

Christmas Eve Sermon

Theme: God showed his love in sacrifice.

1 John 4:10

WELCOME

Our context returns to the theme of love. Here, John explains how true, godly love in a person's life is a sign of being born again. Those who truly love God will act on that love, towards other people. Those who don't demonstrate love have no fellowship with God, at minimum. Love is something God showed us first, by sending Christ. Our love for Him is ultimately rooted in His original love for us. We are again reminded that true love involves acting, not just feeling.

Anson spoke a lot about gift giving last week and we are going to dig into that a little more today..

What is the worst gift you've ever received?

Most kids would say clothes (socks) are the worst gifts they could get. BOX 1

What's the best gift you've ever received?

I'll never forget unwrapping my GameCube at Chuckie Cheese when I was a kid. BOX 2

Of course the things we like or don't like for Christmas are subjective and change over time. In fact these boxes are somewhat reverses for me as an adult now.

But the one thing I didn't realize as a kid that I realize now is the time and energy that went into these gifts for me. The paychecks, the searching, the wrapping, the time, the anxiety. And now as a dad myself, I have this growing awareness of what my family gave up for me that I might have meaningful birthdays, Christmases, and the in-between.

This settles us in on our theme for the morning which is "God showed his love in sacrifice."

As a student pastor, I recognize my limitations when it comes to dodgeball. This can be a problem when we play dodgeball almost weekly, but I know there are some people on my team way better than me. If I need to jump in front of a ball and sacrifice myself so they can take our team further, I will do it.

One of the most famous pop culture sacrifices came in 2019 when over ten years of marvel movies reached their conclusion during Avengers: Endgame. Tony Stark slid on the infinity gauntlet, said "I am Iron Man," snapped his fingers and defeated Thanos.

We see sacrifice lived out in personal health.

We see sacrifice lived out in marriage.

The sacrifices we make throughout our lives come from a sense of love, empathy, and responsibility toward others. We give up something important to us, time, money, energy, well-being, so that others may move forward while we take a step back. And according to the Bible, offering ourselves in this way is the ultimate sign of love for others. This example set by Jesus whose entire life was an offering, or a gift, to us.

Galatians 2:20 The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

We are in the season of giving. I would say most there is little space underneath your trees right now. Maybe you've got to run out between our services and pick up final gifts before the stores close.

As we conclude our time together this morning, let's consider Hebrews 10 which unfolds the results of Christ's work and love for us.

*** Because of the gift of Christ, we have been reconciled with God.**

Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. Hebrews 10:20-22

*** Because of the gift of Christ, we have a future hope.**

Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Hebrews 10:23

*** Because of the gift of Christ, we gift our lives to others.**

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25

We are called to live a sacrificial faith - not a superficial faith. A sacrificial faith always seeks the welfare of others even when it is personally costly. A person with sacrificial faith does not always demand their rights, they fight first for the rights of others. - Richard Sterns

Closing - BOX 3

Maybe:

Here we find the purpose: the "propitiation" for our sins. The word "propitiation" involves a payment or sacrifice to cover the cost of our sins. Under the Mosaic Law, the Jews offered

ongoing sacrifices for their sins. Yet Christ provided the only sufficient payment, once for all, to cover the sins of the world. This was because He is the perfect sacrifice, without sin.