience a brutal death on a cross.

Why would He do this?

Why would He leave the splendor of heaven and come to the darkness of earth as a weak human infant named Jesus?

The Bible tells us he did this because he loves us that much, h

He knew that if He didn't come to earth, we could never experience a truly full and an abundant life, we could not walk in the light of His paths, and we could never be adopted as His children.

That's what John tells us here in these verses.

Three Results of the Word Becoming Flesh

1. We become adopted as God's children.

The first result we can experience from the "***Word becoming flesh***" and probably the most important is that we can become children of God.

NLT John 1:12 "***But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.***"

Now understand this with me: God wants every person on earth, every person here, to be His child.

We are not automatically God's children.

Just because we are born into this earth doesn't mean we are his children.

We must be born again,
We must be born of His Spirit to become one of His children.

That is why God, a spiritual being became a human child, so that we could be one of God's spiritual children.

As it says in the passage we are given the rights to become a child of God when we believe that God came in the flesh and have accepted Him into our life.

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When we believe in Him and accept Him, the Bible tells us we are adopted into His family and we receive all the benefits of being a child of God.

NLT Romans 8:17 “***And since we are his children, we will share his treasures-- for everything God gives to his Son, Christ, is ours, too. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.***”

When we are adopted as children of God we receive treasures, the same treasures Jesus, as the Son of God received.

These treasures include:

forgiveness,
eternal and abundant life,
light,
blessings of love,
joy,
peace, etc..

These treasures God give us in abundance and He works them inside of us so that they are unaffected by whatever bad things or suffering we must endure.

God tells us we will experience suffering in our life but those who keep the faith will receive His treasures which will endure forever.

2. We can receive His life – “In Him Was Life (v. 4)”

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Verse 4 says, “***In Him was life.***”

In this child was life.

Here was the Creator of the universe who brought life to the earth, and now He has come in the flesh to bring life back to us.

In fact John repeats this over and over in his gospel, that Jesus has come so that we might have life, he even concluded his gospel by writing that the very purpose of his writing his gospel account is so that we might have life:

NLT John 20:31 “***But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life.***”

See friend, God came to earth because He wants us to experience real and genuine “life,” and by that He means two things:

First, God wants us to experience eternal life.

He wants us to live forever with Him forever in heaven.

Jesus repeated many times over that no one could experience eternal life without him, the most popular is John 3:16

“For God so love the World that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but everlasting life.”

Second, having life refers, not only to a future, but to a present reality.

We can live a full abundant life right now because of Jesus.

Jesus said, ***“I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly*** (John 10:10).”

What God knows is that without Him, we cannot live life to the fullest, we cannot have abundant life, and we cannot receive eternal life because He is the source of all good things.

NLT James 1:17 ***“Whatever is good and perfect comes to us from God above.”***

Do you know what happens when we don't receive his life?

We experience selfishness, pride, hopelessness, guilt, anger, bitterness, and broken relationships.

Let me ask you this evening:

Are you experiencing any of these?

God doesn't want that for your life.

God loves you too much for that.

God came in the flesh two thousand years ago so you could instead experience His joy, His peace, and His love right now, every day and forever.

That was why He came there was no other way for us to receive His life except for Him to come in the flesh, just like you and me.

Would you say you are living a full abundant life?

If not maybe it means your Christmas is only one day a year, and not all year round.

You have not received His life into yours.

3. We can receive His light in our darkness –

John goes on to say, ***“God came in the flesh, not only that we might receive life but so we could receive his light, “In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it*** (v. 4-5).”

Whether we like to believe it or not, our world is shrouded in darkness tonight and everyday.

It has been shrouded in darkness since the very first man and woman walked the earth.

It is shrouded in darkness because people follow the darkness, they make bad choices, say stupid things, do stupid things.

We like to think the world is getting better, however, the reality of darkness still remains and will always remain until every person on earth receives Jesus, the Light.

Just this morning someone came to me and told me that Comedy Central, I never watch it, but they are showing beginning tonight every show and movie that is against the Christian belief of Christmas.

Just this past week I've learned what is going on in Sudan right now as we sit here.

70,000 people have been killed and
1.8 million have been displaced,
homes and villages burned.
It is genocide.

We can look at Iraq, and the terrorists, and see that darkness still remains in our world.

We don't have to go very far, just into Columbus tonight and see the darkness of sin.

And the truth is we can see in our own community, and see darkness still remains.

Our children and grandchildren have to worry about drugs and violence in schools.

I was in high school only 41 short years ago in a rural community like Pataskala and I never had to worry about these things.

And whether we like to hear it or not, that darkness penetrates each one of us too.

We like to think we are above it, but the truth is we are not.

We fall for the darkness as well.

God says there is only one way to eradicate darkness, evil, sin whatever you want to call it, from our life and from our community, and from our world, and that is Jesus, the Word made flesh.

Jesus Himself said:

NLT John 8:12 ***"I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't be stumbling through the darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."***

God came to earth so that we can escape the darkness, even the darkness which is inside of us.

There is no other way friends.

There is no power inside of us strong enough to resist evil and the temptations around all of the time.

We will get tripped up every time, and God loves us too much to allow that to happen to us, so the Light came into the world so that we might receive the Light never to walk in darkness ever again.

Now, I know I am addressing a crowd where most of you have received the Light of God's Son into your life.

But for some of you there is a problem, darkness still remains, like a shroud over your life.

You still fall into darkness, sin, temptation.

God tells us we will never be free from temptation.

Jesus wasn't and we won't, but we shouldn't fall for the darkness anymore.

One reason we continue to experience darkness is because we have not given all areas of our life to Him.

We have allowed God's light to penetrate into some areas of our life but not into all areas of our lives.

We compartmentalize our life into sections and we don't allow God to have the whole part of us.

We say, "God you can have my life on Sundays, and Monday through Thursday, but Friday night and Saturday are mine to do whatever I want.

Or perhaps in the time when you are alone all by yourself, you give in to temptation.

You tell God, You can have this part of my life but I'm not going to let you deal with my anger, problem, or my resentment over my crummy boss, my coveting desire for fancy toys, or my addiction to alcohol or pornography, or whatever darkness we struggle with.

And because we don't let God have that piece of our life it tends to bring a shadow over the other areas of our life.

Part of receiving God's light into our life is allowing Him to enter and light up all areas of our life, including the ugly stuff.

The power of the darkness is when it stays in the dark.

Once it comes into the light it loses its power.

One of the ways we open ourselves to the light is to ask God for forgiveness by admitting to God the dark areas we struggle with.

It's no mystery to God, He won't be shocked because He already knows, just let Him set you free.

The second way to shed God's light in is by telling one other person we trust.

Once the "Cat is out of the bag" our dark area loses its strength and power in our life, that is why Alcoholics Anonymous has been so successful in helping people leave the dark past of alcohol addition behind.

The greatest mistake we can make is to keep our darkness a secret.

Because we will never experience God's complete light in our life.

Living Christmas everyday means we receive the light of Jesus, we and we follow Him, daily, and His promise to us is that the darkness will not overcome us, the darkness cannot overcome the light.

Let me end with the question I posed at the beginning.

How does a child born in a manger over 2000 years ago affect your every day life?

Hopefully because of Jesus' birth you can say, "I am a child of God."

If you have never taken that step, I pray you will do it tonight and join me in a prayer in just a moment.

When you become a child you receive the treasures He has promised, eternal and abundant life.

Maybe you have already taken that step but do not feel as though you are living the abundant life God promised?

Or perhaps you continue to experience darkness in your life?

God wants us to be fully in the light, that's why he came to earth.

Prayer of Salvation