

## **I. Coming Near to Dwell with You**

- A. For Christians, the truth that God has come near is not lost on us during this time of year. We sing songs, watch movies, and decorate our homes with the theme of nativity. However, for many of us the full potency of the truth of God's burning heart to be near to us is not realized.
- B. The default thought of fallen humanity concerning the nearness of God is that He is distant, aloof, and miserly with his intentionality to interact with you, that the bulk of the effort in getting near to God depends mostly on you. However, even the smallest effort to make a biblical survey concerning who actually reaches in the quest for nearness would clearly show that it is the exact opposite of most individuals' assumptions concerning which party is more intentional with seeking nearness.
  - 1. From Genesis to Revelation the scriptures are replete with the story of humanity who is either not looking for God or running from Him and He is the one who draws near.

## **II. Biblical Narrative**

- A. The Nearness of the Creation Narrative - (Gen. 1:26-27, 2:19, 2:22, 3:8-9)
  - 1. God created us in His image, giving humanity the unique faculties and capacity to relate to Him.
  - 2. Even in the reality of the unfallen, untainted age, God reached. He came every evening to draw near to His friends.
  - 3. When they did choose to turn from Him, it was God who took it upon Himself to make them a way back.
- B. The Nearness of the Sinai Desire (Ex. 24:9- 25:9)
  - 1. God set up the entire Levitical and sacrificial system so that He could be near to sinful man.
  - 2. God brought Moses and 70 elders up into heaven to share a meal with them.

3. God had Moses remain in heaven with Him for 40 days so He could show him in great detail his Tabernacle and have Moses replicate it on the earth. The reason for this was so He could leave His heavenly dwelling place and dwell with His people instead.
4. God then sets aside a holy convocation (holiday) in which an entire week of the year is set aside for his people to remember FOREVER that He longs to draw near to them and dwell with them. (Gen. 29:44-46; Lev. 23:33-44; Zec. 14:16)

C. The Nearness of the Davidic Reason

1. The people of God reject Him and ask for a king to rule over them like all the other nations have. God gives them what they want but then uses the vehicle of a king to bring about a reality in which He will dwell with and be near to His people.
2. David was a man after God's own heart primarily in light of the fact that He wanted to make a way for God to dwell with humanity on the earth forever in nearness. (1 Chron. 17:1-12)

D. The Nearness of the Indwelling Spirit

1. God's desire to dwell in our hearts through His Holy Spirit was not solely given for the purpose of sanctification or power over sin, but rather to fulfill to the longing in His heart to be near. (2 Cor. 6:16)

E. The Nearness of the Restoration of All Things

1. The entire promise of the messiah given in Genesis to Adam and Eve revolves around the mission to make a way for God to dwell with man in unparalleled nearness forever as He intended.
2. The nativity scene is mostly considered in light of the incarnation being needful in order to save people from sin. Though this is true, this is NOT the main biblical reason God gives us for the miracle and revelation of the incarnation. God FOREVER gave up His own image and came in the image of man, not just for the sake of sacrifice but for the sake of eternal nearness. (Jhn 17:25-26; Rev. 21:3)

### III. The Nearness of the Nativity Event

- A. The precious manger scene that we are about to focus on for the rest of this session, and for the next week as a nation, is God's eternal and unrelenting persuasion to our hearts that He longs to be near to us.
- B. He will forever desire and reach for us in order to be near. At the heart of all these truths we are about to look at is God's sovereign choice in the matter. He can do whatever He wants to do, and could have come however He wanted to come. God did not have to be exposed to the weakness of humanity to the extent that He was in order to be a just sacrifice for sin. Every instance where He went beyond the qualifications for a holy and acceptable sacrifice was for the sole purpose of revealing God to us and drawing near.
- C. With this in mind, what He chose to do does not reveal a pragmatic approach to the issue of the needful sacrifice for sin, but rather a deep and burning desire to show you that He is the God who desires to be near (Heb. 4:15-16; Phil 2:6-7).
  - 1. Nearness of Circumstance (Mat. 1-2; Luke 1-2)
    - a. Born in social scandal under false accusation with no justification.
    - b. Born to terrified parents in ultimate vulnerability.
    - c. Had to flee for His life around 2 years old.
    - d. Dwelt in a foreign land during his childhood with very little stability.
    - e. Buried His father at a young age.
  - 2. Nearness of Social Status
    - a. Born and raised in poverty.
    - b. Parents had to work everyday, hand-to-mouth.
    - c. Foreign rulers oppressed his family and people.

- d. Remained in poverty Himself.
- e. Remained under foreign oppression with his people.

3. Nearness of Likeness

- a. Hunger
- b. Pain
- c. Exhaustion
- d. Had to learn
- e. Betrayed
- f. Rejected
- g. Misunderstood
- h. Belittled

**IV. Meditations/Questions for the Season and Lifegroup**

- A. What aspects of the nearness of the incarnation narrative do you find the most fascinating or beautiful?
- B. What aspect of the nearness of the incarnation narrative or truth impacts your heart and emotions the most? Why?
- C. What areas or aspects of your heart or life do you feel distant from Him. Why? Is this distance you feel true?