

THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

Week 5
CHRISTMAS 2018
 Matt Labbe

**WARM-UP**

What is the most absurd statement you have ever heard someone say? What made it so absurd?

INTRODUCTION

- What thought stands out for you this week from the Christmas service or what God has been teaching you in your own study of the Word?
- Would you say you are someone who likes and embraces change, or someone who does not like change and maybe even fights it?
 - Why do you think we don't often like change very much?
- Think about the incredible change that Jesus personally would have made, coming to earth from heaven. What do you think your reaction would be to a change as drastic as that?
- Why did he do it? Let's repeat the question like a three-year-old would here and ask "why" a few times. If your answer is, "He did it for love," ask, "Why does he love us?" Etc.
- In telling the Christmas story, Matt called it "absurd." Why did he use that term?
- Read **Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23**. This prophecy of Isaiah, quoted in Matthew, says the child born would be called Immanuel, which means *God with us*. What do you think the significance was for the people of Israel that God would be with them in the flesh?
- Read **John 1:9-14**. In verse 10 it said that not everyone recognized the light, Jesus. What can keep us from recognizing the truth when it is right in front of us?
- When you think of Jesus being both fully human and fully God, how might this idea have seemed absurd to the people around him?

BIBLE APPLICATION

- What are some ways that you have sensed that God has been with you throughout your life, even in the times when you were questioning or skeptical about him?
- How has knowing that you were not alone helped you cope with difficult situations?

- How does that knowledge give courage to face the unknowns about whatever might be coming?
- Sometimes, we use God like a storybook "genie in a bottle," turning to him only when we want or need something. In what way does this show we have not committed everything to God?
- Matt made the statement, "**Jesus changes everything, or Jesus changes nothing.**" Discuss what this statement means.
 - How does this apply to each of our lives?
 - In what way has Jesus changed everything for you?
 - In what ways do your choices or actions show that you haven't allowed him to change much at all?
- What are some reasons we might say we believe Jesus changes everything, but don't live our lives like we really believe it?
- Read **James 1:16-27**. For those who claim to be believers, what insight do these verses give us on how we should live our lives if we have truly allowed Jesus to change us?
- What does the phrase from **Matthew 1:18** mean, "This is how Jesus the Messiah was born"?
 - Why was this kind of birth necessary for Jesus to redeem each of us?

NEXT STEPS / ACTION

- What are some ways we can explain to others how surrendering to Jesus and allowing him to change our life can bring true freedom?
- If you're willing, share what you wrote down on the card: "I'm giving _____ to Jesus."
- What is your next step in fulfilling that commitment?
- How can this group support you as you surrender this to Jesus?

PRAYER

Pray over the commitments that each of you made to surrender something to Jesus. If there are some unspoken commitments, pray for those too. Ask God for eyes that are open to see his presence in your lives. Immanuel, God, is with us. The Holy Spirit is with you.



PERSONAL GROWTH & NEXT STEPS

At-home personal study

Read through the book of **James** this week.

- What is God revealing to you that you may not have given over to him yet?
- Write down what he says to you.
- Share with a trusted friend who can help you give that to Christ and provide accountability.

*"I'm giving _____ to Jesus,
and this changes everything."*

GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

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NEXT STEPS TO FULL LIFE

Who can help you and support you with the change God has placed on your heart above? Here are some ways to support one another:

- Be part of a Full Life group, if you aren't already in a long-term group.
- Participate in a Freedom Group if there is an addiction that you would love to break with God's power.
- Ask someone if they would meet with you for a certain number of weeks for 1:1 Bible study and discipleship and accountability.
- Invite someone who you think might benefit from 1:1 discipleship and mentoring to be mentored. Sometimes, someone is too shy to ask. We can grow significantly when we "look left" and mentor someone else.

No matter where you are on your spiritual path or how much you know about the Bible, there will always be someone else who isn't as far along the path as you are. That's what we mean by looking left. Together we grow and become more like Jesus.