

The Reason for Every Season

John 1:1-18

(preached 12/19/21; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

Introduction

As we gather this Lord's Day, we are 6 days away from Christmas.

Yesterday was the second busiest shopping day of 2021, but there will plenty more Christmas shopping that will occur in the next 5 days as well.

When all the shopping is said and done, each American will have spent on average of \$850 to buy gifts for others this Christmas.

And this doesn't include the cost of food and drinks purchased to entertain family and friends.

And all of this spending makes it abundantly clear that for the majority of people, the reason for the Christmas season comes down buying gifts and getting gifts.

In fact, some of yall are sitting in the church this morning stressing over gifts that you still have to buy or stressing over how much you have already spent on Christmas.

And for that reason, it truly is a holiday that is way out of control.

Now, that's is not to say that Christmas should be avoided.

There is nothing sinful about giving or getting a gift.

There is noting sinful about eating with family and friends.

There is nothing sinful about decorations.

But there is plenty of sin in greed and anxiety and foolish financial decisions that are all associated with Christmas.

So believers have to constantly guard their hearts at Christmas because it is easy to lose your focus.

This morning, I want us to simply think about Christ and Christmas.

The call of the world is that Jesus is the Reason for the Season, but let me tell you Jesus is way more than the reason for the Christmas season.

Christ is the reason for every season.

In fact, Christ is the reason for everything, and I want to spend a few moments reminding us of that as we prepare to go to the Lord's Table.

And I think one of the best places to see Christ's supremacy in light of the Christmas season is in John 1.

I read this last Sunday evening before we sat down to our Christmas dinner together, but this morning, I want to spend a little more time in this passage to center our heart on Christ.

Now this will not be a normal expository message from these 18 verses.

In fact, a true exposition of these verses would require multiple weeks if not months.

As we began the gospel of John a few years ago, it took 4 messages to cover these 18 verses.

So my intent this morning is not give you a detailed examination of these verses.

This will be more of a survey of these 18 verses.

This will be a bird's eye view of these verses rather than a snail's view of them.

But the truths of John 1:1-18 will keep our hearts where they need to be this Christmas season.

But more than that, these verses will prepare our hearts to eat of the bread and drink of the cup in order to proclaim the Lord's death until He returns.

So, let's begin by reading the first 18 verses of the gospel of John..

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 [a]He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not [b]comprehend it.

6 There [c]came a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 [d]He came [e]as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8 [f]He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.

9 There was the true Light [g]which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His [h]own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in

His name, 13 who were [i]born, not of [j]blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

*14 And the Word became flesh, and [k]dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of [l]the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John *testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me [m]has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’” 16 For of His fullness [n]we have all received, and [o]grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth [p]were realized through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*

What I want us to see this morning are 4 ways that Christ is superior to Christmas.

Jesus is clearly the reason for the season, but He way more than that.

Let's begin in verses 1-3 with..

I. Jesus Existed Before Christmas Existed (1-3)

Look back at verse 1 of John 1..

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 [a]He was in the beginning with God.

Though God has no beginning or no end, the world in which we live did have a beginning..

We find the beginning of our world in Gen 1:1 where we find out that God made the heavens and the earth, and He even established the idea of time...

Yet, Jesus is the Word that John is talking about, and He existed before the heavens and earth were made...

Though our minds can't fully comprehend a time before the creation of the universe, Christ existed in perfection as the second member of the trinity.

He existed in the perfect union of Father, Son, and Spirit way before there ever was an earth, a solar system, a sun, a moon, and certainly before there was a holiday called Christmas..

Jesus is eternal.

He is not a created being as the Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses claim...

He is God and has always existed in eternity past and will exist into eternity future...

Jesus existed before there was a December 25th , and he will exist after December 25th is come and gone..

Jesus is eternal, and John called him the Word.

Now, let's take a little time to understand what John was doing in describing Jesus as the Word...

You see John's audience to which he wrote was made up of two types of people, Jews and Gentiles...

And John's purpose in writing his gospel is found in the next to last chapter of this gospel...

John 20:31

“these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is [h]the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

So, John was writing to Jews and Gentiles to prove that Jesus was the Son of God...

So, when he used “the Word” to describe Jesus, the Jews connected it with the Word of God, which brought the world into existence.

In the book of Genesis, God SAID, Let there be light and there was light...

To the Jew, there was power in the Word of God, and in this opening chapter of John’s gospel, the Word is about to be revealed in the flesh.

So by referring to Jesus as the Word, John got the attention of his Jewish audience and is going to tie Jesus directly to God...

For John’s non-Jewish audience, “the Word” had a different meaning...

The Greeks did not acknowledge God as the creator of all things.

Instead, they thought a force that kept all things together...

They often referred to that force as “the Logos,” which translates into the Word in English...

So John was telling the Greeks that the force that created all things and holds all things together is Jesus Christ...

And John was telling the Jews that Jesus was the word of God and was equal to God...

John called Jesus the Word to help both Jews and Greeks begin to see that Jesus is God.

So verses 1 and 2 remind us Jesus has existed forever and will exist forever.

And verse 3 reminds us Jesus brought everything into existence.

Look at verse 3...

3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

It is amazing to think that some people live for Christmas, almost as if it is a religion in itself.

Yet Christ existed before Christmas, and furthermore verse 3 tells us that everything associated with Christmas is only possible because of Christ.

Though people often urge others to keep Christ in Christmas, let me assure you that Christmas doesn't exist unless Christ made it possible.

Way before Jesus was the babe in manger, he was the Creator of all things.

So any kind of Christmas celebration without Christ in the center of it is just a human get together.

Any kind of Christmas activity that doesn't acknowledge Christ as the center of all things is just a human activity.

So Jesus is before Christmas in time and importance.

A second relationship we see between Jesus and Christmas is found in verses 4-11...

II. Jesus Is Rejected but Christmas is Accepted (4-11)

In verses 4-11, we are reminded that even though Jesus existed before all mankind and even created all of mankind, most of mankind has rejected him...

In **verse 4-5**, we see a great truth but sad truth about Christ...

4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not [b]comprehend it.

Jesus came to bring life to dead people, and He came to be a light in a dark world...

These are pictures that the Bible uses constantly to describe mankind....

People are dead in their sins...

People live in the darkness of their sins...

This is a universal truth that has been true since the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden...

Everyone who has ever been born was born a sinner, and lived in a world of darkness....

And the Bible says not only do we live in darkness, our sinful nature is drawn to that darkness and not to the light...

Yet, Jesus was born to break through that darkness...

He was born to give life to dead men and light to a dark world...

You even see in verses 6-8 that God sent someone to announce the arrival of life and light into the world...

6 There [c]ame a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 [d]He came [e]as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8 [f]He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.

John the Baptist, though he lived in wilderness and ate locusts and honey, came to testify about the arrival of Christ...

Yet, the world rejected John the Baptist, and they also rejected the One that John the Baptist testified about...

Look at verses 9-11...

9 There was the true Light [g]which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world

did not know Him. 11 He came to His [h]own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

Though Christ came to bring the light of His truth to the world, the world rejected Christ.

Though Christ came to offer salvation to Jew and Gentile, the majority of Jews and Gentiles rejected Him.

Though Christ made the world and came to die for those in the world, the world has rejected Christ.

He was not received by the Jewish people.

He was not received by the Gentile world.

This is the great irony of the gospel.

In his sin, man needs to know how to get to God.

In his sin, man needs to know the truths of God.

And Christ came to bring both, but the world preferred darkness over light and lies over truth.

This stands in sharp contrast to most people's view of Christmas....

Most people love Christmas.

Most people accept Christmas.

There are incredible numbers of unbelievers who celebrate Christmas.

The reality is that Christmas has almost universal acceptance, Jesus has almost universal rejection...

Everyone loves the trees and the meals and the presents and the lights of Christmas, but not everyone loves the Christ of Christmas...

And how do we know that?

Because the same people saying that Jesus is the reason for the season are the same people who will sin against Jesus all during the Christmas season.

And the reason for that is simple.

They love Christmas but they have no desire to obey the commands of Christ.

A third relationship between Jesus and Christmas is found in verses 12-13....

III. Jesus Is About Giving, But Christmas Is about Getting (12-13)

Look at verse 12...

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name...

Though everyone at Christmas says that it is better to give than receive...

We all still loving the receiving part of Christmas...

Yet, the central theme of Christmas is God giving His Son to the world, and then the Son giving his Life for the world..

And when someone repents of sin and turns in faith to Christ, Jesus gives the right to be called children of God.

Unlike what many teach, not everyone is a child of God.

That title only belongs to those who are saved through faith in Christ.

But then see the greatest gift of God in verse 13...

13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

The most incredible gift of salvation is the fact that God even gives us the repentance and faith necessary to believe in the name of Christ...

John is very clear here...

No one receives Christ without a work of God...

No one is saved by their own blood or by the will of their own flesh or their own will...

Salvation is entirely a work of God...

Not only does God give the gift us the gift of salvation; he gives us the faith and the repentance to believe in Jesus name and receive the right to be called children of God...

Salvation is all about the giving of God...

Jesus is all about the giving of Himself in the place of sinful man...

We may say Christmas is a season of giving, but it truly has become a season of getting.

Let's move to verses 14-18 and discover a final truth of Christ's supremacy to Christmas.

IV. Jesus Shows Us God but Christmas Shows Us Man (14-18)

Let me read verses 14-18 again...

*14 And the Word became flesh, and [k]dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of [l]the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John *testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me [m]has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’” 16 For of His fullness [n]we have all received, and [o]grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth [p]were realized through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*

Though there are some incredible truths in this final section of verses 14-18, I want us to focus on just one...

When Jesus came to earth, God came to earth...

You see in verse 14 that John goes all the way back to verse 1 and mentions the Word again....

For the Jews, they would associate the Word of God as God Himself, full of power and truth...

For the Greeks, they would associate the Word with the force in the universe that created all things...

But the important thing to remember is this..

Neither the Jews nor the Greeks would consider the Word as something that you could see or touch or talk to...

The Jews would see the Word as the invisible power of God, and the Greek would see the Word as the invisible force of the Universe...

So when John says that the Word became flesh, he would stop all of his readers in their tracks...

The birth of Jesus was the revelation of God in the flesh.

The Creator has come in the cradle of a stable.

The Eternal One had entered time.

The invisible spirit was now made visible.

The Word became flesh.

This is the summary of Christmas, and this was world shattering news to John's readers.

The baby in the manger was God taking on human flesh...

It was the story of stories...

The headline of headlines...

This is not just a reason to enjoy a meal and exchange a few presents...

This is the most important event in the history of the world.

The Second Member of the Trinity left heaven and came to earth.

The One who created all and holds all together entered into His creation and lived there.

The eternal One came into a temporary world to reveal God's glory to mankind...

And why is this incredible?

Look back at verse 18..

18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

Jesus, being fully God and part of the trinity, came to earth to explain God to us...

What an incredible truth that is..

Jesus came to show us the glory of God...

That often stands in sharp contrast to Christmas, which shows us the glory of man...

Many people at Christmas are not celebrating the fact that Jesus' birth brought the glory of God to earth...

Many people are at Christmas are celebrating their glory on earth...

We can afford these gifts...

We can eat this meal...

We can enjoy our family...

Lost in all those traditions is the incredible news that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us to give us a picture of the eternal God...

Jesus came to show us the glory of God.

Unfortunately, Christmas is often nothing more than people showing off their own glory.

Now please understand, I am not here to throw a damper on your Christmas celebrations.

Please go and enjoy the good things of God at Christmas.

Family is good.

Having food to enjoy is good.

Being able to give to others is good.

There are no sin in those things necessarily.

But Christmas must never be the center of our lives.

It must never consume our thoughts or direct our emotions.

And why is that?

Well, John 1:1-18 reminds us that Jesus is far superior to Christmas.

#1 Jesus existed before Christmas.

#2 It is far better to embrace Jesus than to embrace Christmas.

#3 Jesus came to give, but Christmas often centers on getting.

And #4, Jesus came to reveal the glory of God, while Christmas is often focused on the glory of man.

Therefore, the question for your heart this morning is simple..

Would you love Christ if there were no Christmas?

Would you celebrate Christ if there were no holidays that pointed to Him?

I pray that you would.

Christ is far superior to any man made traditions or gatherings.

Christ is far superior to any gift giving or family dinners.

Christ is far superior to everything.

So may our hearts as believers remember that as we gather to celebrate Christmas.

And for anyone here who doesn't know Christ in a saving way, may God give you no peace at Christmas until you repent of your sin and put your faith in Christ alone.

While the world sings of peace on earth at Christmas, our prayer for you is that God would give you the peace of being right with Him through faith and repentance in His Son.

Christ came to the world to bring light and life.

This morning, the light of Christ is the truth that the only solution to sin is Christ.

This morning, the light of Christ is the truth that Christ was born to die, but in his death, Christ secured the forgiveness for all who will believe in Him alone.

This morning, the lights of Christ is the truth that anyone who refuses to come to Christ will die and be punished forever in a lake of fire.

This morning the light of Christ is the truth that he is the source of all life in the world.

He brings every man physical life, and He will give you spiritual life if you put your faith in Him alone.

This is the light of the gospel of Christ, and for those who believe, God grants new life for them now and forever more.

And this is why Christmas is not gifts and food, but rather life and death.

So trust in Christ and turn from you sin, and you will pass from death to life.

And if you have questions about that, please come find me once church is over.

For now, let us as believers in Christ go to the Lord's Table.

If you are not familiar with the Lord's Supper, it is a symbolic event to remind Christians of what Christ accomplished for us on the cross.

Though the wooden manger in Bethlehem is sweet to consider, the wooden cross outside Jerusalem is even sweeter for the believer.

Because it was there that the babe in Bethlehem had become the Lamb that was slain for His people.

Jesus life was truly the story of the cradle to the cross.

And though Jesus' birth and life revealed the glory of God to all mankind, the cross secured the forgiveness of sin only for those who believe in Christ.

Therefore, the church gathers frequently together to remember the gift of salvation secured by Jesus on the cross.

In a few moments, I will pray and our deacons at Pine Grove will come forward and serve you a wafer and grape juice, which are symbols of the body and blood of Christ.

The Bible says that the wages of sin is death.

And Christ body was put to death by the hands of sinful men according the plan of God.

His body was beaten and bruised and blood poured from it as if He were punished for being the worst of sinners, even though his body never committed one single sin.

But this was what Jesus was sent to do.

He came wrapped in fresh cloths, but he died in blood stained clothing to satisfy the wrath of God against the sins of His people.

Yet in that unjust death, he paid a just ransom to secure the freedom of all of His people.

So we gather to remember that sacrifice.

We gather to think about the body and blood of Christ.

If you are not a Christian, I warn you not to take part in this portion of our service until you repent of your sin and trust in Christ alone.

To take part in this without faith in Christ is to invite God's judgment in your life.

And if you are a believer living in unrepentant sin, I also warn you not to take part in this portion of our service until you repent of your sin.

To take part while living in sin is to also invite God's judgment into your life.

For the rest of us, what a great way to honor Christ this morning.

We believe that HE is superior to all things including Christmas.

WE believe that He is the son of God who was slain for the sins of His people.

WE believe that his death secured the forgiveness of our sin.

And we believe that He is returning one day to set up His kingdom.

So let us gather this morning to proclaim that.

Let us pray.