

God Sent His Son

Listen to the word of God tonight:

John 1:1-4; 14 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Hebrews 1:1-2 – “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;”

Galatians 4:4-5 -- “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

Do you believe in the incarnation? That Almighty God, the one who created all things, came to earth as a man, born of a woman? Just pause for a few moments this evening and marvel at the significance of that idea.

Paul Harvey used to read a story, kind of a modern parable, at Christmas time. The story is called:

The Man and the Birds read by Paul Harvey

Listen as I read it:

The man to whom I'm going to introduce you was not a scrooge, he was a kind decent, mostly good man. Generous to his family, upright in his dealings with other men. But he just didn't believe all that incarnation stuff which the churches proclaim at Christmas Time. It just didn't make sense and he was too honest to pretend otherwise. He just couldn't swallow the Jesus Story, about God coming to Earth as a man.

"I'm truly sorry to distress you," he told his wife, "but I'm not going with you to church this Christmas Eve." He said he'd feel like a hypocrite. That he'd much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them. And so he stayed and they went to the midnight service.

Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier and then went back to his fireside chair and began to read his newspaper. Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound...Then another, and then another. Sort of a thump or a thud...At first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against his living room window.

But when he went to the front door to investigate he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, had tried to fly through his large landscape window. Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze, so he

remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter, if he could direct the birds to it.

Quickly he put on a coat, galoshes, tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light, but the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice them in. So he hurried back to the house, fetched bread crumbs, sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail to the yellow-lighted wide open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs, and continued to flap around helplessly in the snow.

He tried catching them...He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around them waving his arms...Instead, they scattered in every direction, except into the warm, lighted barn. And then, he realized that they were afraid of him. To them, he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature.

If only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me...That I am not trying to hurt them, but to help them. But how? Because any move he made tended to frighten them, confuse them. They just would not follow. They would not be led or shooed because they feared him.

"If only I could be a bird," he thought to himself, "and mingle with them and speak their language. Then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to safe, warm...to the safe warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see, and hear and understand."

At that moment the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind. And he stood there listening to the bells - Adeste Fidelis - listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. And he sank to his knees in the snow.

The incarnation, God has come to earth to be one of us, His creatures. Yet as John 1:10-11 tells us even though **"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him."**

Jesus told the parable of His coming a little differently. You can read it in Luke 20:

9 Then He began to tell the people this parable: "A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time.

10 "Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

11 "Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed.

12 "And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast him out.

13 "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him.'

14 "But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.'

15 "So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them?

16 "He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others."

In the incarnation, Jesus came not only to preach and to teach.

He came not only to heal and to raise the dead.

He came not only to call and to equip.

He came to be beaten and He came to be spit upon.

He came to be ridiculed and He came to be betrayed.

He came to be nailed to an old rugged cross.

He came to be stripped naked before the eyes of His very own mother.

He came to be pierced in the side.

He came to lay down His own life.

He came to be placed in a borrowed tomb.

And He came to be raised from the dead.

Because He Emmanuel. He is God with us. He is the Savior, Christ, the Lord.

The promise of the incarnation is by grace, John 1:12, **"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."**

The mystery of the incarnation is that God would come to be a man, to live with us, to love us, and to die for us. And because the Son of God became a man, then men who believe in Him can become sons of God.