 **Sermon Discussion Guide**

 **CHRISTMAS *– THE WHOLE STORY***

**God Reveals His Creation**

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*Christ himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth, the things we can see and the things we can’t; the spirit world with its kings and kingdoms, its rulers and authorities; all were made by Christ for his own use and glory.* Col. 1:16 (LB)

God created the world because He desired to create us. His desire is that we (His Creation) would be used by Him for His glory. From the beginning, God gave us the choice to be used by Him for His glory. God knew we would choose to not let Him use us for His glory and that we would choose to seek our own glory instead. Even though God knew this He loved us too much to not create us anyway. In the coming weeks we will see God’s complete plan for us but we begin this week with the moment God put our existence into motion.

We don’t always look at what was happening when God created everything that we can see. In this sermon series we will see how Christmas has always been the focal point of God’s plan for creation. Everything before Christ’s coming pointed to His coming. Everything that God wants now and in the future is made possible by His coming. We celebrate Christmas because God made it possible for us to be used by Him for His glory because of what Jesus did for us 2000 years ago.

Since Christmas has always been the most critical moment in history for God’s creation there are 4 facts that we can look at to help us understand God’s plan for humanity: (1) Christmas began with a Creator (2) Christmas began with a Creation (3) Christmas began with an Audience and (4) Christmas has always been part of God’s plan. 3 facts about creation that help us grasp God’s purpose for us are: (1) Creation was not an accident (2) Creation was not an experiment and (3) Creation was planned by God. Let's *Talk It Over*.

Open your group with a prayer. This is only a guide – select the points you want to discuss.

*In the beginning was the one who is called the Word. The Word was with God and was truly God…*

*And with this Word, God created all things. Nothing was made without the Word.* John 1:1,3 (CEV)

1. How does John help us see that Jesus is God and that He created the world?

*Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was*

*hovering over the waters.* Gen. 1:2

2. Genesis 1 says that the Holy Spirit was present when God created everything. Does Genesis 1 say that Jesus was there?

3. Read Col. 1:16 at the top of this page. Paul teaches us that there are other “kings and kingdoms” that God has created but

 we can’t see them. According to this passage were these kings and kingdoms made for the same purpose as we were?

*You were rescued by the precious blood of Christ, that spotless and innocent lamb. Christ was chosen even before*

*the world was created, but because of you, he did not come until these last days.* 1 Peter 1:19-20 (CEV)

4. How does Peter help us understand that Christ’s coming (Christmas) was because of us.

*We know that in everything God works for the good of those who love him. They are the people he called, because that was his plan. God knew them before he made the world, and he chose them to be like his Son..*

Rom. 8:29 (NCV)

5. Do you believe that Jesus came so God could accomplish His purpose to use us for His glory?

6. Discuss where we fit into God’s plan for creation now that we have been included in Christ through the baptism of the

 Holy Spirit?

**Diving Deeper (optional)**

1. *By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God’s command, that what we now see did not come*

 *from anything that can be seen.* Heb. 11:3 (NLT)

 Evolutionists want us to put our faith in their knowledge when speaking about our origins. What or who does the writer

 of Hebrews want us to put our faith in when speaking about our origins?

*2. God is powerful and sure of what he wants to do.* Job 36:5 (NCV)

 Why is it important to know that we are not just an experiment of a creator trying to figure things out?

*3. No human wisdom or understanding or plan can stand against the LORD*. Prov. 19:21 (NLT)

 Is evolution human wisdom and/or understanding? Can it stand against the Word of God?



 **Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes**

**Suggestions for This Week’s Study**

* **Icebreaker**: Ask: Why is it important to know what God has to say about who we are and why we exist?
* **Goals**: We all have a great love for the Christmas story. But it’s not just a story that we celebrate once a year. During this time together try to focus on how Christmas fits into the greater plans of God for humanity and how ultimately without Christmas we couldn’t live out God’s purpose for us to be used by Him for His glory.
* **Final Prayer**: Pray something like this with your group: “Heavenly Father, help us to see that you created us in your image so that we can truly be used by You for Your glory. Jesus, thank you for coming at just the right time so that our sin would not prevent us from living our your purposes for us!

**Preparing to Lead Your Group**

* **Pray** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God’s wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God’s instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
* **Plan** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God’s five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
* **Ponder your progress** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn’t. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

**Using This Sermon Discussion Guide**

* Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your

group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.

* Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.