

SERMON NOTES

Sunday, December 22, 2024

The Unlikely Characters of Christmas: Jesus

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it...The Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. John 1:1-5, 14 (NLT)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NIV)

Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. Philippians 2:6-7 (NLT)

“Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:42-45 (NLT)

God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. 2 Corinthians 5:19-20 (NIV)

THE BIG STORY OF THE BIBLE

1. Creation
2. Fall
3. Redemption
4. New Creation



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Questions for thought and discussion:

1. It wasn't uncommon for the Greek and Roman gods to come to earth, but it was unheard of for any god in any culture to become human. Why was God coming to earth as a human so unusual? What does it say about the uniqueness of the God of the Bible?
2. It was unheard of for a god to willingly give up power and privilege. Read Mark 10:35-45 and Philippians 2:6-7. How was Jesus different from other gods when it came to how he used his power? In what ways do you choose to serve rather than to be served?
3. The idea of a god suffering for humans, let alone dying for them, was completely absent in ancient mythology. Take a moment to meditate on the extent of God's love for you, a love so powerful that God was willing to suffer and die for you.
4. How can recognizing Jesus' humility and sacrificial love challenge us to live differently during the Christmas season?
5. How are you an "unlikely character of Christmas?"

