

**Small Group Outline for Week of December 20, 2020**  
**WEFC Message: God with Us – On Purpose - John 1:29-37**

**Introduction:**

In just a few days is Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and even Boxing Day. Merry Christmas! As a Christian and as the Church of Jesus Christ, here at WEFC and all over the world; this is a key calendar event. Many criticize against Christmas because they feel it is so commercialized. Actually, we are in control of the commercialism for ourselves. Deep down we know that Christmas is about Jesus - He is the reason for the season.

Over the last two weeks we have been looking at the “not-so traditional” Scripture text of the Christmas story; John 1:1-37. The Apostle John, one of Jesus’ closest friends while on earth, writes to help his readers and by extension, us, to focus beyond the story of the birth of Jesus on earth. Please do take some time this week to read the Christmas story in Luke 1-2.

What about the Christmas Story? What’s the point? Why didn’t Jesus just show up as a 30-year-old man who has now arrived to save the world? The Christmas story is all about saving the world, but it includes some very important purposes:

**Purpose One: To have Relationship: For God to be Up Close and Personal**

The Apostle John is showing us that Almighty God came as Jesus to meet with us “face to face.” Christmas is about Isaiah 7 Emmanuel - God with us! The point of the Incarnation - to be with us, to understand, to identify with us. To prove that He gets what it’s like to be human, to be of flesh.

- **John 1:10-14**
- Word became human (became flesh)
- He came into the very world He created
- Jesus came into the dark world physically - the Incarnation: Almighty God taking on human form-Jesus. The Word became flesh - not just human - God taking on flesh
  - Earthly flesh: Adam’s body was made from the earth, from dirt, from the dust
  - God took on the created stuff

**Share:** Can you imagine God taking on dirt?

**The Incarnation: a big 4 syllable word - God taking on human form**

We need to know that God knows what it is like to be human - because He is God and He created Humans; He already knows us inside and out. But clearly for our sake and not for His, He can say to us “I know what it is like to be a baby, a child, a middle schooler, in high school, in the work force. I know what it’s like to feel emotional pain, physical pain in normal life, not just as the cross. I had parents and siblings, and family.” Yes, he knows us from the outside in – creator – but also from the inside out – incarnation.

The point is that God has shown us that He is up-close and personal... and He wants to be that with you and me, and with His Church.

**Question:** How does the Incarnation relate to you in your day to day life?

**Share:**

What are you feeling? What are you going through right now in your relationships? In your work? In your heart? Jesus knows, and His presence can be that calm and with the Holy Spirit, they can bring clarity to whatever you are going through. This is God up-close and personal.

Yes, all our Christmases will be different this year. But it is still Christmas. He still came. Do we have an up-close and personal relationship with Jesus Christ and with God? God with us! (John 1:3,4) He is the Creator of all, the giver of life, and he wants to be personal with us, with me!

## **Purpose Two: To be Reconciled**

Here's the key: before we can have relationship and recognize Jesus Christ and allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, we need to be reconciled to God. That is the big purpose for Christmas.

### **1 Timothy 2:3-6**

- *This is good and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. 5 For, "There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. 6 He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone." This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.*

### **Read John 1:29-37**

- John declared, "Look! The Lamb of God!"

John the Baptizer is pointing towards Good Friday and Easter that would happen in about 3 years from then. He uses the term "Lamb of God" on purpose and intentionally. This is the reason Jesus came; not just to live, but to die...

What are your thoughts here as relating Christmas and Easter together?

### **The Lamb of God - the blood and death of a lamb; Why?**

*(Deuteronomy 12:23) we discover that God considered blood to hold the very life of a creature. But by God's decree, instead of requiring the Israelites' lives as the price for their sins, animal sacrifices (such as those described in Leviticus 1) were to be offered as a replacement, and the blood of the animal atoned for their sins. This ritual needed to be repeated continually because the Israelites continually sinned (as do we) and the blood of a mere animal was not sufficient to take away sins*

*"If you eat the fruit of this tree you will surely die." So they ate, and death came. So to cover them, a couple of animals had to die. Their sin caused death to the precious animals they cared for. Who says our sin doesn't affect others?*

**Read Hebrews 10:1-10:** what stands out to you in this passage?

### **Conclusion:**

Christmas will be very different for all of us. I wonder if God is allowing COVID 19 to extend into the Christmas season to push us to re-evaluate our Christmas priorities, our focus.

- What is Christmas? Is it all the music, the festivities, the food, family & friends? It certainly includes that, but so much more.
- We say that Jesus is the reason for the season, but are we acting like that?
- Please here me say to you gently; not in correction or judgement: If our Christmas can't be meaningful this Christmas, then maybe we need to re-examine what Christmas really is to us. Is it our traditions and even our families that are more important than Jesus?

### **Weekly Reflection:**

1. Read the Christmas Story in Luke 1-2
2. Watch the movie "The Nativity Story" (2006)
3. Each day spend 10-15 minutes in your favorite chair: listen to a favorite Christmas Carol, and write down 5 things about this Christmas you can be thankful for.
4. This week, call 5 people to wish them a Merry Christmas and pray for them. Go for a walk, connect with people over this Christmas.