

Christmas Eve: Don't Miss the Light, John 1:9-14, 12/24/2020

John 1:5,9-14

⁵ *The light shines in the darkness but the darkness did not comprehend it.*

⁹ *The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.*

¹¹ *He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

¹⁴ *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

There are many ways to understand what Christmas is all about, but the theme I want to focus on this Christmas Eve the **true light (John 1:9)** that came shining into the darkness. That's what Christmas is about according to the gospel of John. I wonder if we could use some true light in the darkness in our world today? The most optimistic of us would have to confess that this has been one of the darkest years any of us have experienced. I will spare you the rundown because no one wants to hear it again. We are desperate for true light aren't we? The Jewish people in Palestine 2000 years ago were desperate for light because they were living in dark times. The Golden Age of Israel was far back in the rearview mirror. They were now an occupied state, living under the thumb of the Roman Empire. Many struggling to get by, living in poverty, without power or influence. Not only that but it had been over 400 hundred years since God had spoken through the prophets. They wondered if God had forgotten about His promises. His promises of bringing the Messiah, the king, the one who would deliver them and give them hope of a brighter future. If you have felt the groans of waiting in the darkness, if you have cried out this year, "How Long oh Lord?" know that you are in good company with God's people 2000 years ago.

And now, finally the wait was over. John says that the true light was coming into the world. That light of course, was a person, Jesus Christ whom John calls the Word of God, the creator of the World, and God who became flesh that first Christmas morning. And so a weary world should have rejoiced, as the Christmas Carol says. The wait was over, he's here, the Messiah, the savior is finally here! And yet, that's not what happened. The world received him with little rejoicing, and little fanfare, they ultimately rejected him and sent him to be crucified. John says ¹⁰ *He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.*

Most people, even His own people the Jewish people, missed the light. How could they have missed Him, the miracles, fulfilling the prophecies, his matchless wisdom and authority, his character, integrity and compassion...**how did they miss the light?** I believe the answer is critical because in our dark moment we could be in danger of missing the light this Christmas as well.

They missed the Light of His Glory.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father.

They were looking for their messiah to be born to royalty, to the glory of a palace, position, influence, and physical beauty and stature. But instead he came to two poor nobody teenagers in a nowhere town, in a less than sanitary place, a stable...Israel was looking for the glory of man, not the glory of God. They missed his glory because God doesn't look on the outward appearance, he looks on the heart. Oh, and the heart of Jesus was gloriously pure, compassionate, tender, kind, humble. Don't miss Jesus because you are looking for the glory of man- because you are searching to find life through power, status, physical appearance, wealth, being associated with the "in crowd." You will not find the light of His glory there. If you want to find Jesus, you will find him in humble places with a humble heart.

They missed the Light of His Truth.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and TRUTH. To understand why they missed the Light we need to understand what they believed their Truth was. Their version of Truth was that they were God's people and so therefore, they were in with God. They didn't need to be saved from their sins- they were children of Abraham, but rather from their circumstances. They wanted a savior from the political and economic oppression they were experiencing. What many in Israel were looking for was a king, a deliverer to overthrow the Roman empire and establish political peace so they could live happy, healthy and prosperous lives, free from worry, in comfort and at peace. They just wanted everything to go back to normal...back to the good old days.

Can you relate? Do you long for deliverance from your circumstances? Deliverance from political and social division. Deliverance from economic hardship. Deliverance from COVID, from social distancing and masks, a Savior from Zoom and virtual school and missing our friends, and missing the warmth of a good hug. We just want some comfort and good times... God we just want everything to go back to normal, back to the good old days. And we often believe, much like Israel did I'm a good person, I've done plenty of good things, we just need a savior to deliver us from these bad circumstances, then I could finally get some peace, hope and joy. Then all would be right in the world.

That's the kind of light Israel was looking for, the kind of savior they wanted. But Jesus came as the true light- the kind of light that first had to expose the truth- **we need a savior from our sin-sick hearts.**

Matthew 1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Jesus came not just to save people from their circumstances, but first to save them from their greatest enemy, sin. Jesus came to overthrow an empire, but it wasn't the Romans, a far more

powerful empire- the empire of sin that rules humanity and separates us from God. Jesus came to set humanity free, but not from slavery to people, but from slavery to our own sinful hearts. Jesus came to bring peace, but not through the absence of hardships and a drama-free, comfortable life: but through confronting our rebellion against God and providing the means of peace with God through Him. Jesus came to expose the truth- we need a savior from our sin-sick hearts.

They missed the light of his grace.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of GRACE and truth.

The people of Israel thought that salvation came through their heritage, their good works, obedience to the law. They believed in a works equation- I obey, therefore I'm accepted. But the truth that Jesus exposed is that no amount of good works can get us to heaven. Salvation is offered as a gift of grace. *Ephesians 2:8-9 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.*

And the gift Jesus gave us was laying down his very life for us, in our place to pay the penalty for our sins to be forgiven eternally.

Romans 5:6-8 *⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.*

⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Don't miss the light of His glory, His truth, His grace this Christmas.

Have you seen the Light of Jesus? Or are you looking for false lights and false saviors in the glory of man- accumulation of wealth, in political leaders, powerful places and people. In a false truth- that we don't need a change of heart, just need a change of circumstance...in social movements, in solutions to our health, our happiness, a solution to your marriage, your finances. Don't miss out the greatest gift of Christmas- GRACE: a savior from our sin through Jesus Christ.

See the light of Christmas: Jesus Christ

John 1:12-13

¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Free *Why Christmas?* Book

Text "SEE" to 302-217-6594

