

Have Yourself a World-Wide Christmas

(Inspired by a Matt Woodley message)

John 1:1-18

The two visions of Christmas:

Have yourself a merry little Christmas

I love the vision of the song. It pulls us in close to a familiar tight circle of family and friends who gather around us. It's taking a camera and pulling in on a family or a small group of close friends. It's a wonderful vision of Christmas.

Have yourself a world-wide Christmas

The Gospel of John gives us another vision of Christmas that doesn't invalidate the up-close vision. It zooms _____ and gives us a global view of Christmas. The theme of John 1: **Have yourself a world-wide Christmas!** Zoom in is nice, but it's really healthy for us to zoom out as well, and get beyond ourselves and our little muddled lives, to see Christmas as the Bible sees it. Follow along as I read **John 1:1-18**.

In that amazing text, there are some references to all people in all places on the earth. **Verse 3:** Everything, which includes all people, were created by Him. **Verse 4:** He who is the light gives light to everyone. **Verses 9-10:** He is the true light who came into the world. **Verse 12:** To all people in all the world who received Him, He gave the power to become children of God. So there's this huge global perspective.

Let's zoom out and see what it means to have a wide-angle view of the coming of Jesus Christ to planet earth as a global Savior!

The world-wide perspective:

1. Christ is the _____ of all the world.

Verse 9 says the true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. Then verse 10 speaks of His arrival: He came into the world, the very world that was made through Him. But there's a problem: "Yet the world did not know him." The light came into a world that was blanketed by darkness, and the light shined in the darkness, and the light

keeps on shining in the darkness, and yet the world remained in the dark until they came to know Him, receive Him, believe in Him.

Jesus is the light of all the world! But isn't it true that it usually takes "this _____ light of mine and of yours" to shine in a life before the Light can shine in them? We are like individual candles that light the wick of other candles—candles that were lightless until Jesus lit them through our loving sacrifice. We share our light through our love so that they too can know the Light who shines in all the world. One of the many ways we may do this is through ministries like **Compassion...**

Let us come back for a moment to us, because I know that Christmas is not always easy for people. For some of us, Christmas is a time of darkness and loneliness, perhaps especially in 2020: dark circumstances, dark mental and emotional stresses, darkness in our difficult relationships, darkness of grief because of losses that overwhelm us. Some of you may be struggling with depression, which is a _____-sinful affliction that the Lord Jesus treats with compassion. Remember His Word is Matthew 12:20: "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench."

2. Christ offers _____ to all the world.

Verse 14: The truth of this gospel is that we could not ascend to God based on our human righteousness and human moral effort. It is not possible to be a good enough person. Our world and our lives were blanketed in spiritual, moral darkness. So the eternal Word, God Himself, became flesh! We couldn't ascend to Him, so He descended to us, and became one of us. He left home and came to us, and He came full of grace and truth! And that's why we leave home and go to others. For example, **our Haiti trips...**

If even just one Haitian comes to faith in Jesus because of these little lights of ours, then **verse 12** declares, Jesus gave him or her the right, the power, the privilege to become children of God!

3. We are _____ to His world-wide light and grace.

In the middle of this glorious Christmas passage is a character named John. He's not John the human author—that's the Apostle John. It's John

the Baptist—Jesus' forerunner. And right there he is, in verse 6 (**6-9**). What's he doing there? In the midst of the Awesome Light that has arrived on our planet, stands a man. Just a man, but an important man. For he came on the scene to bear witness about the light.

And we are like John, because this is how Jesus has chosen to get this message of Light to everyone who's still stuck in the darkness. Like John, we are the ones called by God to get the truth of the gospel out there in the world around us and to the world that's way out there in faraway places. We are witnesses to the most powerful message ever brought to humankind. And we can get it out there in various ways. We can go ourselves. We can send another to go. And we can partner with a ministry that's already there, sharing the life-saving good news with people stuck in some of the darkest places imaginable.

One of those ministries that a number of us have partnered with is **Family Legacy**. This ministry is stationed in Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia, Africa. Lusaka's population is several million with 37 slums, or 70% of the population, where abject poverty, wretched sanitation, and spiritual darkness blanket the people. And for most of the slum dwellers, there's only one way out: Family Legacy.

An other-worldly honor!

We have the privilege to be agents of grace to little girls and boys through **Family Legacy**, witnesses through **Many Hands for Haiti**, lovers of little souls through **Compassion International**, and gospel lights who share Jesus' grace and truth to **the neighbor** across the street. This is **the global perspective**. We take the Light, and the grace, and the truth into a dark world, and then pray like crazy that people near and far will receive by faith the Light of the world, Jesus Christ.

Let us pray this Christmas, "Lord, use _____." And zoom in: **have yourself a merry little Christmas**, where family and friends are dear to us, gathered near to us. And **have yourself a world-wide Christmas**, that zooms out so that you will be a person who says,

"Please, Lord, use me!"