

Week of December 9, 2007

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Monday

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world..."

This beloved verse is often used to show how much God loves an individual. For God so loved Randy, or Pam, or Matt, for example. But such an emphasis can miss the pointed correction to our prejudices that God loves others just as much as He loves me. From the very beginning God showed His love was inclusive of all races, peoples, and nations. Rich or poor, societies prized or despised were welcomed at the manger. God loves and calls all peoples and every person to a relationship with Him.

Tuesday

Matt. 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of *all the nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...

At His birth Jesus welcomed, no beckoned, all nations to come and worship. All types of people are found in the scenes of His first advent. There kings and shepherds, male and female, young, old, highly educated, and totally common people came to worship. Just as He beckoned them to come, so He beckons us to go. Go into all the world, to all the people and preach the Gospel. In the first advent, find His call to come. Before His second, embrace His call to go!

Wednesday

Matt. 2:1-2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him."

The Wise men still lead us by example. First, they sought out the Lord, took the initiative, and came and worshiped Him. They did not cry that no one paid them attention or waited to be sought out by another. Worship was their focus and their desire. Second, they brought Him gifts for the Kingdom, riches from their purse. Sensing what He was giving to them, they freely, joyously gave of their means. Are you a wise man or woman following the example of these?

Thursday

Phil. 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself;

It is awfully easy to look at others, to think of them as being of lesser quality, intelligence, or value than yourself - awfully easy. That is one reason the Biblical stories of Christmas are so instructive and convicting. There, in His manger and in His early life, we see that God publicly displays His inclusive love and equal value for every human nationality, gender, age, and race. Throughout His ministry He reaches out to the un-reached and values the devalued: the women, the sick, the Samaritan, the Gentile, the Jew. You?

Friday

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave ...

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father...

Give and go: that's what God did and what He continually calls us to do. It sounds like a play on a football field or a basketball court: give and go. But in reality it is the call of heaven. If we are to be in the game (the battle) for the Kingdom, we are to give and go. Not one or the other, not either ...or: we are to both give and go. The Wise men did it. God did it. We are to do it: give and go. This Christmas, whether across the street or across the world, God calls you and me to give and go.