

# Jesus: His Family Christmas (John 1:6-13)

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] for today but please flip open your bibles to john chapter 1 1 to 3 oh 13 sorry cool follow along in the beginning was the word and the word was with god and the word was god he was with god in the beginning through him all things were made without him nothing was made that has been made in him was life and that life was the light of all mankind the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has the darkness has not overcome it there was a man sent from god whose name was john he came as a witness to testify concerning that light so that through him all might believe he himself was not the light he came only as a witness to the light the true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world he was in the world and though the world was made through him the world did not recognize him he came to that which was his own but his own did not receive him yet to all who did receive him to those who believe in his name he gave the right to become children of god children not born of natural descent nor human decision or husband's will but born of god god cool thank you pastor sam um just briefly introduce uh pastor sam um most of you know him but recently um howard baptist church have voted to call him as their senior pastor and so that starts february so i'd like to invite um senior pastor sam um yeah forward well good afternoon everybody thank you for having me back again william and everyone here it's good to be here to open the word with you uh william invited me and said i can kind of preach whatever i've been preaching through for um howard baptist church and it's a bit unusual because it's john's gospel which is maybe not exactly what you might be used to at christmas uh but what happened is after seven years of after seven christmases coming into my eighth christmas of being pastor i felt a little dry looking at like matthew and luke again which is a maybe not nicest thing to say but then i saw someone did a sermon from john at christmas and so i started looking at uh john's introduction and you know each gospel writer so matthew mark luke and john have their own kind of flavor to how what they show us about jesus and john's is more unique than the other ones and i thought it was just such an interesting and lofty picture we have of jesus as john introduces him to us and i thought even though traditionally we think of jesus as a baby in a manger it's this same jesus that john introduces to us that came and so we can reflect on him as john introduces him to us and so i hope that's an encouragement to you today today i'll just be looking at verses 6 to 13 but i will just highlight the first five verses as well but before we do that let's um pray heavenly father we thank you for the blessing and goodness of christmas and this time we can spend reflecting on jesus come in the flesh to save us and lord i just pray you would plant his goodness and grace and salvation deeply into us that we would feel adopted and welcomed into your family heavenly father so please do by your word invite each one of us into a wonderful grace-filled relationship with you we pray in jesus name amen christmas is a family time i'm sure you've experienced that uh my cut forth christmas extended family uh time has taken on a bit of new life in the last few years uh we now have kids so grandkids uh in the mix and uh very excited for christmas which brings a new fresh sense of life to our celebrations they are keen for presents and treats and a late night and uh hazel my four-year-old

has already asked will we have a big lot of cherries this christmas she associates uh christmas with cherries at the moment um and our family we have our our staple platters that each member brings for christmas so there's like a broccoli salad that has uh mayonnaise and uh raisins and different things in it uh there's a danish pudding which takes ages ages and ages to make and i had to make that one year but it's not what i normally bring we have brandy steps and roast turkey and way too many strawberries and we bring them all together as a family and have a meal and then my wife's australian and so she has to watch the australian boxing day cricket match that happens the next day and so christmas and family they really go together in many of our lives christmas and family don't always meet though sometimes people are too far away from their families to enjoy christmas

time together sometimes people have passed away and you at christmas particularly miss those who are no longer around uh and for other christians or for other people um christmas family time is actually awkward or difficult or unpleasant uh with any family there can be broken relationships and breakdown in a family and you feel like maybe you've got to navigate or just endure the day particularly if your family aren't christian it can be particularly hard to kind of want to celebrate jesus but not have it part of your life your christmas day so perhaps christmas time will be a family time but only in longings and sometimes with its challenges and what today's passage is about family as well it's about christmas family jesus christmas family is what we see in john and we see that jesus he has his longings and challenges as he joins and creates a family over christmas time and the good news of these eight verses is that each of us is welcomed into the family of jesus his family christmas is for all the lonely the dysfunctional the sinner the content the happy we're reminded this christmas that we can each enter the family of jesus so please do keep your apps and bibles open to john 1 6-13 um we see in the first uh five verses that were read for us uh the introduction of jesus and his glory so he uh john says that jesus was the eternal god existing from before time began uh and that he was the creator and sustainer of life uh physical and spiritual uh this is who came to earth this is a glorious picture that john gives us of jesus who was born and placed in a manger the child who was born was god come to save us from darkness well when this jesus when one so great came how would he be received how would jesus be received and if he is so great how do we join with him in his family so come with me and john as we see first that jesus must take center stage in his family second that jesus faced his own family rejection at christmas time and finally we see how we can join jesus family so first from verses six to eight i want us to see that in jesus family he takes center stage it's not about you or me at all it's not about even about a great prophet like john the baptist look at verses six to eight it says there was a man sent from god whose name was john he came as a witness to be a witness about the light that all might believe through him he was not the light but he came to be a witness about the light john as he writes he sidetracks us here a bit he's been writing about this eternal god and creator and he hasn't used jesus name yet he's just been calling him the word and he's used the pronoun him so far and now in this verse here he introduces us to a man a man sent from god and as we're reading through the sentence i think we're supposed to think is this him is this the word you've been telling us about is his name john but then we're told soon after no john was not the light john was not the coming savior john's job was to bear witness to him to bear witness to the word to be a witness to jesus and he tells us three times uses the word witness of john three times john would later say that he was unworthy even to untie the sandals of jesus and in verse 15 of chapter one that jesus ranks before him because he was before him you see in jesus family it's not about us it's not about john the family of jesus centers around jesus as we point to him as we witness to him now the writer of this gospel john so reading john's gospel john's good news about jesus and the john that was sent from god are not the same man now that's a touch confusing if you're new to the bible and even if you've spent a long time in the bible you may not have realized this but there's john here in verse six he bears witness to jesus he was known as john the baptist he was born just before jesus he was jesus cousin actually jesus older cousin and john realized that jesus was more than just a cousin and so that's why john says jesus was before me he's greater than me he was before me in time he was god but then we have john who wrote john's gospel and john was a follower of jesus throughout his life he was a close follower of jesus who was entrusted by jesus with caring for jesus mother mary when he died and ascended to god's side he was john the disciple john the disciple that jesus loved but i want you to know that both john the baptist and john the disciple place jesus center stage and make the family of jesus about him they do this by both bearing witness to jesus john the baptist did it as he proclaimed jesus is coming repent and believe jesus is coming and john the disciple witnessed by writing this letter of john of his writing this letter about jesus to us pointing us to jesus saying this is what he was like this is who he truly was both of them point to jesus both of them allow jesus to take center stage in their life and witness can you make jesus center stage as they did can you witness to him he is so worthy of us proclaiming his name and goodness sometimes not though i don't think we're naturally inclined to praise other people part of being a human i think is that we think of ourselves naturally and there's something normal about needing to care for ourselves and look after ourselves but i just one example of this is uh the family christmas photo christmas time is a great time to get that uh family christmas uh snap um anna and i are not great at taking family pictures but christmas is that one opportunity when there'll be at least one photo of our family all together and god has kindly sent into our family one sister-in-law with both the patience and determination

required to round up for me and my other three brothers who are both unwilling and unphotogenic along with our kids into a family photo she has got the patience and determination to get us there and so we have it uh now when that photo when you have a family photo and there's lots of kids you

got to take a few to get it right so that you know at least half of them are actually looking in the right direction and then at least half of those kids looking in the right direction are smiling somewhat and once you've taken all these photos the best ones sent around to everybody in the family and as soon as you get that photo what do you do you look for yourself and sure enough in the best photo you have a weird smile you're looking in the wrong direction your eyes are closed and really that photo photo for you is like dumpster get rid of that photo i look terrible in it that photo is dead to me that christmas never happened right and that's because how we look in that moment uh is important it's uh part of how we act and yet that cannot be the christmas christian family in the family of jesus if a photo would be taken he needs to be center stage he is the most important person in the family of god uh if it was a photo you would think of it as like a wedding photo where the bride and groom are kissing in the middle and then the the bridal party's like looking like that's in a stage it's their special day people are pointing to looking at them uh well in jesus family when it comes to the salvation of god's people and us coming together it is all about jesus us pointing to him us witnessing to him that is the christmas christian family because you see there was a man sent from god he wasn't the light but he came to bear witness to that light jesus that's our role in the family if you are in jesus family today uh you're not center stage but you are pointing others to jesus and more traditionally in the christmas story we see it's full of witnessing isn't it just think of all the elements there's there's angels they appear singing praises to their savior we have angels going about sending messengers uh telling the shepherds uh a star in the sky proclaiming that jesus the king has been born we have mary she's storing up the treasures of all that is happening so that she could tell others we have simeon and anna praising jesus in the temple when they first see this child we have the prophets from old are speaking through time about jesus who is coming this child who would be born it's full of those witnessing the arrival witnessing to the arrival of jesus and we too are called to witness to the great light that has come into the world and one practical way you might be able to witness to jesus and make him central is the way that you answer the question what are your plans for christmas so what are you up to this christmas the way we tend to answer that indicates that christmas for us is about the holiday we're about to have the food we're about to eat or the family that we're going to spend it with yet that question really is a perfect and obvious opportunity for us to share what it looks like as a christian to celebrate jesus at christmas what could you genuinely say the next time someone asks you what are your christmas plans how could you witness to them tell them what is so meaningful about christians as they celebrate christmas what could you genuinely say about the service about carols about what you are remembering and holding on to we can witness at this time of year so do put jesus center stage and if you're not yet in jesus family then consider the witness of your friends and family around you but also the gospel of john that we're looking at today we're just looking at a few verses but the whole book is witnessing to jesus what he did why he came it is a first-hand account a

first-hand witnessing of jesus and all that he is so first christmas is not about us but jesus takes center stage in his family and we're pointing to him second not everyone appreciates jesus taking center stage and that is what we see in verses 9 to 11 jesus he's pushed aside jesus is not received we see jesus had his own christmas family rejection verses 11 8 to 11. in other gospels accounts when jesus is born we have actually quite a big deal made of the birth of jesus and the intention attention that was paid in that moment right everyone's coming to see the newborn baby as you do with newborn babies but across the course of jesus entire life jesus was not widely accepted he got fickle attention from these awestruck crowds some who wanted food some who wanted to be dazzled but they abandoned him and for the most part he was rejected outright by religious leaders as they eventually dragged him off to be killed and if christmas is a difficult time of year for you and your family or without your family then just note that jesus knew rejection from those closest to him from those who should have loved him and celebrated him and welcomed him look at verses 9 to 11 with me the true light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world 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 jesus the light has come to shine in the darkness jesus the creator has entered his creation and yet he was not recognized or wanted why why why did no one want him why was he not received well in john 3 19 uh john expands i think on this idea of the light

coming into the world and so john 3 19 says the light has come into the world and people love the light of darkness rather than the light because their works are evil jesus coming as he came his light his goodness exposed our darkness and our sin and we don't like that and people didn't like that and i think his light exposes us in three ways or his life did first one his general life i think shows us up his perfect life shows uh the rest of our lives up and i often think of jesus brothers and sisters who seem to reject them at first particularly james we know i wonder what it would be like to grow up with a brother who was perfect who always did the right thing who never teased or bothered you i just think it would be so easy to be resentful of the good boy and yet jesus whole life shows each one of us up as we sin and fail so that's first his life second i think his teachings uh show our darkness and our sin so jesus taught things like if you are lost it's like you've committed adultery in your heart if you have anger and it's like you've murdered someone in your heart and with those types of teaching it just exposes how terrible actually our sin and even things that go in in our heart are and third i think he shows us and exposes sin in our life by his death so jesus came to save sinners he did that by dying on the cross for our sin and it just shows our sin was so terrible that it must be punished and dealt with and jesus did that on the cross as the

[ 20 : 22 ] wrath of god was poured out upon him because of our sin you see jesus coming revealed and exposed our sin and our darkness and that is not easily accepted and so we many rejected him even jesus own people the nation of israel who had been waiting for this savior for the most part did not receive him for jesus came preaching repentance from sin you see jesus was not a gift easily received jesus was not a gift easily received and my family has a very different gift opening process than anna's family does so my family it's pretty chaotic we hand out all the gifts at the same time uh while as anna's family everyone sits around and they hand out one present at a time i'm not sure how your families do it but the one gift at a time really stresses me out because everyone's watching me as i open my present and if it's not a very good present it'll be shown on my face oh a pair of socks oh a shirt that doesn't fit me and i don't really like the color of it and i just can't fake i just can't fake it it's written all over my face if i don't like that gift well when jesus came the world and his people this gift came they said ah is that what you think about me is that what you're saying about my life and so they didn't want him they loved darkness and didn't want to be exposed so jesus came preaching repentance for sins and many did not want to receive that and so that light exposing caused this family break where jesus was rejected by many but it's not just an exposing light that jesus offers he does not just point out and reveal our darkness but he brings light to us jesus uh his light can't help but show up our darkness yet in coming jesus died for that very sin he's exposing that we now are able to when we realize our sin repent and know for certainty that when we turn back to jesus he will forgive us we will be welcomed into his family and so we have jesus taking center stage as he deserves for all that he's done we have jesus facing his own family rejection because of the way he exposes us but finally we see that we can join jesus family and as you consider the coming of jesus this christmas would you receive him are you willing to join the family of jesus with him being center stage are you willing to draw near to jesus the great light when you know that it is going to expose and reveal your own sin and darkness will you repent turn and receive jesus verses 12 and 13 show us what happens when we do that when we turn to jesus and trust him so verse 12 and 13 says but to all who did receive him jesus who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of god who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of god here's the christmas family jesus was rejected but he continued to form a family a people of his own he started adopting children to his family he started creating a people out of those who believed in his name his name represents who he who he is the eternal god the creator and sustainer of life the savior of the

world and jesus is clear that entry into his family requires no special qualification or heritage no pedigree of birth or race or place everyone is welcome that's the point of not needing to be born of blood or the will of the flesh so no bloodline needed no particular parents that you need to get into the family of god and it's not dependent on our own will that's the will of man or a human decision uh but it's dependent on god's will so he causes you to be born into the family god into the family of god that is the spiritual life that jesus is able to bring you see it's grace alone that saves it's jesus alone who gives the right to become children of god not as a result of family relationships or birth or human initiative but grace alone in the lord jesus it doesn't matter if you have a good family that has a wonderful christmas time together it doesn't matter if you have had a great christian upbringing doesn't matter if you come from a dysfunctional family and a strange family it doesn't matter what

matters is that you are born of god now we must receive jesus and believe in his name we're told to do that we interact by faith with god but it is god who wills in that work in us to be born again it is god at work in you and i wonder if you can relate to my experience of belief and faith um i can't really explain why i believe with certainty and others don't or why i keep believing uh sometimes if i'm being honest i kind of can't get rid of my belief if something unsettles me uh some behavior or some thing uh idea i've never thought of um i kind of can't give up my faith it just stays there and i just can't deny god it's kind of a decision that's out of my hands and i think that's the will of god working in me that i believe and continue to i have been born again into a new family that's god at work and so what i must do and what i'll keep doing is receiving and believing in the name of jesus and if you're here today and you have a deep sense that god is real and that he sent jesus his one and only son into the world to die for you to save you from sin then know that that is god at work in you causing you to be born again into his family that is a wonderful gift to you being able to believe in god admit your sin and realize who jesus is not everyone feels like that not everyone can look at what jesus says and his life and say i want to follow that man not everyone has an unshakable belief in god that keeps them coming back to church and coming back to god today if god is working in you like that then please do receive him as lord accept this adoption that he is working in you and begin to live in the family of god well we have jesus family and in his family he is center stage and we're pointing to him we are witnessing to him we see jesus faced his own family rejection as uh as he exposes our sin and we don't want to see that and finally we see jesus welcomes us into his new family would you receive him today christmas is a family time and the story of jesus moves us to ask are you willing to join the family or will you miss out on the christmas family photo this year shall we pray

heavenly father we thank you for this marvelous word about jesus from god's uh from john's gospel i pray that you uh would allow us to take that word plant it deep in our hearts and bring forth a harvest of righteousness lord please uh keep the devil from snatching this word away from the busyness of the christian christmas season uh from crowding it out heavenly father but uh use that word to encourage us all the more about who jesus is and what he's come to do for us we pray this in jesus name amen