

# PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY...REACHING THEIR COMMUNITY

## Sermon Study Guide

December 6 & 7, 2014

**THE MAIN THING:** The Man Christ Jesus was 100% deity and 100% humanity. On earth, Jesus felt the needs, emotions and experiences of humans. He came to be a Mediator between us and God and our Redeemer to ransom us from the slavery of sin.

### PURSUE RELATIONSHIP *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. What is your favourite part of Christmas?
2. Is Christmas a time of peace or conflict?
3. What do you find easier to relate to the deity of Christ, or his humanity? What challenges do you see trying to reconcile these two seemingly opposite natures?

### PURSUE GOD *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

#### Observation and Reflection

Read Matthew 2

1. Reflect on what it would be like to be Mary, Joseph, or other families in Bethlehem (who lost children). Have you ever experienced what it's like to be a refugee?
2. What risks did God take in allowing Jesus to be born as a human?
3. Compare your present day view of Christmas with the events surrounding the birth of Christ.
4. What range of human emotions or experiences are attributed to Jesus in the four Gospels? Which ones do you most relate with? If time, personally share meaningful Scripture passages that relate to the wide range of emotions/experiences.

Read 1 Tim. 2: 5-7

5. How is Jesus our Mediator? What does his present ministry of intercession look like? (Romans 8:26-27, Heb. 2:17; 4:14-16)
6. Recall Hosea's restoration of Gomer (Hosea 3:1-3) Christmas is associated with gifts - the true gift of Christmas is freedom. What will you receive freedom from this Christmas?

#### Application

1. How do we share the truth of Christmas (Christ coming as a human) with those who may be unaware or even hostile to the Gospel?
2. How do we connect Christmas with the cross?
3. Reflect on your own focus during this Christmas season: is it on The Christ or all the trimmings?

### PURSUE MISSION: *Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community*

### THE WORD (NIV):

#### 1 Timothy 2 5-7

<sup>5</sup>For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. <sup>7</sup>And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles.

#### Romans 8:26-27

<sup>26</sup>In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. <sup>27</sup>And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

#### Hebrews 2:17

<sup>17</sup>For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

#### Hebrews 4:14-16

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

# PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY...REACHING THEIR COMMUNITY

## The Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:5-7)

Christmas means decorations, bright lights, Christmas trees and carols. For us who love Jesus it's about Jesus. He is the reason for the season and for everything. Christmas points us to a baby born 2000 years ago in Bethlehem. This event is the **Incarnation; Incarnate' means 'in the flesh'**. Jesus, Second in the Trinity, took on human nature and entered our world. Evangelical Christians believe in the divinity of Jesus. He is 100% God. What needs emphasis is Jesus' humanity. He is also 100% Man. Jesus is both. **Docetism**, a heresy in the first century church, said that God's Son "seemed" to be human, that His humanity was an illusion. The Bible defends Jesus' humanity (see. 1 Jn) In the Gospels people said, 'We know him and his family, he grew up here, he is the carpenter's son.' Christians may be practical Docetists, thinking, "Since Jesus was God, it is easy for Him to be sinless, to resist the devil." By downplaying His humanity we have a remote, distant Jesus rather than One who is with us daily. The very purpose of the incarnation. 'Jesus in the flesh', was to show how near God is. For proof, look at the baby lying in the manger. That's how near He came!

## Why is it important for us to see Jesus as both divine and human?

### 1 Jesus is our Mediator—He identifies with us. (1Tim 2:5-6)

In the 1950's when blacks faced great discrimination, John Griffin, a white journalist from Texas, posed as a black and traveled across the Southern US. In his book, Black Like Me, he documented the difficulties and insults he faced. He wrote "How else except becoming a Negro could a white man hope to learn the truth?...to bridge the gap between us...." Precisely what Jesus our mediator did. Our relationship with God was severed. The only way to bridge the gap was for God to become a man. Genuine accusations can be leveled against God. Job said: "Do you have eyes of flesh or do you see as a human sees?" (10:4) God's privileged status gave Him a vantage point, so He could not understand human disappointment and heartbreak. Only with the Incarnation does God have "eyes of flesh" to see the world as a mortal and know what being 'human' means. In the Man Jesus, the eternal, all-powerful God left heaven, stepped into time as a helpless baby. John Stott says, "God set aside his immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death."

The Man Christ Jesus is the mediator. Jesus built a bridge between heaven and earth. He knows the divine side as well as the human side. The Son of Man is the perfect representative of the entire human race!

Why is Jesus the only one qualified to represent us? Mary was an unwed mother giving birth to Jesus in trying conditions. She and Joseph bore this stigma and shame. Times were turbulent in Bethlehem at Jesus' birth. Herod the Great feeling threatened by a baby who would be King of the Jews ordered the brutal killing of boys under 2 years, cause for great mourning and weeping. An angel warned Joseph to take his family and flee as refugees to Egypt, a strange country and culture. (Mt 2)

Today Jesus hears the cries of 48 million refugees from all over the world and with a heart of compassion He says "I understand." Picture Jesus hungry, thirsty, exhausted, weak, disappointed, angry, anguished, writhing in pain. Picture Jesus compassionate, sorrowful, depressed, deeply moved, and grieved. He sighed and sobbed; He felt agony, surprise, great joy and love. A writer in Christianity Today describes "the intensity of Jesus' emotions: not a twinge of pity, but heartbroken compassion; not a passing irritation, but terrifying anger; not a silent tear, but groans of anguish; not a weak smile, but ecstatic celebration. Jesus' emotions are like a mountain river, cascading with clear water."

### 2. Jesus is our Redeemer who pays the ransom for our sins. (1 Tim 2:5-6)

By becoming human like us, Jesus could offer a sacrifice for us. (Heb 2:16-17) Our Mediator is also our Redeemer! The humiliation that started at his birth culminated on the cross where he would face utter disgrace and death as every human being will. Jesus represents us to God. by paying a ransom—a huge price. Christ and the Cross are integral to Christmas. The cross overshadowed Jesus' life from the day of His birth. The baby laid on a wooden manger later was laid on a wooden cross. Jesus not only came — He came to die and to ransom us. This was announced at the time of his birth. (Mt 1:21) The word for ransom in 1 Timothy specifically refers to ransom paid for a slave. We were slaves in the market, held in bondage by sin and Jesus paid the ransom price.

Hosea (ch 1, 3) illustrates this image of ransom. Hosea, a man of God, obeyed Him and married Gomer. She gave birth to three children; Hosea may not have been their father, but he claimed them as his own. Gomer ran away and was enslaved in prostitution. Again God commanded Hosea to get her back. He found Gomer for sale as a slave at auction. Hosea paid her ransom and took her home as his wife. When the Bible says Jesus gave His life as a ransom for us all, that's what it means! We were the 'Gomers' who turned our backs on God, in bondage and auctioned off on the slave market of sin. But the Son of God reached to us in love, left heaven, entered into the yuck of the slave market and said, "You are mine. I will pay the ransom price and will take you with me." He restores us to a place of honour as His children.

Christmas is a challenging time. When families gather at Christmas, there is potential for conflict. Jesus understands family conflicts. His family life was not perfect peace and harmony. His family said He was out of His mind. He had no time to eat because He saw the pressing needs of people. (Mk 3:20-21) He was so exhausted that He slept in a boat on stormy seas. He was forsaken by His closest friends. Jesus came to His own and they did not receive Him. He faced the challenge of being single. Jesus can identify with each of us.

The gift of Christmas is freedom from sin, freedom to come to God with anything knowing He sympathizes with our weaknesses. All this because the Man Christ Jesus looks at us with the "eyes of flesh"! There is One Mediator between God and humans — the Man Christ Jesus. Accept God's Christmas gift! Let Jesus be your Mediator, Redeemer and High Priest so you can encounter God face to face.