

Christmas Day
December 25, 2021
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INI - SDG

Jesus Makes All the Difference

John 1:1-14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. ⁸ He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. ⁹ That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 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: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ 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.

Supposedly the genetic difference between chimps and humans is 1.2%. That doesn't sound like much. But it makes a big difference. The difference between a c and a c sharp is only half a step but it makes a big difference. Come home from work and tell your spouse you appreciate them. It is a small thing but that one thing can make all the difference in their day.

Sometimes one thing can make all the difference in the world. That's what we have in our text this morning. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. One little sentence, one little baby, one little village, but He changes everything.

There was a famous theologian named Augustine. He lived in the late fourth century. He grew up studying Greek philosophy and later converted to Christianity. Concerning John 1:1-14 he remarked that everything written in those first 13 verses could be found in Greek Philosophy. He exaggerated a little, there is nothing in Greek philosophy about John the Baptist for example. But mostly everything here would be familiar to the Greeks.

Until you come to verse 14 **“And the word became flesh and dwelt among us”** – that Augustine said is what makes all the difference. He is right. Greek philosophy has no place for the incarnation, but that incarnation, Jesus becoming man, is what makes all the difference. There is a lot in scripture which superficially might sound similar to Greek philosophy or even a lot what you hear on TV these days. Yet outside of Christ there is no incarnation, no God who became man and dwelt among us, and that makes all the difference.

Greek philosophy and modern philosophy will talk about ideas and hopes and dreams. They'll talk about what can be and what might be and what we wish would be. But we know what IS, that Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us, not what might be, but what God has done for us.

He was born of the virgin Mary and made man and dwelt with us. The incarnation makes all the difference.

The Incarnation makes all the difference for our Celebrations today

Gal 4:4 But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

I was making soup yesterday. I was about to simply dump the ingredients into the slow cooker, when I remember the butter has to be melted and the flour whisked into it. This creates the thick paste that will serve as the base of your soup. Why you must do it that way I don't know but I know it makes all the difference.

Just so God when he knew the time was right sent forth his Son born of a woman and that makes all the difference for our celebrations today.

Some people say Christmas is just another "winter solstice" celebration. It is no different than the pagan celebrations. Its just another celebration of light in the darkness of winter. It's not. It's not even on the winter solstice, its four days late. But even if it was, even if everything we did was the same as a pagan solstice celebration, still there would be this one difference we are celebrating Christ's birth that makes all the difference in the world because it means that we are celebrating the God who became flesh and dwelt among and not just having a party on the shortest day of the year.

We are not celebrating the fact that it was dark today and in a couple months the days will be long again. We are celebrating that God lives among us.

If it were only about the lights and the presents and the eggnog, there wouldn't be much there. But instead, it is a celebration that God became man, dwelt among us and still dwells among us. Long after the presents and the food and Christmas tree are all gone, God is still with us, that is what we are celebrating and that makes all the difference

The incarnation makes all the difference in the law.

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

In bible class the other week we were talking about listening and communicating effectively and a lot of what we talked about you could hear at a seminar or on a YouTube video. What is different about what we hear here? We know that God has become flesh. Because we know that God hears us even if no one else does.

Why does that make a difference? Because after bible class everyone went home and some of you tried to do what we talk about. Tried for a week or maybe two and then forgot about it and went right back

to your old ways. But even after you had forgotten everything else Jesus still dwells among us, that makes all the difference

The ten commandments are not that different from the law you can find in any other religion but “the word became flesh and dwelt among us,” that makes all the difference. Why? Because the law is no longer a requirement hanging over our heads. It is no longer a list of commands we must do. Instead, it is a list of those things that Jesus did for us. It is now a list of things we would like to do but if we can’t get it all done we are going to heaven anyway.

Consider the difference between a wish list and a to do list. A to do list if it is too long or too hard it leads to depression. But a wish list is something I’ll do what I can and leave the rest.

Jesus has moved all things from our to do list, you must get it done or else, to our wish list. I want to be more loving, more patient, more forgiving but when I fail, Jesus has forgiven me.

Jesus was born among us and that makes all the difference.

Amen