

Recognise, Receive, Rights & Relationship

John 1:10-14

Have you ever thought why John's gospel is so different from the other three? The simple answer is that he is not writing hot off the press copy to get the news out but reflecting on who Jesus is 60 years into walking with Him!! After introducing who Jesus is in verses 1-9 he then offers us a challenge to respond to Him with four R's!!

Recognise: if Jesus turned up today would you recognise Him? When He came to Planet Earth, He came in a way that people did not expect: a vulnerable, dependant Baby, to parents who almost lost Him to genocide and became refugees in Egypt. Would we recognise Him today? Could He come as a homeless person seeking your loose change? (Matthew 8:20 says He, Jesus, had nowhere to lay His head!) Could He come, as a middle-eastern man we might suspect is a terrorist? Could He come as an eastern European whom we resent because of the scarcity of jobs?

Let me challenge you tonight to let Him out of the box you have put Him in: or to get yourself out of your personal box or comfort zone, and behold Him with new eyes this Christmas!! So recognise His coming, His servants & His work (of the Holy Spirit).

Receive: it's one thing to recognise Him; it's another step entirely to receive Him as Tara & Emma! John says 'His own did not receive Him': those who had wanted Him to come had got so religious that it had blinded them to Him when He came: scary thought! Keep your life centred on Jesus, not on Church, nor on changing the world or how we do stuff as Christians. Keep your eyes on Him, your heart full of love for Him, and radically

desire each day to follow Him and do the things He did, as He promised you would!!

So having recognised Him, receive Him into your heart by faith. A present recognised yet unopened is of no use: only when we open it and truly receive it does it become part of us. So receive Him, Jesus, wholeheartedly and completely.

Rights: it's incredible to me that the one who gave up all His rights to come to Planet Earth (Philippians 2:5-11), is the same person who gives us rights. In a world where people demand their rights, He is Jesus giving us rights which will last for all eternity. John comments: to those who believed in His Name (His Name means: He (God) saves) He gave the right to become children of God. Then he qualifies that statement by making it clear: not of natural descent (white Anglo-Saxon so I must be a Christian, or because of my parents....). Johanna & Judy may have had committed Christian parents but that no more makes them a Christian than going to Macdonald's makes me a hamburger. John also says it's not about a human decision alone: in essence we can't get there on our own; the Holy Spirit work is to show us Jesus and draw us to a place of surrender to Him. Nor is it about a husband's will: harking back to the days when the head of the household made decisions for everyone in that household. Put simply John says: we are 'born of God'. It's His work from conception to birth!! Paul adds to this insight about the rights we receive as we recognise Jesus: he says it like being adopted as sons and daughters of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He says we receive a glorious inheritance with all the saints: Wow!!

Relationship: so there it is: it's all about having our relationship with God restored as in the beginning of time, and it's all about His initiative to make this possible by letting the Word become

flesh and blood, a human being, to be like us and dwell among us. So contrary to our celeb culture we behold the *Glory of God* in a helpless babe, a rebellious teenager in the temple, a counter-cultural prophet, priest and king striding terra firma in 1st century Palestine, & an utterly forsaken man upon the cruel cross dying for my sin and yours.

Such a person, such a *God*, is one I want a dynamic relationship with!!

Pastor David.