

Be the Light

Scripture used: 1 John 1:1-2, John 1:1-4 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Big Idea:

Christmas is an opportunity for us to renew our capacity to believe. Some of us have been followers of Jesus for a while, but every Christmas is an opportunity to reflect on the gift and grace of God and deepen our faith. For others of us, Christmas is an opportunity to believe again after life's tragedies, hardships, and distractions may have distanced us from God. For others of us, Christmas is an opportunity to believe for the first time. The message began with showing a true story of an everyday encounter on Christmas Eve:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-VbG4JhT64>. (To search for it on YouTube, search "Melanie Wilson Christmas.")

KEY POINTS

- 1) ***The Christmas account in Scripture is true.*** Christmas means little if the story itself is not true. All the Gospels and New Testament letters were written very plainly to be eyewitness accounts that Jesus lived, died, and was who he said he was. This is what John is emphasizing in 1 John 1:1-2.
- 2) ***The truth makes a difference in our lives.*** John 1:1-4 highlights three ways that the reality of God's love in Jesus matters:
 - a. ***In Jesus, we find life.*** The life that Jesus offers is not merely physical existence, it is a life full of meaning and purpose.
 - b. ***In Jesus, we find light.*** Jesus is the light of the world, and the light he offers shows us how to live, and it also helps us to see who we are, who others are, and the fullness of God's love.
 - c. ***In Jesus, we find love.*** The love of Jesus is a love we desperately need. Jesus' love is an unconditional, grace-filled, healing, forgiving, and transformative love.
- 3) ***Because Jesus loves us from the "bottom up", we can be the light by loving others in the same way.*** The YouTube video that was shown is the true story of a store manager who catches a shoplifter on Christmas Eve, but realizes that the man is simply trying to provide a little bit of Christmas for his kids. As God gives her light to see the man's circumstances, she renews his life by loving him with unconditional grace and paying the price of the items for him, so he can provide for his family. We learn from the man that sometimes it is good to get caught in our brokenness, if we truly are caught by the grace of God. We learn from the woman that celebrating Christmas isn't about what we do on one particular holiday. It is about realizing that God has paid the price for us on the cross, so we can be the light for others by seeking to love others every day with amazing grace.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Where do you find yourself this Christmas? What do you need from God? Spend some time reflecting on the reality that Jesus is Immanuel, God with us, and how that impacts your life.
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Reflect on John 1:1-4 and 1 John 1:1-2. Where have you experienced the grace of God in your own life? Have you ever been "caught" in something, and ultimately realized you were caught by God's grace? How does God ask us to respond to His grace in our lives? Have we experienced Jesus as our source of life, light, and love?
- 3) **DO** - We were challenged to be the light in this world. Think about what this would look like in your family, at your workplace, and in the communities of which you are a part. Pray and ask God for strength and courage to be a light in dark places, where hope, healing, and love are needed!