Why the Incarnation Matters

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[0:00] If you have your Bibles with you, go ahead and turn to John chapter 1.

! Christmas is probably one of the most significant holidays that we as Christians observe.! Christmas, we remember the day of salvation, was made possible for us through the incarnation. When God became man, when he sent his son Jesus to dwell amongst us and to provide a way for us to be adopted as sons and daughters.
I want to read probably one of the most significant passages that talks about the incarnation. And that's in John chapter 1. So if you all would, let's stand together in honor of reading of God's Word.
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
[1:15] He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.
He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory, glory of the only Son, from the Father, full of grace and truth.
[2:31] John bore witness about him, and cried out, This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.

From his fullness, we have all received grace upon grace. This is the word of the Lord, church. You all may have a seat. As we look in this passage, you know what John is doing with this gospel account that he is writing, he is writing a letter of evangelical intent.
And immediately from the start of this letter, he wants people to know that there is something special about Jesus. He wants all the attention to be focused on Christ.
He doesn't want to leave anything up to question about who this letter might be about. It's about Jesus. And he wants them to know that up front, that there is something special about this person. Jesus is God in flesh. And he has left heaven to be our Savior. You know, that's one of the greatest truths about our faith. You know, we live in a world that is constantly telling us that we need to make ourselves better.
[3:52] That we need to make ourselves good enough. That there's some standard that we might be trying to measure up to. Even in other faiths that believe in some sort of deity, they believe that you have to make yourself good enough to get to your God one day.

But we serve a God who knew that we could not be good enough to cross that divide. So he crossed it for us and became one of us.
That's what the incarnation is. It's when Jesus became flesh for us. You know, we hear all the time, to the point where it almost becomes just common language.
Well, of course, Jesus was the Son of God. That's just part of Christmas. But it's important to understand the significance of the incarnation.
The impact that that has on our faith. And to understand that, I think we need to understand who Jesus is. I want to look at a few ways that John has described Jesus here at the beginning of his gospel.

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[4:58] It says, In the beginning was the Word. So the Word that is Jesus, that is who John is talking about. If you are new here and you don't know who John is talking about when he says the Word, he is talking about Jesus.

So the Word that is Jesus, he did not come into existence in the beginning. He was not a created being. The Word was there in the beginning. John is proclaiming the eternal nature of Christ.
And that's important because Christ's eternality, that is one of the most defining characteristics of Jesus' deity. That's one of the things that he shares with God that nobody else can.
He is eternal. There is no beginning to him and there is no end to him. He was in the beginning. The next thing that John says is that the Word was with God.
There was already fellowship between God the Father and God the Son in the beginning. Jesus was not a product of God's creation, but an eternal member of the Godhead that we call the Trinity, through which God created all things.
[6:07] So Jesus was not a product of God's creation. He was an agent of God's creation that he made all things through. Probably one of the most important things that John says about Jesus in this opening prologue here is that the Word was God.

Jesus is God. He is no less God than any other member of the Holy Trinity. Jesus himself said that he and the Father were one. In one of his discourses between him and the Pharisees, he said that before Abraham was, I am.
We see Jesus wielding his divine authority over everything that sin has broken in this world, in his earthly ministry. According to God's Word that we have read here and in other places that you will read, Jesus' divinity is beyond question.
You cannot say anything less than, yes, Jesus is God. He is divine. So here we have Jesus, completely God, completely man, yet worthy of all of our worship.
He's eternal. He's sovereign. Yet he presents himself to humanity after 400 years of silence in the form of a baby. Now tonight, I want to answer the question of why the incarnation is important to us as Christians.
[7:35] Why is this so important to our faith and our salvation? And just from this passage, there's three reasons that I want to lay out for you.

From verses 4 through 9, God does not want to leave us in darkness. That's the first reason the incarnation is so important, because it shows us that God does not want to leave his people in darkness.
Darkness and light all throughout Scripture have always been opposed to each other. They've been opposing forces representing life and death. Sinful nature versus new nature in Christ.
Enlightenment versus foolishness. The Old Testament even establishes this contradiction between the two with the advent of the Messiah. In Isaiah 9, verse 2, it says, The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.
Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shone. The darkness that Jesus is shining into is our captivity to sin.
[8:42] Our desperate need for a loving shepherd to come and tend to his flock. Darkness has had its reign long enough on earth, and the fullness of time had come. Just like we had sang in that song, the fullness of time had come.

In other words, God had been working this plan all along. This wasn't something that God had come up with at the last minute. Like, you know, I think I'm going to work salvation this way now. Now, this was something that he had planned all along.
The fullness of time had come. Jesus is here to set the captives free. Now, maybe you're here and you've never come to Jesus in faith because you might think, well, my darkness is too deep.
Listen, darkness has been trying to overcome the light for a long time. And as we see in verse 5, the darkness has not overcome the light. You may feel the weight of the world on your shoulders, but Jesus said, I have overcome the world.
The light of the world we are reading about tonight and that we are celebrating in this season has come to be your eternal victory over sin and darkness.
[9:48] And that light still shines just as brightly today. And if you will receive him, believe in him as Lord, then your sin will no longer be a barrier between you and God.

And then this next bit of news will be good news for you. This is the second reason that the incarnation is so important to us as believers. God has made a way for us to be his children.

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God has made a way for us to be his children. To the problem that Jesus encountered, which was no surprise to him. In verses 10 through 13, we said, we read that his own creation did not receive him.
They didn't recognize him as their creator. That's probably the greatest impact that sin has on us as fallen beings. That we're no longer able to commune with our creator on our own.
There's been a divide that has been placed here by sin. Sin having broken our relationship with God and excluding us from the family of God, someone needed to repair what was broken.
[10:56] Jesus' incarnation has made that possible. Galatians 4, 4 through 5. The scripture that this song that the choir just led is based on. Galatians 4, 4 through 5 says, But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Sin has separated us from the family of God, but in his love, God has elected to send his son Jesus to pay the price for our adoption. Adoption is costly.
And it's something that has to be done by the will of the parents that are adopting the child. It's a beautiful picture of what God has done for us here. Our adoption had a heavy price.
It was a price that we could not pay on our own. It was a price that Jesus had to pay for us with his death and resurrection on the cross. And it was not something that we could do of our own will, but it had to be done by the will of God.
He had the desire to adopt us. And he did. And he's still adopting people today. That is a great truth that the incarnation brings to us. And this sheds light on the next truth of why the incarnation is important in our third and final one.
[12:20] And that's this. God desires to be close to us. We have a God that desires closeness with his creation. Up until this point in history, God has been showing this desire for closeness.

We see it in pictures throughout the Old Testament, like the temple and the tabernacle. God's presence literally dwelt in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle.
And that tabernacle was placed in the middle of the Israelite camp amongst his people. We also see this desire with his use of the prophets to deliver his good word to the people, to the nation of Israel.
We also see this desire for closeness with the law. God desired to have a covenant relationship with his creation. But even in these pictures of closeness, there's a need for fulfillment.
With the tabernacle, yes, God's presence dwelt in the tabernacle amongst his people, but only the high priest could approach the Holy of Holies and mediate and make sacrifices for the people.
[13:33] The prophets, even though if they were faithful, they delivered the good word of God, they still needed to be the intermediary between the people and between God.

The law, even though it was holy and good, the people pursuing it were not. And always lacked an inward cleansing, falling constantly short of that standard that was needed for righteousness.
This need for fulfillment, for closeness, was met in Jesus. He tore the curtain of the Holy of Holies and came as Emmanuel, God with us.
Not God in a tabernacle, not God in a Holy of Holies where only one person can enter once a year. God with us, Emmanuel. In the final days, Hebrews says that God has now spoken to us through Jesus.
The word made flesh like we just read here in John chapter one. And while we could not be holy enough to fulfill the demands of the law, Jesus did and offers us his righteousness in return.
[14:44] So why does the incarnation matter? Because our salvation is only made possible through it. Everything God promised through the prophets is fulfilled in it.

Every hope that we have for the future rests upon it. We are a people who rejoice in the incarnation because without it, there would never be an offering that would be perfect enough to rescue us from our sins, from the darkness that has entangled our souls for so long.
Jesus is the light that overcomes the darkness. And God is still desiring to shine that light into the darkest parts of this world and into the darkest parts of your life today.
Now, maybe you are here and you know that that light has never shined into your life. You know for a fact that you are still at odds with God. But I can tell you with 100% certainty from God's word that there is no sin that is too great, that Jesus' love and grace can't outshine.
If you will just place your faith in Jesus, believe that he is the son of God, believe that he is God made flesh who died for your sins and submit to him as Lord, you can be made right with God.

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[16:06] You can be adopted as sons and daughters. You can no longer be at odds with God, but be welcomed into his family and have that closeness that God has been desiring to have with you for so long that we see all throughout scripture.

That's why the incarnation matters. And I hope that as we pray and as we get ready to depart, that that will always be at the front of your minds. Not necessarily the presence, not the time with the family, even though those are great things, those are important.
But the reason that we celebrate is because of what Jesus did for us. The fullness of time that was finally reached and God's plan was fulfilled. I want to pray.
And then what we're going to do after that, you all have candles. We're going to spread out and make a circle around the room. You just turn those candles on at the bottom.
And then we're going to sing Silent Night with our candlelight part of the service as we depart today. So I want to pray. And then once I do, you all can spread out. Father, we thank you that there is no divide that you would not cross for us.
[17:21] You show that in your son, Jesus. Lord, even though he was completely God, he took on the form of being completely man so that he could die on the cross for us, so that he could make a way for us to be adopted, so that he could show your desire to be close to us, so that he could fulfill all of the plans that you have made from the beginning of time.

Lord, we thank you for the gift of Jesus. And Lord, I pray that as we depart today, Lord, that we would remember why it is we celebrate this season. And Lord, I pray over anyone that is here that knows that they are not your child, that knows they have never placed their faith in Jesus.
Lord, I know that you have brought them here for a reason, to hear the truth tonight of what Christ has done for us. And Lord, I pray that they would not leave this place without feeling the conviction from your Holy Spirit the draw from your sovereign call.
And Lord, I pray that they would be saved and be adopted into your family as sons and daughters and that they would be redeemed and reconciled. Lord, we thank you for Jesus.
And I pray that as we close this time together, Lord, that we would leave this place celebrating the incarnation. I pray for all these things in Jesus' name.
[18:43] Amen. Silent night, holy night, all this love, all this pride, round yon virgin, mother and child.

Mother and child, holy infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.
Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light, with thee angels let us sing.
Alleluia to our King.
Christ the Savior is born. Christ the Savior is born.
[20:50] Amen.

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