

John 1: 4-13

Introduction

I. Jesus came to bring life and light

II. Consider Mary's experience of Christmas

- A. A miraculous life supernatural born within her
- B. That meant a whole new joy for her
- C. That meant a whole new center for her life
 - The radical rearrangement of everything to accommodate this new life
- D. God wants to do something similar in each of us

The Passage

I. Who Jesus is: life and light (v. 4-5)

- A. Jesus, the eternal Word, has life in himself
 - 1. He can give his life to others (Jn 20:31)
 - 2. John is primarily talking about spiritual/eternal life rather than simply natural/biological life
 - Eternal life = a quality of life that comes when we experience a personal relationship with Christ (in this life and the next)
- B. Jesus' life brings light
 - Light = having knowledge of the truth/seeing reality as it really is
= seeing ourselves as we really are, seeing God as he really is, etc
- C. Life and light are closely related (as are death and darkness)
 - If you don't have light, you don't have much life

II. The context of his coming: darkness (v. 5, 9-11)

- A. How did the world come to be such a dark place?
 - 1. Rather than embrace the life and light God provided in Eden, Adam and Eve reached out for life and light apart from God (independence), and as a result they were plunged into a world of death and darkness
 - 2. Humanity has this independent streak that says, "We don't need God. We can find life and light on our own."
 - 3. So, the world is now full of people who are spiritually dead and spiritually blind
- B. Christ (the life-light) enters a dark world that is not receptive to him (v. 9-11)
 - 1. v. 10: The creator came to his creation, and the creation does not recognize him
 - 2. v. 11: the Messiah comes to his own people (the Jewish nation) and they don't receive him
 - "receive" = welcome, make room for (hospitality)
 - See Jn 14:3

III. The joy of new life for those who receive him (v. 12-13)

- A. What these people do
 - 1. "believe in his name" (opposite of v. 10)

- = believe in him/who he is/recognize he is who he says he is
2. "receive him" (opposite of v. 11)
welcome him, make room for the king, recognize need for him
- B. What God does in them: a new spiritual birth (v. 12-13)
1. This is a supernatural work of God in them (v. 13—not a human work)
God implants his own spiritual life, the life of his son, in them
(See John 3, Eph 2, Ez 36:26 and 37)
 2. It means a new joy
The joy of being children of God
 - a. the joy of his unconditional grace
 - b. the joy of intimate relationship with him
 - c. the joy of knowing our Father works all things for our good
 - d. the joy of knowing that as his children we are heirs of eternal life
 3. It means a new center
The radical rearranging of everything to accommodate this new center: Jesus Christ
 - a. letting go of old things we used to pursue for ultimate satisfaction and security
 - b. letting go of old character patterns so that Jesus character can be formed in us (fruit of the Spirit)
 - c. removing ourselves from the center so that we live to please Christ and bring glory to him

Conclusion

- I. Where do you need to make room for Jesus?
How do you need to create space for Jesus?
What's an area of your life in which he would want to be more central?
- II. Where do you need to celebrate the new birth this season?
Where do you need to be reminded of your status as a child of God?

"Joy to the world the Lord has come. Let earth receive her king, let every heart prepare him room"

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. Discuss again how Adam and Eve's sin in eating the fruit was connected with the theme of life and light in Sunday's sermon.
3. Verses 12 and 13 discuss how people respond to Jesus and the work of God in those people. How are those two things related in your mind? Does one come before the other? Is one a cause and the other an effect?
4. Where are you particularly tempted to pursue life and light apart from Jesus during this Christmas season?
5. How do you need to make room for Jesus this Christmas season?
6. Where do you need to experience the joy new life (the joy of being God's child) this Christmas season?