

Why the Incarnation of Christ Is a Model for Our Whole Life

For most of my years in the church I only heard about the need for all men to receive Jesus as their Savior (see John 1:12). But, except for the yearly Christmas message related to the birth of Christ, I do not recall ever hearing a message regarding the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us, as found in John 1:14. However, this passage speaks not merely of His birth, but of His entire life on the earth, which lasted more than 33 years!

As Christ-followers, we are not only to bask in the heavenly blessings we receive in Christ as a result of His death, burial, and resurrection (see 1 Cor. 1:30-31; Eph. 1:3), but we are also called to imitate His whole life (see Matt. 5-7). Consequently, the Word becoming flesh provides a missional lesson for the church regarding our need to be immersed in the mission field to which we are called. God did not merely send the Word (ideas or concepts), but embodied the Truth in human flesh. He became flesh to save and serve the ones He was assigned to (see Heb. 2:14-18).

This deeper understanding of the Incarnation obligates us not only to celebrate the birth of Christ during Christmas, but also to present our bodies as a living sacrifice for our divine vocation (see Rom. 12:1-2). Those of us called to at-risk communities are not merely called to “march for Jesus,” but to “move in” for Jesus and immerse ourselves into the neighborhoods of our flock. It is not usually enough for our church building to be in the community; the incarnation compels us to live among the people we are called to.

I tell people all the time that the safest place to be is not some nice affluent suburb, but in the will of God. No matter where you are called to serve, the will of God is always the

safest place for your spouse and children (see Ps. 91).

In closing, we in the church need to hear more about the life and times of Jesus, and not just about His birth and the last six hours of His life as He hung on the cross. Why? Because God has provided us with the most effective model for evangelism: the Incarnation.

This is something I never heard preached from a pastor during a Sunday church service.