



The Story of Christmas: "Jesus"

John 1 & John 3

12_24_2024

Speaker: Pastor Drew Hunsley

Anaheim Hills, CA | RockCC.com

26:58

Well Merry Christmas. Such a fun service. I love having this opportunity to gather together with our church family one last time before everybody runs off to their big holiday parties.

28:20

Maybe you're heading to mom's house or grandma's or traveling. My family, we're getting ready to fly out of LA in a few hours. So everybody's got big Christmas plans, right? But this is such a wonderful time for us to gather together and spend time together.

28:35

So if you've been with us over the past several weeks, you may know that on Sunday mornings we've been working through a series through December that we're calling the Story of Christmas. We've been looking at the Story of Christmas through the lens of different participants.

28:52

We looked at Mary's story a few weeks ago. We looked at how Mary slowed down to... to ponder God's work in her life. We looked the next week at the story of Joseph, how Joseph took the news and saw Christmas through his eyes.

29:07

We saw Joseph's immediate obedience in response to the angel coming and telling him what to do and how to respond. And Joseph beautifully illustrated for us obedience in very tangible ways in taking Mary as his wife and raising Jesus as his own son.

29:24

We saw the next week, the story of the shepherds. We looked at the shepherds, how they received the news that a newborn savior had been born. And that created joyful excitement in those young men that as they rushed off into Bethlehem, they ran off excited to tell everyone the news of what had happened that night in Bethlehem as a baby was lying in a manger.

29:50

And then this past Sunday, we looked at the story of the wise men, how these magi, these wise men had seen Jesus' star that had shown up in the sky and these men sought Jesus. They brought what they had.

30:02

They did what they could to offer gifts to Jesus as they acknowledged him as the new king. But the final message that I wanted to kind of share, the final perspective that I wanted to offer as we consider the Christmas story this year was to consider the Christmas story through the eyes of Jesus himself.

30:21

Who was Jesus? What was Jesus doing before the Christmas story and why did Jesus choose to come? What was Jesus doing in coming and being born and being laid in a manger, being born in Bethlehem on that night?

30:36

I want to consider and invite you to consider Jesus's perspective on the events of that day. Now we don't have any reflections, any profound insights from that day. There's no secret scroll that we found that tells us what Jesus was sitting there in the manger thinking as he was looking around at the the holes in the roof or whatever it may have been.

30:56

He was a human baby, right, whose development was on par. I'm sure he checked every one of the boxes when he went to the pediatrician's office, but he was the same as any other one-day-old baby. So Jesus is, he's just a baby.

31:12

Luke 2 tells us that Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. That means that Jesus was on a developmental track. He was God, fully God, laying there in that manger that day, but he was also fully human.

31:26

That means that he couldn't get up and hunt for his own food. That means that he couldn't have a conversation with Mary and Joseph that day. He grew up like any other child. He lived a normal human existence and all of the the weaknesses and frailties that we have Jesus had.

31:43

Jesus got hungry. Jesus got upset when he was missing something. When he, as a baby, had a wet huggies on his rear end. He was upset about that, right? All the same

things that we have as humans Jesus experienced he was fully God as he was laying in that manger but he was also fully human.

32:06

While we don't have any profound insights into what Jesus thought of the shepherd's smell or the wise men's gifts we do know a few things about what happened on that night that we want to consider this evening.

32:18

We know who Jesus was before that night in Bethlehem that I'd like to share with you for just a minute or two. And we also know why he chose to come, why Jesus came. John chapter 1 gives us a picture of what was going on with Jesus, both before that moment when he entered into the world in Bethlehem, but also as he entered in why he came.

32:40

So let me pray for us. And then we're gonna dive into a couple of different things in John chapter 1. Would you pray with me church? God, we thank you for the privilege of being here, of being able to come and to gather in your house, God, for the joy of this Christmas season as it is Christmas Eve.

32:57

We're preparing to go eat some wonderful food, to go spend time with family, or have meaningful time that we might have moments to pause and to consider the glory of Jesus coming and living among us, even perhaps by ourselves in this time.

33:12

But, God, that as we have this moment together this evening, God, as we have the privilege of being able to slow down and to consider who Jesus was and what Jesus did, we pray that you would give us eyes to see and ears to hear what you would say to us this evening.

33:30

God, we pray that you would help us to truly consider Christmas through your eyes, through Jesus' eyes as He came and laid aside the glories of heaven to come and to live among us. We pray that you would

33:42

use this time to stretch us, to cause us to think and to consider and God perhaps most importantly God we pray that everything that we do that it would point to you, that it would give you the glory that you deserve on this beautiful Christmas Eve.

33:57

It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen. All right, well just two short thoughts for us this evening before we get you out of here. The first thing is I'd like to look at John chapter 1 and talk about who Jesus was.

34:11

Who Jesus was. We know about the story with the baby and the manger in Bethlehem, all of those things, but who Jesus was starts far, far, far before a night in Bethlehem. And John chapter 1, John focuses on who Jesus was before Bethlehem.

34:28

So let me read for you John chapter 1, verses 1 through 4. John uses the term the Word to refer to Jesus as the living, the fleshy Word of God that came and lived among us. So in John 1, he says, in the beginning was the Word, Jesus.

34:46

The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things that were made were made through Him, and without Him, nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men.

34:56

Before Jesus shows up on the scene on that first Christmas night in Bethlehem he was with God. It tells us in John chapter 1 that before the world began Jesus was there. Jesus has always been he wasn't born. He was born in a way on that night in Bethlehem but he also he wasn't created that night in Bethlehem.

34:56

Jesus was there before any of that happened before there was Mary before there was a Bethlehem before there was a star, Jesus was there. John 1:1 tells us that the Word was with God and the Word was God. Jesus was God. It tells us in verse 2 that he was there in the beginning and verse 3 tells us that without him none of this that we see would have ever come into being. Without him nothing would have been made Colossians chapter 1 reinforces the same story in verses 16 and 17.

35:59

Colossians 1, it says, by him, by Jesus, all things were created through him and for him. In verse 17 it tells us that in him, in Jesus, all things hold together. So when Jesus shows up in that manger in Bethlehem, the entire creation knows who he is.

36:17

Maybe the the shepherds needed to hear the news from the angels, maybe the wise men needed to see and realize that this star signified that something special was happening. But in that moment when he's born, I'll tell you the mountains knew who he was, the animals knew who he was.

36:35

The angels who came and announced his birth, the angels knew who he was because they had been there all along. Angels were there when God said let there be and there was. They were created by him and they were created for him.

36:50

In fact, Jesus created Mary who he then humbled himself before and became dependent on. Seems like a strange moment. I know we have kind of similar strange moments as we were talking a minute ago. Pastor Dave was talking about we don't refer to them as old, right?

37:09

They're sweet grandmas or they're other things, but you know at times we have moments where maybe we have to care for a parent. Maybe the roles reverse and that becomes strange for us in a fact that one day a child becomes dependent on a parent and then maybe later in life a parent can become dependent on a child, but in this moment there's a really strange reality here because Jesus, the one who spoke and stars flew out into the sky.

37:36

The one who created Mary is now being born and cared for by that same woman who he had created years earlier. It seems like this was almost some sort of an undercover boss thing, right? Jesus, the creator of the universe, decides, you know what, I'm gonna go and

37:54

I'm gonna live among them. I'm gonna see how things work down there, but we don't hear those stories often, do we? Aside from the novelty of a TV show like that where the CEO of the company comes in and scoops ice cream or whatever it may be, we don't hear stories of a supreme leader humbling themselves or subjecting themselves to their subjects.

38:15

I don't remember ever hearing about great globally dominant leaders going and waiting tables or caring for the dishes at a big banquet. Jesus created Mary, but now the woman who He created was going to be fully responsible to care for and to protect and to raise God as her newborn child.

38:39

Why would Jesus, the one who created the world, place Himself in a position of submission like this? It's strange at the very least to see the king of the universe humbling himself and placing himself in

38:54

such an utter, helpless position of dependence on a woman named Mary and a man named Joseph. If we were to ask that question, why would Jesus do such a thing? I'm glad you would ask that because John explains that just a few lines later in

39:09

John chapter 1 verse 14 which we just read a moment ago and then the few chapters later in John chapter 3. John tells us why he came in these verses so it's such a strange exercise for us to sit back and to wonder what it was like for Jesus in those first few moments in Bethlehem.

39:29

You know everything is so new for infants and in the same way many of these things that he was there experiencing were new for him in a way. Now I know not the same way that every normal child experiences all of the new but he was a normal human child that means he faced the same limitations that every other baby faces.

39:49

That means at the same time that the one who created many of those discoveries that he was discovering he was discovering these things he was breathing perhaps for the first time as his lungs filled up with air as Mary gave birth to her firstborn son.

40:05

It's a significant thing for babies right that's that's the thing that we want to make sure is fully developed before babies enter the world. Can they breathe air on the outside of the mother. Jesus was taking his first breath in that moment.

40:19

The sensory input that Jesus was being overwhelmed by the bright lights or maybe the sounds or maybe the smells, these different things that babies enter into the world and they experience all these new things.

40:32

Jesus was experiencing in a unique way in this moment in history. I always love how babies, the newborn babies, they kind of curl up and they they're so fascinated by their fingers. Maybe he was looking at his fingers or tasting his fingers or noticing his fingerprints that were there on his hands.

40:50

You know who created those? He did. Strange to think about, isn't it? He was looking at his mother's face, noticed and locking in like a newborn child would when you make that eye contact with a baby for the first time.

41:07

And you can tell they're just soaking it all in. They're watching and learning and taking in all those facial expressions, all those things, learning the contours of mom's face. Resting in his mother's arms, all those things that he was experiencing on that night.

41:24

He was the one at the root of why they existed. Jesus was the one who created those contours on Mary's face, and now he was discovering them as her newborn child. He was the one that was fundamentally responsible for all these things, yet on the same track he was on the receiving end now of all of these things.

41:44

It's weird to think about, but in the midst of it all, John tells us why Jesus became a man in verse 14. Tells us that In John 1:14, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

42:03

John 1:14 tells us that Jesus became a man and lived among us to reveal to us who God is, to put on flesh and to show us in a tangible way a God who is otherwise invisible. We can't see God in the same way that we can see Mike or Gilbert or Alvin sitting around this room, but we can see Jesus in that same way.

42:27

Jesus came and lived among us, tells us that He came to reveal to us who God was. It says in verse 14 that we have seen his glory the glory of the Father. Jesus came to do two key things in this moment.

42:43

First, he came to bring a tangible picture of God to humanity. Jesus in John chapter 14 a little later on he said if you have seen me, you have seen the Father. But he also came to reconcile humanity to God, to make a way for us to go from being far from God, from being strangers and aliens in

43:07

the kingdom of God to going in and being received and adopted as God's sons. God's daughters. John chapter 3, just a page or two to the right of where we are in John 1, tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

43:26

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. Jesus came and humbled Himself. Jesus comes in as the undercover boss not to investigate how things are being done, not to catch Mary or Joseph in the act of doing something they shouldn't be doing.

43:46

But Jesus came to stand in the gap between God and humanity and to bridge that gap. To create a path where God and flawed, sinful humans could be reconciled, could be brought back together. That baby in the manger that night in Bethlehem came to make salvation available to me and to you.

44:12

So what do we do with that. So what's the point? Why are we talking about this on a Christmas Eve right? Drew don't you know we're just supposed to read Luke chapter 2. We're supposed to hear how angels were coming to announce the the birth to the shepherds and you know we know the story right why are we talking about this? Well I don't know about you but sometimes I struggled to to lay aside my rights a lot in life.

44:41

You know, I'll look at circumstances. I'll look at a situation and say, you know, I'm right about this. I don't have to apologize for whatever it is that I said or did. I was right. They don't get to talk to me like that.

44:52

I can't believe what he did or what she did. Can you believe, and we get so worked up in what we deserve or what we think we should be able to do or say or think or receive in whatever circumstance. Time for me to get a little bit vulnerable.

45:10

Just yesterday, my wife and I had to work a few things out. We're not gonna get into all the details, but I was being very focused on my rights and my feelings, and I thought I deserved some things that, we needed to slow down, and I needed to, you know, get my head out of my backside. And realize there's just some things that just because I think I deserve them doesn't mean that that I do.

45:33

We're very prideful people aren't we? We always think we're right.

45:39

We always think we know best. We always think that that I deserve more than than I truly deserve. We have trouble submitting to someone else. That's when we look at someone who is our equal in a lot of ways and say I'm not gonna submit, I'm not gonna humble myself before them.

45:56

Meanwhile, Jesus, the God who has always been, the God who always will be, the one who created the world, Jesus came and humbled himself in the most extreme way because Jesus eternally existent, eternally glorified in heaven before this moment.

46:16

Jesus laid aside the glories of heaven and came on that night in Bethlehem as a helpless baby. The level of sacrifice that Jesus exhibited to come as a fully dependent infant is mind-blowing to me. To consider what that change must have been for him, for him to go from all-powerful, all-knowing God of the universe to be limited and restrained by an infant body.

46:47

It'll break your brain if you think too hard about it. Meanwhile, we struggle to help with the dishes or be the first one to apologize. We've got two applications for you today as we wrap up and send you out of here.

47:01

Two things that I want for you to consider or for you to remember as we leave here this evening. The first one is that you are loved extravagantly by a God who came, by a God who put on humanity, and by a God who lived among us to show you what God was like.

47:19

We can be encouraged today that God decided that that putting on humanity, that coming and living among us was worth it to him. Romans chapter 5 tells us that God demonstrated his love for us that even while we were still sinners, even while we were enemies of God, even as we stood fully opposed to him with no rights, nothing deserving in us, that God would come and that God would choose to do what he did.

47:46

Even in all of that, God demonstrated His love for us that He would send Jesus to come and to die for us. We can be encouraged today that God decided that humanity, that you, were worth it in all of this. Jesus illustrated the ultimate humility when he condescended.

48:03

That's a word that we use negatively sometimes, but it simply means that he graciously and voluntarily stooped low, that he came down, that he kind of got that gentle grandpa posture that he came down and said, alright, we're gonna do this together.

48:19

Jesus came and lived among us and he became a man. Philippians chapter 2 tells us to have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who even though he

was God, even though he was in the form of God, he did not count his equality with God as a thing to be grasped and held on to.

48:40

But he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, by being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.

48:52

Even death on a cross. What an incredibly, radical change the God of the universe would come, would put on humanity. Not only that but in that moment before he entered into humanity Jesus knew the plan.

49:12

Jesus knew what the plan was. Jesus knew that one day he wasn't going to just be an infant who needed his diaper changed. He was going to be a man who was wrongly convicted and killed for something that he didn't do so that you could be forgiven for all the stuff you have done.

49:27

So that I could be forgiven for all the stuff I have done. Let us never forget the benevolent generosity that Jesus showed in humbling himself at Christmas. Second thing that I would encourage you to remember and to take away from this evening, John 3:16 tells us that God gave his son so that whoever believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.

49:52

Don't leave here today without that assurance. Don't leave here today without knowing in the same way that you know many other things. Know today that if you leave here that you have eternal life in your back pocket.

50:09

Do you believe in Him? Do you believe in Him so that you will not die, but that you will have eternal life? If you don't, come talk to me. I'm going to be standing around. I awkwardly stand by the front door so you have to sneak out of here through a side door if you don't want to see me, right?

50:25

I'll be around. You will find me if you come look for me back there in the back hallway. Come, come talk to me. I would love nothing more than to be able to share with you the hope that is available to us in John 3:16 that whoever believes in Him will not die, but will have everlasting life.

50:43

Our prayer team will be hanging around. They would love to talk with you this afternoon and be able to share with you how you can have eternal life in Christ, I promise you, we can even tell you quickly so that you can still make it to mom's on time, right?

50:57

Thank you for coming. Thank you for being here. Thank you for walking with us through this Christmas season, whether this is the first time and you made the point of being here on Christmas Eve or whether you've walked through this journey with us as we've gone through the Christmas story together over the past month.

51:15

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to come and to consider what God might have for us this afternoon. So I wanna wish you a Merry Christmas and I wanna pray for you as we go.

51:25

So we're gonna sing one more song in just a minute, but let me just pray for you before you go. Can we pray together church? Let's pray. God, we thank you for the privilege of

being able to come and to gather in your house, to sing praises about the newborn King, to sing about the glory of the God who created the world coming and living among us.

51:48

Coming and making a way for us to be forgiven, coming and making a way for us to know you. God, we pray that as we go out of here, as we go to family gatherings, as we are about the busy-ness of Christmas in these next couple of days. God we pray that the incredible mind-blowing reality of the incarnation that God put on flesh.

52:20

God, we pray that that would never be lost on us. God, we pray that that would never be something that we just, that we miss out on, that we don't realize, that we don't stop and think about at this moment.

52:31

I know there's a lot going on this time of the year, but God, Help us not to miss the point of it all, that you condescended, that you stooped low, and that you made hope available to us on that night in Bethlehem.

52:47

You made life available to us. that night in Bethlehem. God we pray that that you would constantly blow our minds with the reality of what happened at Christmas. God help us to never be able to sing a song or eat a Christmas ham or gather with family or open a present or anything else.

53:05

God help us to not be able to do any of these things without realizing and remembering the beauty of it all. The root at the foundation of all of this is the fact that you became flesh and dwelt among us.

53:23

God, we pray that you would work in our lives, that you would open our eyes to the beauty of who you are, that you would call us to obedience, that we might walk in obedience to who you tell us to be, what you tell us to do.

53:37

Father, we love you. We thank you for Jesus. We thank you for that baby in Bethlehem. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.