

Discussion Guide: Christus Victor

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42 (NIV)

December 15, 2002: "Christus Victor" by Shane Fuller, Pastor of Sr. Hi & College. Shane described the mystery and wonder of God's epic plan of sending his Son into the world to restore what was lost when the world began.

The epic tale of the battle between good and evil began when Adam and Eve responded to Satan's temptation by disobeying God's clear direction and sin and death entered into the human race. When this occurred, the LORD God proclaimed to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Genesis 3:15

Some 2000 years ago, in the fullness of time, God sent his son into the world to crush the head of Satan. On the eve of that great day, angels proclaimed to startled shepherds,

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:10-14

Throughout his ministry on earth, Jesus demonstrated his power over the forces of darkness and the fact that he was sent on a mission by his heavenly Father to restore what was lost and provide a way for mankind to restore fellowship with God.

When confronted for his persecution of the early church, Jesus said to Paul...

'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'
"Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' Acts 26:14-18

In Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia, he described how the Lord Jesus Christ...

...gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, Galatians 1:4

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he described how those without Christ are trapped of the devil and taken captive to do his will, not God's will.

And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 (NIV)

The writer of Hebrews, explains how Jesus came into the world and shared in their humanity...

so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Hebrews 2:14-15

The Apostle John in his first epistle writes...

Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 1 John 3:7-8

The good news is we have victory over the powers of darkness and the Spirit who raised Christ from the dead also works in us when we put our faith and trust in Jesus. Oh, we still struggle in our daily walk with our Lord because the battle still rages on, but the ultimate victory is ours because our Lord Jesus Christ destroyed the devil's work and restores into fellowship with God the Father those who place their faith and trust in Jesus.

Given all this, what is our response?

When the shepherds heard the message from the angel of the Lord, they responded by...

- going to see this thing that had happened,
- spreading the word about what they had seen and heard, and
- glorified and praised God.

Discussion Questions:

- What is the world's response today when they hear the Christmas story?
- What is your response to the true message of Christmas?
- What has God been doing in your life this couple of weeks? Are you praising God and giving him the glory for the things that he is doing in your life?
- Are we, like the shepherds, spreading the word about what we have heard, and seen, and experienced in our own lives? What might we do to spread the word?

Outreach Challenge: Pray for God's wisdom to select someone in which to "spread the word" and report back to the group the results of your encounter for Christ at our next meeting.