

REVIEW

- Week 1: The Father loves us.
- Week 2: The Father values us.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY REVEALS GOD'S PERSPECTIVE, VALUES, AND PERSONALITY.

- Remember: The Christmas story is a part of an ongoing story.
- God's word says the world is in darkness.
- God is going to end war, and bring peace.
- The source of this peace is Jesus, the coming Messiah-King.

Isaiah 9:1-2,6-7 ¹Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—²**The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.** ... ⁶For to us a child is born, **to us a son is given**, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

1. GOD'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE PROBLEM: DARKNESS.

- God is light.
- How did darkness come to be? We rejected the light.
- The world chose to walk in darkness, confusion, sin, and spiritual blindness.

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

2. THE REMEDY IS A GIFT. THE SON IS GIVEN (HE IS A GIFT).

- A relational solution
- The fact that the Father had to give the solution means that *people* could not.
- A light has dawned; a Son is given.

John 3:16-20 ¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.

John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

3. THE COST OF THE REMEDY REVEALS THE DEPTH OF THE PROBLEM.

- The remedy reveals the severity of the sickness—chemotherapy and radiation are terrible, but they reveal the level of the consequences if you don't do them.

- An amputation of a limb reveals the level of issue you are dealing with. You don't amputate an arm for a hangnail. You don't do radiation and chemotherapy for a common cold.

WHAT KIND OF SACRIFICE?

- Think about what Jesus left—the place, the relationships, the privileges.
- Think about where and when and how He entered planet Earth! Born in a barn, to a poor Jewish girl and a carpenter as a dad, who would live in Nazareth (not the right side of the tracks), into a family that would be ostracized, to a people under Roman rule, at a time when life was subsistence living and hard work, to a people who would reject Him and betray Him, into a world where the devil would make Him the target of all of his activity, at a time when He would be called a criminal and be punished in the worst possible way: crucifixion.

Philippians 2:5–8 ⁵In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

4. THE LEVEL OF THE SACRIFICE REVEALS GOD'S THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS TOWARD US.

What does this tell us?

- What kind of love does the Father have toward us?
- How much does He value us?
- What does He want from us?
- What does He want *for* us?
- The saddest thing: an unopened present of such great value!
- Will you come and worship?

Luke 2:10–14 ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

Passages to consider: Luke 2:8-13; John 3:16-20; Romans 5:6-8; John 15:12-13

- What was meaningful to you from the sermon?
 1. Share a time when you experienced sacrificing something to give something. (Either as giver, receiver, or observer.) OR How do you respond or feel when you receive an extravagant gift? (The gift doesn't have to be a material thing. ☺)
 2. Read Luke 2:1-20 twice, slowly. What sacrifices do you see in this account? Think about all the people involved. (*Note: you might even have a nativity scene around while you read.*)
 3. Take a look at John 3:16, Romans 5:8, and Romans 8:3-4. What do these passages show you about the Father's heart? A) Read Philippians 2:5-8. What does this show you about Jesus?
 4. In what ways have you seen sacrifice as a part of Christmas? A) When you look at a nativity scene, how might this change what you see? B) This year, what might distract you from seeing the Father's heart in the midst of the Christmas season?
 5. After spending some time reflecting on God's heart of love and sacrifice for you, how will you respond to Him this Christmas?
 6. What ways could you help your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers experience this part of the Father's heart?

Passages to prepare for next week, The Heart of the Father (Week 3) God Provides: Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:29-45; Galatians 4:4-7; Matthew 6:28-34; Romans 8:28-39