

Christmas 2017

John 1:1-5, 14

Well, we've been reading and singing about the Christmas story. I'd like to talk to you for just a moment about the meaning of Christmas. What is the meaning of this story? Why is Christmas such a big deal? Some people think it's all about lights, gift giving, and family. Those things are really good things... But Christmas is about something much bigger.

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it... 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Christmas is actually a story about the conflict between good and evil. You see, before the world began, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit lived together in perfectly, holy fellowship. They enjoyed one another with a supreme kind of joy and satisfaction. Out of the overflow of that joy and glory, the Trinity decided to create a universe. Now, It's important to understand that God's decision to create was not an expression of any lack within the Trinity or any need that God had as God. But to display his glory and share it with mankind created in his image, God made a perfect universe and planted people in a perfect garden on planet Earth. And everything worked perfectly and was beautiful.

But did you notice what happened? Into this perfect universe, somehow, darkness entered in. Into God's perfect, beautiful, colorful world, sin entered in and cast an ominous cloud over everything. Satan led a rebellion against God and Adam and Eve joined him. Mankind's fall into sin fractured the universe and a twisted kind of brokenness entered into every relationship we have. Our relationship with God was broken. Our relationship with each other was broken. And our relationship to the Earth itself was broken.

If any of you have been watching Stranger Things, in the show, there's an alternate dimension that they call the Upside Down. The Upside Down has all the same places as the real world but it's cold and dark and there is no life. The Upside Down is filled with a dark ashy fog. That's something like what sin has done to God's creation.

The Bible is very honest about the darkness and brokenness in our world. The darkness of sin was holding mankind hostage – prisoners to sin? Who would rescue us? Who could save us from the tyranny our own rebellion had caused? We were helpless. Nothing we could do could save us. We needed rescue. We needed a hero.

So God, the author of creation, and the author of the greatest story ever told, in the greatest conflict between good and evil that history has ever known... God looked down and saw that there was no hero strong enough or wise enough to rescue fallen man.

He was going to have to do it himself.

So in the most amazing act of history God, the author, wrote himself into his own story.

Listen to it again, *“in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him... And the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory.*

Friends, Jesus is the light of the world that shines into the darkness.

The story of Christmas is the story of how Jesus came on a rescue mission to save his people. He entered into our darkness and brokenness and has shattered it by the light of his glory. How can we know that's true? Not only did Jesus come and suffer in our place on the cross, but he actually died and was buried in a rich man's tomb according to prophecy. And on the third day Jesus rose from the dead. 40 days later he ascended back to the Father in Heaven where he is seated, ruling on the throne of the universe!

Do you realize what this means? This means that for everyone who trusts in Christ, because of who he is and because of what he's done, we have hope.

What this means for you is that no matter who you are, no matter what you've been through or what you're going through, ultimately Jesus is making everything sad come untrue. If you're a believer in Christ Jesus, then he is in the processes of bringing his light into your darkness.

And when you see this, it frees you from doubt and fear. It frees you from your worries. It gives you incredible confidence to face each day.

So friends, this Christmas, enjoy your families. Enjoy giving gifts. Enjoy the lights and celebrations. But let's be a people who understand the real meaning of Christmas. Let's celebrate Jesus who is our King and brother. Let's celebrate his triumph over darkness. Let's celebrate the triumph of Christ's cross and the freedom that you and I have to live in the sun light of his love.

If you're here today and you've been wandering...