

Introduction: Pg. \_\_\_\_

How is your Christmas season going? Is all your shopping done? (Marino's Meme) How many parties have you attended so far? Watched any Christmas movies? Got your playlists rolling?

And who loves driving around to see all of the beautiful lights?

About 10 years ago I discovered something really sad about myself (You should feel sorry for me!). Marsha & I were driving through different neighborhoods to find the best display of Christmas lights and the longer we drove, the worse I felt.

First, I felt a bit light headed. Then, my head started to spin. Now, being the foolish man that I am, I continued driving for at least 5-10 more minutes, squinting, trying to play it off (It's rare for a man to behave like this), Finally, when I could no longer concentrate on the road, I had to tell Marsha: "I don't know what's going on, but I need you to drive."

The passing of thousands of lights so quickly produced a dizzying effect on my mind.

FCF: Now, hopefully you don't have the same experience, but I've learned that the Christmas season, in an ironic twist, can have a similar effect on our souls.

We often move so fast through all that is going on that our hearts become dizzy and we fail to experience at a truly deep and satisfying level, what Christmas is all about: God coming near to us so we can enjoy a real, vibrant relationship with him.

Jesus came to bring a New Horizon....

### **"The Light of Intimacy" Isaiah 50:4-11**

I love the word intimacy because it communicates close proximity, the greatest friendship. Perhaps some of your minds jumped to sex. That's great! Why? Because God created us for a relationship more intimate than the most intimate experiences we can enjoy in this life!

Christmas reminds us that before there was Adam and Eve, there was Adam and God.

We see this in Isaiah 50. It shows us how we can...

**The Point: Follow Jesus into the flow of the secret place.**

**"In your light do we see light." (Psalm 36:9)**

**Isaiah 50:4-11 (text displayed)**

When we follow Jesus into the flow of the secret place, the secret place produces...

#### **1. An awakened ear (50:4)**

If you want to see what kind of relationship God the Father enjoyed with God the Son and the kind of relationship he wants to enjoy with us, here it is!

The servant is in the secret place, the place of his presence, where one on one intimacy happens, where relationships thrive.

The first half of verse 4 tells us what happens as a result of the second half. The servant has words to help others because he has first listened to God. Look at this!

"Morning by morning he awakens."

- When? In the morning... I'm not a legalist, but why wouldn't you start your day with God. Why wouldn't *that* relationship get your first and best attention.
- And check the frequency: morning by morning... We're talking ever-ree-day. Love invests time. When you love someone, you want to be with them!
  - **"Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." (Psalm 90:14)**

- Are you getting to the secret place? Do you long to be there? I'm talking about right now, are you already anticipating your time with God tomorrow morning.
- But here's the surprise: God is the one coming to us. He takes the initiative!
  - He awakens. He awakens my ear to speak words of truth and hope, to provide the guidance we so desperately need.
  - The more you listen, the deeper you will go! The secret place yields new levels of intimacy.
  - Don't believe the lies that you have gone as far as God wants to take you. There is more!

We know God desires, because of the relationship modeled between God the Father and God the Son.

- Go read the gospel of John. Jesus makes statements that sound so radical to us...
  - "I do nothing on my own, but only what the Father is doing." (John 5:19)
  - **"I speak of what I have seen with my Father." (John 8:38)**
- Jesus was in tune, absolutely connected with the Father. NO SPACE BETWEEN! (PICTURE)
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- But the secret place is not just about us receiving. We receive to give. That's the pattern of the kingdom.
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- Jesus spoke God's words because he heard God's words! This explains why people said: "We've never heard anyone teach with such authority. We've never heard a man speak like this before!"
- Isaiah 50:4 tells us Jesus is equipped to speak to individuals at their point of need. He knows "how to sustain with a word him who is weary."

Do you know anyone weary? Tired? Weighed down? "Fainting under life's demands." (cf Isaiah 42:3) You're thinking: Pastor Tanner. Not only do I know someone. I am that someone!

Jesus knows what you need to hear to keep you going, to give you the necessary encouragement to take the next step! (Matthew 11:28-30)

- Need a word of encouragement? "I will be with you."
- Need a word of comfort? "Fear not, little flock, for it is my Father's will to give you the kingdom."
- Need a word of hope? "Take heart, I have overcome the world."

T: Jesus fulfilled his mission because he lived in the flow of the secret place. It begins with an awakened ear. Then it reveals itself in...

## 2. A resolute heart (50:5-6)

It's one thing to hear the Father's voice. It's another thing to do what he says. Everyone wants to be in the presence... everyone wants to enjoy proximity... not everyone wants to pay the price.

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Look at VERSE 5. Do you see how the servant's responds?

- The servant resolved to walk forward — not rebel, not turn back. This is so significant because of the difficulty of the assignment.
- Our devotion will be tested! I know you said you're all in with me, but are you willing to....
  - Be the first to apologize?
  - Love your enemy?
  - Step out in faith and tell someone about how I changed your life?
  - Are you willing to suffer? To be mocked? To lose respect in the sight of others?

That's what Jesus willingly endured. He followed God's plan with radical obedience in the face of opposition and suffering.

### VERSE 6

Jesus was constantly opposed. This opposition culminated in the horrific and humiliating death by crucifixion on a Roman cross.

*"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him."*  
(Matthew 27:27-31)

Jesus obeyed in the face of brutal degradation and physical torture. Why?

- “For the Son of man came to seek and save the lost.” (Luke 19:10).
- That’s why we sing songs of the cross during Christmas.
- The servant, as we will see even more clearly next week, was the suffering servant who was born to die.

The life of Christ teaches us, that, at times, the flow of the secret place (hearing and obeying God’s voice) will feel like you are swept away in a flood, but God tells us to arm ourselves with the same attitude we see in Jesus.

**“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8)**

T: How could he do this? Here’s how: Nothing inspires obedience like the secret place of God’s presence. When you trust someone, they could ask you anything, and you would gladly do it with confidence and joy! The flow of the secret place produces an awakened ear, a resolute heart, and it leads to...

### 3. A favored life (50:7-11)

Verses 7-11 show us how God does not ask us to fulfill his plan and then leave us to ourselves. He walks with us every step of the way!

As we walk in God’s ways, we experience the blessing of his favor! To be favored by God is to receive the benefits of his goodness and grace. First we see the servant receive God’s

Help. (7, 9)

- God says, this is *my* servant. I’ve got his back.
- He helps by showing his servant has not taken a foolish course of action but has done what is right. That is why he will “not be put to shame.”
- Verses 8-9 continue this idea around the themes of justice and victory.

Justice (8-9)

- Verses 8-9 says: whoever would contend with or charge the servant with guilt must ultimately face “the Lord God,” the sovereign Lord of the universe who sees everything, holds power over everything, and will ultimately expose everything!
- Though mistreated and falsely accused, the servant will be proved right in the end. He will receive justice! AND...

Victory (8-9).

- While it looks like his adversaries will be victorious, the end of verse 9 says: “Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.”
- The imagery gives a comprehensive picture of their defeat. They will be taken down by internal and external factors (like a garment wearing down from the inside out - or a moth eating them - from the outside in).
- Jesus won the decisive and comprehensive victory of sin, Satan, and death through his death on the cross and glorious resurrection!

Because of the servant’s victory, he is the one to whom all people will ultimately respond. The favored life always results in influence. For us, our influence is limited, but the servant’s has no boundary.

Listen to verses 10-11. The voice shifts from the Servant’s to the Lord speaking about his Servant.

Influence (10-11).

- Remember, the servant was sent to save. Israel was in a desperate spot. They needed deliverance. The first three verses of this chapter tell them that God is still willing and able to bring the deliverance they so desperately needed. Verses 4-11 tell us deliverance comes to those who hear the servant’s words and trust in God’s plan.
- The question for the people of Isaiah’s day, Jesus’ day, and our day is the same: who will obey the voice of the servant?
  - Verse 10 says, those who trust in the name of the Lord and rely on God come to the place of humble surrender and reverential awe (“fear of God”). That faith leads to obedience and turns our darkness to light.
  - But verse 11 describes the ironic fate of those who oppose and reject him. They think they see. They think they have light, but ultimately they will experience the torment of their godless ways.
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*Conclusion:*

I love what Deitrich Bonhoeffer said about the mysterious power of Christ: **“The joy of God has gone through the poverty of the manger and the distress of the cross; therefore it is invincible and irrefutable.”** - Deitrich Bonhoeffer

No other God... came to us.

No other God... died for us.

No other God... defeated death.

No other God... Deserves our undivided allegiance!

No other God... invites us home!

There is a New Horizon. His name is Jesus Christ.

Are you entering into the flow of the secret place: an awakened ear, a resolute heart, a favored life that leads us back into the place of listening again, obeying again, and experiencing the blessing of God again and again and again!