

Sovereign Grace Church

“Life” outline

December 17, 2017

John 1: 6-13

Christmas is a time of year that can be supremely joyful as well as supremely frustrating. It is a very active time of year with special parties to plan and attend; gifts to buy and wrap; trees to decorate; school activities to attend; special church services; family gatherings of multiple families. People tend to be either unusually kind or particularly cynical and even mean at this time of year. It gives one pause to consider what exactly IS the purported miracle of Christmas?!

I submit that it is not the virgin birth....although that was a miracle! The miracle of Christmas is that we don't really have to live these tense, hurried, frustrating lives in any season of the year....including this one. We may choose to....but we don't HAVE to! When God the Son came to earth and was born and lived as a human being He demonstrated what life lived in continuous union with God was like. He did this as a man....not as divine. In His rejection by wicked men and His unjust death He provided for forgiveness of our sins. In His resurrection He demonstrated that death held no power for the one in union with Him. The miracle of Christmas is JESUS IN US and our opportunity to walk in His resurrection light even now while still upon this earth. In other words, to be busy with holiday activities but never hurried....to plan, negotiate, re-plan, entertain interruptions, care for sick kids.....all in the process of planning special family and church gatherings....and still retain joy and love for those we serve. ...to invest hard earned money in gifts for often ungrateful people & retain gratitude for them and financial peace of mind. In the end, so far as the world sees...WE are the miracle of Christmas....or its curse! The choice is ours.

1. The Word and the Light of Life vv 6-8

Matt. 3: 5-6; 11: 29

2. The Darkness vv. 9-11

Rom. 3:20; Heb. 1: 1-2; Rom. 1: 18, 21; Jn 19: 15; II Kings6: 17

3. The Light Received vv. 12-13

4. Lessons
Ac 1: 8; Lk 9: 24

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

- 1. How do you find the Christmas season? Is it a time to which you look forward? Or a time of frustration and one to get over as soon as possible? How can your family activities be brought into service to Christ during this time? How can special Christmas services be vehicles of His grace and life? How do you handle the inevitable “interruptions” of Christmas? (sick children; unthoughtful and ungrateful people; disagreements with other well-intentioned people).**
- 2. How do you deal with the more secular aspects of Christmas? (trees, decorations, Santa, reindeer etc) Do you attempt to eradicate them? Christianize them? Learn from them? Ignore them? Do you see how Christians can arrive at different conclusions about these matters? How do these disagreements affect your relationship with the brethren?**
- 3. Have you received the Light that came into the world in Bethlehem? Have you received this Light not only for forgiveness of sins but also for living eternal life even now? How do you know you have? How has it made your life different?**
- 4. Was the very popular Christmas hymn Joy to the World really meant to be a Christmas hymn?! If not, is it wrong that we use it as one? [I don't believe it is.....any more than it was wrong of God to use Pilate's wicked act to save the world! But it is interesting!]**