

OUR RESPONSE TO CHRISTMAS
John 1: 1-18; text: John 1:4-5; 10- 14
December 26, 2021

I. Human Rejection of the Word of Life

John 1:10-11 (NIV) He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

A. God, who not only made all things, but who made people with the ability to know him and have a relationship with him, humiliated himself by taking on our flesh and living for a few years on our planet.

John 1:14 (NIV) The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us

1. **The Word is the person of God who showed God to us, just as the words we speak express what is in our minds.**
2. **The Word is the one who verse 1 and 3 says is the God who made this world.**
3. **Verse 4 says that the Word gave life to us.**
4. **But verse goes on to say, "That life is the light of men."**
5. **This is the special life and light that enable us as humans to know God.**

John 17:3 (NIV) Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

6. **Jesus, the Word came, that people might know God and truly live as humans.**

B. But the humans who were given that gift did not receive him.

John 1:5 (NIV) The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

1. **The Greek word translated "understood" can be translated in different ways.**
 - a. **Some English translations translated it "and the darkness has not overcome it."**
 - b. **But the translation in our Bible seems to fit the context better.**
 - c. **An even better translation would be "and the darkness has not grasped (grabbed on to it."**
2. **That darkness represents the minds of the people who were made to know God, but who choose to ignore him.**
3. **And, sadly, in that day, that darkness included some who were God's people.**

John 1:11 (NIV) He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

4. **Can't that also be said today?**

Questions:

- 1) **Does it trouble me that many, even many Christians seem to focus more on secular celebrations, decorations, gift giving, and big meals, than they do the birth of our Savior? Why or why not? Do I find it difficult to focus on Jesus' birth during this season? Why or why not?**
- 2) **What in my view makes human beings unique among all God's creatures? Do I agree that the main reason we humans are special is that God made us in his image that we might know him and have a relationship with him? Why or why not?**
- 3) **If God made humans to know him, why do so many people serve false gods or no god at all?**
- 4) **What in my life distracts me from being aware of God's presence and prevents me from spending time with him? How much am I really seeking to glorify him by what I do each day? How much do I even think about him?**
- 5) **How might realizing God's living presence with me give me comfort during times of trouble? When is it easier to realize his presence, during good times when I am enjoying life or during difficult times when I am struggling? Why do I think that is so?**

II. The Word Becoming Flesh as God's Response to Human Rejection and Sin

A. Focus on those words, "full of grace and truth."

1. **Grace is the love that God gives to us who don't deserve it.**
2. **Truth, in this context, refers to his faithfulness to us.**
3. **God is true to us, even when we are not true to him.**
4. **The New Living Translation expresses this well, "He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness."**

B. Jesus reveals God grace and faithfulness in giving us the right to be God's children.

John 1:12 (NIV) Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

1. **He gave them that right by sacrificing himself on the cross to atone for their sins that they might be right and acceptable to God.**
2. **Remember what John the Baptist said about him.**

John 1:29 (NIV) The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

C. But Jesus also revealed God's glory

1. **God's glory is his power and authority.**
2. **Jesus showed God's power and authority through the signs and miracles he performed, and through his teaching.**
3. **In a greater way he did this through his death and resurrection, laying down his life and taking it up again.**
4. **He died and arose to give us eternal life as children of God,**

Questions:

- 1) How does the grace of Jesus comfort me every day? How does Jesus' "truth" (or faithfulness) comfort me every day?
- 2) What assures me that what the Bible says about God's grace is true, even when I have sinned terribly? How do I know God has not abandoned me in spite of terrible things that have happened in my life?
- 3) In what ways do I see God's glory every day?
- 4) In what ways have I seen and known God's glory in and through Jesus Christ, the Word? Have I seen God's glory change the life of someone close to me? When? When have I felt his glorious life-changing power in my life? Do I still feel it today as I struggle to live for him?

III. Responding to the Word Become Flesh

John 1:12-13 (NIV) Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

A. Our first response must be one of receiving Jesus and what he did for us by faith.

1. And that is not merely a one-time faith, but a faith by which we trust his grace and forgiveness, his faithfulness, and his life-giving glory every day of our lives.
 - a. Some people have come to faith in Jesus, but because they later drifted away, they think God won't accept them anymore.
 - b. The power of Jesus' death is as potent for us today as it was the hour we first believed.
2. The Holy Spirit is with us every day reminding us of God's faithful love, even during those times when our circumstances may cause us to doubt he does
3. Let us respond to the God who gave us the greatest possible gift by trusting him every day.

B. Secondly, we must respond by living as children of God.

1. Verses 12 and 13 say "he gave the right to become children of God, children not born of natural descent or a husband's will, but born of God."
2. We must respond to the new life he gave us as children of God by living as children of God.
3. Romans 13:14 tells us how to do that.

Romans 13:14 (NIV) Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

- a. Jesus Christ is God's eternal son.
- b. If we want to act like the sons and daughters of God, what better example could we have than he.
- c. His love for his Father, his gracious love for us, his obedience to his Father's commands, his trust of his Father, his prayers, and his teaching must all guide us.

C. When we put on Christ, he becomes evident in us.

Colossians 1:27 (NIV) To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

1. The Gentiles in those days were people that didn't know God.

John 1:5 (NIV) The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

2. When we show others the light of Christ, the Spirit can use us to help them receive and grasp on to Christ.
3. We are saddened by the fact that Christmas has become for many a secular commercial holiday.
4. But, let us realize the best way we can fight that.
 - a. It's not by boycotting certain stores because they tell their employees to say "Happy Holidays" rather than "Merry Christmas."
 - b. It's not by placing statues of the manger scenes in front of public buildings.
 - c. It's doubtful that such things will change unbelievers who don't grasp the light.
5. Rather than rely on such superficial things, we can really encourage people to celebrate Christmas rightly when we show them what it has meant for us that Jesus came.
6. When others see Jesus in us, they may be drawn to worship the baby who came from heaven not only to that stable in Bethlehem, but who died and arose again to give them life.

Questions:

- 1) What, if anything, causes me to struggle with trusting Jesus to save me from my sins? Do I ever fear that I have sinned so greatly that God will not accept me anymore? Why or why not?
- 2) What happened or is presently happening in my life that is challenging my faith that God still loves me?
- 3) When have I experienced the power of the Holy Spirit to help me continue to trust my God and Savior when I didn't think I could?
- 4) Am I trying to live as a child of God? In what areas am I struggling to live this way? Does it help me to focus on God's Son Jesus as I try to deal with such challenges? Why or why not?
- 5) Do I think that others are seeing Jesus in me? If so, how? If not, why not, and what should I do about that?

As you take down your Christmas lights this year, don't fail to let your real light shine that others might see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.