



UNTO US

God Through Us
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December 18, 2016

Discussion Notes
The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

Join us today as we complete our “Unto Us” series and look at all that God did through the birth of His Son, Jesus, to radically change and redeem our story. God gave us a whole new way to live, to love, and have a relationship with Him and others -- all through the birth of a little baby, born in a forgotten town, to a teenage mother. Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, the prophet Isaiah tells the good news that God is coming to Earth to save them. “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6) This series tells the story of God’s efforts through the ages to come close to His people, to teach them His ways and to live through them.

SCRIPTURE¹

John 1:4-5 “In him was life. And that life was the Light of All Mankind. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.”

John 8:12 “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Matthew 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

OBSERVATION:

When John wrote his gospel, he was a very old man in his late eighties, and his was the last gospel written. He had experienced loss that we can’t even imagine: Loss of friends, family members and an entire culture. He had lived through Nero’s killing of thousands of Jews and the sending of thousands more into slavery in Rome. He had lived through the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and the subsequent diaspora. He lived on long after Peter and Paul had been executed. In spite of all he had experienced, John still had the resolve to write and believe that Jesus was the source of life. John was also the closest to Mary, Jesus’ mother, yet he doesn’t begin his gospel with the birth of Jesus as Matthew and Luke do. He begins with the significance of His birth.

Question: How can you start to reflect the light of all mankind when there is so much darkness around you?

APPLICATION

There was darkness swirling all around him, yet John says that in Jesus was life and that His life was the LIGHT OF ALL MANKIND. Jesus wasn’t there just for Israel -- He came for all men and He brought a light that was for all of us.

In Genesis, creation begins by God separating the light from the darkness. In Exodus, the people were led by a fire’s light. In Leviticus, the Feast of the Tabernacles required giant candelabras be erected in the

¹ All scripture listed is NIV unless otherwise indicated



temple court. They were filled with oil and lighted to remind the people of how God's glory had once filled His temple. The Magi followed the light of a star, but it disappeared for a period of time and there was a gap of darkness. When it reappeared, there was boundless joy as it led them to the manger. Light was vital and it was an indicator of the presence of God. No matter what we face in this life, no matter how deep the heartache, or extreme the fear, there is always the light of God -- and in the person of Jesus, God's glory was once again present in that temple for we are the temple of His Holy Spirit.

Question: When have you experienced a gap of darkness from the Light of God? Did you lose your way for a while?

Question: Who are the people around you that have lost the Light?

John goes on to say that we are also the light of the world. The baby who came to be with us, became the man who died for us, so the light can shine through us. We are to reflect His light to the world. Our lives are not to be hidden away, they matter, and are to be on display for people to observe and be moved by.

Question: Why do you have the Light in you only to cover it up and deny its power?

It isn't about us, but about the God we reflect. It's like the sun and the moon: the moon has no light of its own, but reflects the sun's light back to the earth.

Question: What your life is reflecting shows what your life is valuing. So what are you reflecting?

Question: What is it going to look like when you to begin reflecting the God who loves this world?

In The Road to Character, by David Brooks, he writes, "Resume virtues are the ones you list on your resume, the skills you bring to a job that contribute to your external success. Eulogy virtues are deeper. They're the virtues that get talked about at your funeral, the ones that exist at the core of your being -- whether you are kind, brave, honest, and faithful. Whether you actually lived. Most of us would say that the eulogy virtues are more important than the resume virtues, but I confess that for long stretches of my life, I've spent more time thinking about the latter than the former."

Question: What are your eulogy virtues? How can you begin to let them shine to those around you?

Question: If we were to put a microscope to your life, what is it all about -- what is it you value?

So at Christmas, when we are confronted with the fact that there are problems we cannot solve, expectations we can't meet, and complications that make us crazy, we are reminded that Jesus is light and life. There is always hope.

Question: What has God given you that you can use to reflect His light?

Question: Where are you going to go that needs to feel His light?

The God who spoke light into existence, the God who gave His Son as a light to the world, the God who sends us into this world is simply asking us to be what we already are: A light that draws the eyes of the world to Him. Do good deeds that point to a great God.

Question: Who are you going to be with this Christmas that needs His light?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, You sent Jesus to shine a light on who You really are. Not only is He the light of the world, but we are, too, and we need to start illuminating the world around us with Jesus. Give us courage and wisdom as we witness Your glory to others. In Jesus' name. Amen.