

ECHOES OF CHRISTMAS

ECHOES OF CHRISTMAS IN THE GARDEN – PART 2

Pastor Derwin L. Gray – December 11, 2016

1. Open in prayer reading out loud together:

Holy Spirit, gives us eyes to see Christmas like we've never seen it before. Lord Jesus, eternal God the Son, gives us the grace to appreciate Your incarnation and redemptive purposes. And God the Father, this Christmas fill us with Your eternal love so we can find pleasure in You and lead others to find pleasure in You as well. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

2. Note: When Adam and Eve chose to live from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, instead of the Tree of Life, death entered creation. Death destroyed the four vital relationships with God, self, others, and creation. As a result of Adam and Eve's rebellion, God evicted them out of the Garden of Eden. Pastor Derwin said, "Christmas is God's eviction notice to death." Read Genesis 3:22-24.

How does make you think and act differently this Christmas season?

3. Pastor Derwin said, "Just as God the Holy Spirit created life on Earth, God the Holy Spirit recreates the life of Jesus in you."

- a. Read Genesis 1:1-4 NIV and Genesis 2:7 NIV
 - o Note: The Gospel of John is the New Testament equivalent to the Old Testament book of Genesis.
- b. Read John 1:4-5 ESV and John 3:5-8 NLT
 - o According to John 1:4-5, who is Jesus? And why is this important?
 - o In John 3:5-8, what must happen for a person to enter into the Kingdom of God?

Note: CHRISTIANS ARE NOT JUST "NICE PEOPLE"; THEY ARE, OR ARE SUPPOSED TO BE, NEW PEOPLE. C. S. Lewis in his "Mere Christianity," borrowing two Greek words, distinguishes between two kinds of life: Bios and Zōē. Bios is the kind of life every person has—biological life, which is sustained by food, air, and water, but which eventually ends in death. Zōē, on the other hand, is spiritual life, the kind of life God gives us when we are born again—life that lasts forever. These two kinds of life, Lewis goes on to say, are not only different; they are actually opposed to each other. Bios is basically self-centered, whereas Zōē is God-centered and other-centered.

Hoekema, A. A. (1994). Saved by Grace (p. 93). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

4. Pastor Derwin preached, "God the Holy Spirit wants to reproduce the Tree of Life in your life. Will you let Him?" Read Genesis 2:9 NLT, John 15:5-8 ESV and Galatians 5:22-24 ESV.

- What does Jesus say will be the result of "abiding" in Him? What is abiding in Christ?

Note: "You are not able to do anything" without abiding means that people cannot access God without Jesus, and consequently they cannot bear fruit. All life-giving things require access to the source of life, Jesus.

Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible (Jn 15:5). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

5. Pastor Derwin taught, "Love is not primarily a feeling; it's a commitment to do what is best for people." What is best for people (in a general sense)?

6. God the Holy Spirit wants to give you gifts that are 'under' the Tree of Life (as part of God's divine life in us, He gifts us). Read Romans 12:4-8 NIV.

- o Discuss Romans 12:4-8 and the implications for you personally and our church.

7. How is this series affecting your perspective of Christmas?

8. Close in prayer.