

Rediscovering Christmas: Rejected or Received

John 1 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

*9 **The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.** 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. 14 **The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.***

The word became flesh and made his dwelling amongst us.

- God the Son becomes Jesus the baby boy.
- And he does so because of relationship.
 - He's the son of Abraham.
 - He's the King of Shepherds.
- He dwells with us and shows us this Christmas the risks he's willing to take for relationship: (each risk is a gift)
 - the gift of vulnerability (to be fully present as who we are)
 - The gift of empathy (to understand and seek to understand the other person)
 - The gift of sacrifice (to pay a price to serve another)

There's downside to vulnerability, empathy and sacrifice - the risk of rejection.

- Most of us don't seek to be rejected - rejection hurts. Continual rejection destroys.
- But Jesus - who is God the Son, is rejected by the world he created.
 - Not only by the world (v10) but by the specific people who were waiting for him (v 11).

Humans choose not to be vulnerable because they are afraid of rejection.

- The same with empathy and sacrifice.
- We want to take away the risks. But we also take away the rewards.

Jesus took the relational risks at Christmas because he knew the reward was worth it.

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- The reward is just like what we receive when we are willing to be vulnerably, empathetic and sacrificial with each other: real relationship.
- But it's the ultimate reward.
 - Children of God.

Because Jesus risked rejection (and was rejected) even in his vulnerability, empathy and sacrifice, we are empowered to be Children of God.

- Children of God who in turn are vulnerable, empathetic and sacrificial.
- What do we rediscover about Christmas: it's all about relationship.

Conclusion

In the first week we looked at the differing titles of Jesus in Matthew 1 and focused on Jesus the Son of Abraham.

- Jesus is the true Isaac: promised, given, offered.
- Jesus being born shows us that God is faithful, relational, covenantal.
 - Because **Jesus is** so can **we be**: faithful, relational, covenantal.
 - Intimate.

Next we looked at Luke and saw the difference between the Emperor and the King

- Each offers peace. But one is genuine while the other is counterfeit.
- Because Jesus we can offer what is genuine this Christmas.

Finally with John, we see the the true gift of Jesus' vulnerability, empathy and sacrifice:

- And it all flowed from his desire and action to dwell with/live with us
- He wanted to be close: physically, emotionally, relationally with us
- Because of him we can be too - with those who know him and those who don't