

THE MISSIONAL MARRIAGE STUDY – SEASON 2

“Incarnational Marriage: Implications from Christ’s Ministry on Earth”

Session 2.1 - Christ & The Incarnation

CONCEPTUAL IDEAS TO CONVEY:

- ❖ Christ’s ministry to us was “incarnational” in nature
- ❖ Christ did not minister to mankind through proxy teaching or propositional theory; but instead chose to come and make His dwelling among us- so that we could know Him and clearly understand the Gospel.
- ❖ Thus Jesus provided the model by which we are to effectively minister to the world around us
- ❖ Our marriages can serve as a great platform by which we can incarnate the Gospel into the world and culture around us
- ❖ This kind of ministry is not easy, and can often be messy and organic in its demands, but the investment is eternally worth it!

THE PROCESS OF INCARNATION:

Main Entry: **in·car·na·tion**

Pronunciation: "in-kär-'nA-sh&n"

Function: *transitive verb*

1 a (1) : the act of giving concrete form or substance to something

- It’s the idea of taking something abstract and giving it concrete form or meaning.
- We would say “fleshing out an idea so it becomes real”
- We see this every day in our culture...
 - Car companies... design to production
 - Advertising... idea to billboard or commercial
 - Food... recipes to meals on the table

Typically three phases take place in the incarnational process...

1. understanding the need
2. creating an idea for remedy
3. implementing a solution

We see the same process with God when it comes to the incarnation of His Son, in **John, Chapter 1...**

The Problem or Need:

10...the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

The Idea:

11...He came to His own..., and those who were His own did not receive Him.

12...But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

The Solution:

14...And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

NEED: *Man is lost, needs salvation...* IDEA: *I’ll go to them Myself...* SOLUTION: *Incarnation...*

God felt the best way to reach us, wasn’t by:..

- Him expecting us to come to Him
- Sitting around with the Trinity and just talking about it
- Coming up with a some phenomenal heavenly programs, events, and curriculum that we could space shuttle up to
- Dumping stacks of tracts down from Heaven and hoping we’d find one and read about Him

But instead... to come make His dwelling among us... to bring Himself into our world so we could know the truth

QUESTIONS FOR DIALOGUE:

1. How important was the incarnation? Where would we have been without it?
2. What do we learn about the heart and character of God for Him having chosen to take this approach?

PHILIPPIANS 2:6-8... "...although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

3. What were the downsides for God having to step into our world? What did it cost Him?
4. Are there any parallels to the way Jesus approached ministry and the way He's asked us to approach it?

JOHN 17:18 / 20:21... "As the Father has sent Me into the World, so I send you into the world"

JOHN 17:13-19... "But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth"

5. What would this type of incarnational ministry look like for a typical Christian couple in America?

ACTS 17:26... "and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation"

6. What might it cost us? What are some of the downsides for this type of ministry?

What we'll be studying for the rest of the semester, in light of this session...

- Intentionality in Christ's mission (*not just hanging out in culture just to be cool and hang*)
- Christ's focus on the marginalized, outcast, neglected, rejected, dejected...
- The way in which Christ served people and used hospitality
- The truth Christ spoke... (*not just a social Gospel*)
- Jesus' commitment to righteousness, being set apart in the midst of loving sinners
- Most importantly, the fuel that drove Jesus' incarnational ministry... Jesus' abiding devotion and dependence upon the Father

HOMEWORK:

- ❖ Take some time this week to sit down with your spouse and thank God for sending His son to earth for your salvation.
- ❖ In following Christ's pattern of incarnational ministry, begin assessing the arenas of life and culture that God has divinely placed you in at this point in time (Acts 17:26). In other words, what neighborhoods, what social networks, what marketplace is your marriage connected to where there are lost people?
- ❖ Address the following questions with your spouse...
 - What spiritual opportunities might there be in these specific arenas that God has placed us in?
 - In what ways are we already naturally connected to the people in those arenas?
 - What are some initial steps we can take to build relational bridges to those people that we aren't connected to?
 - What are some things we can be doing right now to reach those people with the Gospel that we aren't already doing?
 - What are the likely barriers that will prevent us from connecting with these people and reaching them with the Gospel of Christ?
- ❖ After those questions are addressed, begin setting some goals with your spouse to begin taking intentional steps to incarnate your marriage further into those arenas so that the Gospel can go forth. Develop goals for the following time periods (if possible)...
 - ✓ 1 Week
 - ✓ 1 Month
 - ✓ 6 months
 - ✓ 1 year
- ❖ Pray that God would bless the goals, give you the courage & resources, and continue to open doors of opportunity around your marriage