**He Became Our Neighbor**

Based on [John 1:1-18](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Jn1.1)

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The Nativity of Our Lord ~ Christmas Day

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*"He was in the world and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him."*

I'm sure you're all at least somewhat familiar with the story of the Titanic, that huge cruiseship that hit an iceberg on its maiden voyage in 1912, and some 1500 people lost their lives. If you've seen the movie...you probably noticed the different treatment that was given the rich and the poor. I'm not talking about the obvious difference. Even today if you fly first class, your ride will be more luxurious and comfortable than those stuck in coach...you get what you pay for. But in the movie, when it became clear that the sinking of the massive oceanliner was inevitable, many of the poor were not allowed to be saved by a life boat. Instead it was the rich who received priority boarding.

The actual history of "class conflict" and life discrimination aboard the titanic isn't clear. I don't know if the movie got the history right or not, but I do know what God says. God says, the distinction between rich and poor--that's just the way of the world. Jesus says, the poor will always be with us; and that the rich already have their reward. He says blessed are the poor, for theirs shall receive the kingdom of god. He says it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to get to heaven.

Jesus does not say these things to make the rich feel bad about being rich, or the poor to feel good about being poor. In fact, he's not even talking about money. He's pointing out that, in this world, power and prestige, and their symbol: “wealth” will always receive preferential treatment. And if the poor and powerless ever do become rich and powerful, others will become the powerless poor to fill the gap. Nature abhors a vacuum. In this world of sin, weakness, poverty, and humility will always be trampled underfoot, and the powerful will always use it for themselves. In spite of all the welfare programs and progressive tax structures implemented mankind cannot--through programs of social engineering--change the sinful nature of the world. According to the way Jesus speaks, to be poor means nothing else than to be powerless and rejected in the world.

All this is to remind us that the royal Son of God was born in poverty, and that indicates that he was born powerless and rejected by the world. John the Apostle says, **"[Jesus] came to his own and his own people did not receive him."**  God was born a Jew, and the Jews rejected him. God was made man, and men rejected him. God was born into the world, and the world cast him out. And yet in the midst of all this rejection there is this Gospel, "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

Because Christ was born, we are given a second birth as children of God. We remember that by our new birth of "water and the spirit" Christ's birthright becomes ours. And we also remember the tragedy of unbelief...that some reject their birthright, and trade it for a pittance. Esau traded his for a meal. Paul says of the enemies of Christ's cross, "Their god is their belly, and they glory in shame, with minds set on worldly things."

Christmas has us consider why God send his son into the world. But it also has us consider why did God send him in a manger? If God wants all men to be saved why wasn't his son born in glory, and riches, and power and might? Then he wouldn't be rejected. Then all would come to him, all would praise him, and claim their birthright. Not just shepherds, and foreigners, but the whole world would certainly come to receive such a good-looking Saviour. Everyone would bet on that horse; all would bank on that stock; all would receive his silver and gold and crowns into their homes and their hearts.

Why did the son of God take on human flesh? Why did he come in weakness and not in power? Why did he come in a manger and not in a palace. The answer is simple, it's so that the weak would be drawn to him, and so the powerful would reject him.

If God comes in glory and might, giving all blessings by request, it doesn't matter whether you love him or not, you're gonna smile when he looks, laugh at his jokes, shine his shoes, and flatter him. And you're going to wait for his blessings like a seal waiting for a fish. Even if your god is your belly, you'd follow whatever power can feed it. No one would reject a powerful God. Like Judas, you'd serve him with your lips, but withhold your heart. In order to satisfy your belly, you'd bow down to the powerful, and trample the weak underfoot. But that is the way of the world, the way of the powerful, the way of the rich.

And so, on Christmas morning, the God who in power commanded us to love our neighbor, came in poverty and weakness and became our neighbor. God wasn't found in first-class, he was stuffed in the lower deck. And the hearts of men were revealed in how they treated God, as he was numbered among the poor. God came in humility and weakness, to reveal the hearts of men, the rich rejected him, and the poor loved him. And that’s the twist...this poverty of spirit that makes the god/man rejectable; is the very thing that makes him approachable. For the Word has become flesh, and dwells among us.

Merry Christmas...