

Ocean View Women's Bible Study
February 03, 2011
Week Three Teaching

READ from Genesis 1:1-5; 26- 2:1

READ from John 1:1-14

- John brings us back to the beginning. Not to the beginning of Jesus' life on earth, but the beginning of God, the beginning of life, the beginning of the beginning.
 - We meet our creator God in the Gospel of John, and surely. Those who first heard this account of Jesus would have heard 'in the beginning' and thought of Genesis and the creation of the world
 - They would have immediately understood that John was linking forever, eternity, with today, with the story of Jesus.
 - This Jesus is bigger than just the fulfillment of the Jewish hopes, or anyone's hopes for that matter, this is the God of the universe coming down to us.
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- But there is one distinction between the creation story and the story we hear in John. In the creation story there is God and there are the things He creates. They are very separate and only God gives life to those things. To human beings, God breathes life into them. We are actually created with the breath of God
 - But every breath we take, every day we live, every thing on this earth is a gift from God, and not from us.
 - But John is different, the Word is different. Verse 4 says that IN the word was life. In Genesis we see God above breathing life into everything below and giving it life. Now the life comes to us. The life and light, which are interchangeable, comes into the darkness and shines in the darkness.
 - But here is a key purpose of Jesus coming to the earth, coming and being life and light among us. Because of what is says in verse 5, that the darkness has not understood it. That is the story of God and God's people. God has tried to reach down and rescue and love and purpose and change the heart of men and women time and time again. But the darkness has not understood it. Throughout history, starting with in Genesis there was darkness and there was light. God is the creator of light and life. But the darkness still moves, the darkness still grows. Some times in our lives, we may even feel like the darkness overwhelms the light. The darkness sometimes seems like it's going to win.
 - I want you to think right now, just in your head. Where are the places of darkness that you see in your world? Is it in you job, your boss, the way you are treated by others, is it in your home, a spouse, or a daughter, is it memories, the darkness of something in the past, something that has happened to you that you still are ashamed of, that still defines you. Maybe you feel like you are the darkness sometimes. Like you try to do good and you try to be good, but you just keep sinning, you just keep making the wrong choices. Sometimes it does feel like the darkness is going to win.
 - You know we feel like that sometimes, but we don't let people know. That's why children are so beautiful, because they are transparent. I am now seeing the world through two children, a two-year old and a 16-year old. They are passionate about what they think is bad and what they think is good. When it's bad it is WRONG and when it's good it is so right.
 - We learn to cover ourselves up better. We hide, we cover, we pretend, we numb out. We come up with our own ways to survive the darkness around us.

- Well darkness is real, but there is only one creator of light and life, and that is our God. Only God brings light and life, but He can and WILL bring it every time. He never longs for us to live in darkness, for darkness to be our reality or our identity. Never.
- Matthew 7:11 says, "If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" He knew our hearts, He knew our needs, He knew we really needed God Himself to come and walk alongside of us, and show us what it looked like to live a life of light in the midst of such overwhelming darkness.
- So that is why he did what we read in verse 14.

- In verse 14 we find one of the most profound pieces of scripture in the whole of the Bible.
- It says that the Word 'dwelt among us' or made his home among us.
- Because of the darkness, because God was light but we couldn't understand it, we couldn't take it in, we couldn't figure out how to live it out in our lives. Because of this, God came and lived among us.
- The literal translation is that He made his tent among us. This is curious to me, because for me, I don't really like tents or understand tents, and the Prince's aren't really 'camping' people. We are more 'floors and carpet' kind of people. We are 'bed' people. We aren't into ruffing it for enjoyment. But turns out Jesus is.
- He lived the fullness of the human experience in a body. He perspired. He felt fatigue. He was a human being just like us.
- We can find some interesting stuff when we dig down deeper into what is happening by Jesus camping with us.
- Jesus dwelt with us is that He made a long residence with us.

- It says a few deep things about dwelling with us
- 1. He should have been dwelling in the palace, as the prince and king, but didn't even have a place to lay his head, and had a lowly and ordinary home
- 2. The people in that day who would sleep and live in tents were the soldiers. So to come into a place and set up tents, was an act to precede war. Jesus was declaring war over our sin, over Satan, over the darkness of the world.
- 3. A tent is always a temporary home, just somewhere one goes for a short stay. Jesus was saying to us that He would not stay with us forever, that His time on earth was temporary.
- 4. It symbolizes that God wanted us to know that now He wasn't far away, only in the temple, but now He lived among us. God is accessible and close, is our neighbor and our friend through Jesus Christ.

- Jesus among us, Jesus living right there, right with us. This kind of love, this kind of move is profound. But it demands a profound response. God didn't do this so we could sit in a room today and think 'WOW,' that is so cool what God did. He doesn't just want us to sit in our seats, and think of how lovely He is and then walk away as if nothing happened. If we gave that sort of response to anyone showing love to us on earth, no response would be a response of rejection. So when we do nothing in response to God's love, in truth, we are responding with rejection to that love.
- God brought Jesus to live among us, so it would change our reality. He wanted the

darkness that surrounds and overwhelms us to be pierced by the lightness and light that is now inside US when we follow Jesus Christ

- I mentioned this a bit last week, but John's gospel isn't about right living it's about a life miracle that starts in you and me.
- But we have to allow God to do that work in us. We have to open ourselves up to who Jesus is and what he wants to bring to light in OUR lives.

- This idea of tents isn't something just in the New Testament, it was the homes of nomadic people in the OT also.
- It's interesting because a tent was something very personal to a person. Many times men and women lived in different tents, and you never let a stranger into your tent.
- It was something you protected and watched over. The doors would have been shut and suspicious of anything new.
- This is how we are with our hearts as well. We don't let many people in, we keep the doors of our heart shut, and we are always suspicious of anything new.
- But God has something to say to us about this in Isaiah 54

1 “Sing, barren woman,
you who never bore a child;
burst into song, shout for joy,
you who were never in labor;
because more are the children of the desolate woman
than of her who has a husband,”
says the LORD.

2 “Enlarge the place of your tent,
stretch your tent curtains wide,
do not hold back;
lengthen your cords,
strengthen your stakes.

3 For you will spread out to the right and to the left;
your descendants will dispossess nations
and settle in their desolate cities.

4 “Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame.
Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated.
You will forget the shame of your youth
and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.

5 For your Maker is your husband—
the LORD Almighty is his name—
the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer;
he is called the God of all the earth.

- This is God telling us His people to open the doors of our tent, and even more to make them bigger, because God wants something wonderful to dwell in our lives. Something bigger and greater than was there before.
- Jesus not only takes up a tent next to us, but he wants to come inside of us, He wants to restore us, rename us, reclaim us, renew us and remake us. Jesus wants to fill our tents with love and dreams and joy.
- Whatever your story has been before, however much darkness filled your life in the past, with Jesus dwelling among us, we are invited to open wide and trust God for new things, for beautiful things, for light where there was only darkness.
- It's time to open up, to open wide, and to look at what is all around us, even filling us up. It is the Word, it is God, it is Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

Questions:

1. What are places of darkness that you see in the community of Ocean View?
2. What are some places of darkness in your home or life?
3. What holds you back from opening yourself up to the things God could do? What holds you back from trusting God to bring light that will pierce your darkness.

Pray together over the dark places in your lives, envision them in your minds, and pray God's light into them through Jesus Christ

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Pray together over the dark places in your lives, envision them in your minds, and pray God's light into them through Jesus Christ