

## The Incarnation On Lark Street

John 3:17  
John 12:47

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## References

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 "Bible and the Christ" - Tillich  
 "The Christian Faith" - Read  
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 "The Message of the Faith Gospel" - Titus  
 see "The City" - #647.

## THE INCARNATION ON LARK STREET

"For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." John 3:17 RVZ

"...for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world." John 12:47

## I. The City

## A. Shelley wrote in "Peter Bell the Third"

"Hells is a city much like London--  
 A populous and a smoky city;  
 There are all sorts of people ungod,  
 And there is little or no fun done;  
 Shall justice shown, and still less pity."

## B. Cowley, the London born poet said--"God, the first garden made, and the first city Cain."

## C. Thomas Jefferson declared that cities were "ulcers on the body politic."

## D. Yet today the city dominates our world

## E. Not only that--but you and I live in the city.

## II. During the next four years the Methodist Church is going to see and hear the words again and again--Jesus Christ is Lord.

## A. If these words have any meaning at all, for us they must mean that He is Lord in the city

## B. The nature of the world as we know it seems to challenge this statement--it certainly makes us wonder about the existence of a God who is both good and almighty.

## C. The dangers of the city

## 1. Economic insecurity of city life

"If the economic machinery of the city breaks down the urbanite is destitute, remote from the essentials of life."

"I'd rather be a farmer with my cellar full of potatoes than a vice-president sitting on the curbstone."

## 2. War--the city is particularly susceptible to the dangers of modern warfare

## 3. Many city dwellers fail to achieve any worthwhile adjustment to their environment because of the varied standards of conduct and the many activities of city life.

## 4. The city is built for adults, not children. Children are tolerated only as potential adults.

## 5. We always think that the country has the primitive living conditions but actually there scores of city dwellings without adequate plumbing and without some of the basic conditions needed for mass living

## 6. There is the din--the noise--of the city that takes an enormous toll physiologically, psychologically, and economically.

## 7. Health problems

## 8. Mental health.

- Lack of contentment
- Pressures

## 9. Crime in the cities

## 10. The urban man or woman with his individuality blurred in the mass of humanity.

## D. Lark Street is typical of the city

## 1. From Clinton to Madison we find across section of the city

## 2. All the problems that plague any city can be found on this typical city street

## 3. But please remember--not only are the problems here -- solutions are here too

## a. For on one corner of Lark Street is a beautiful building

## b. In that building is a room, a beautiful room called a Sanctuary

## c. That Sanctuary speaks to the people who enter it

## d. More would enter it if only we could find a way to tell them what is here and why it is here.

## III. This church is here because we believe that the incarnation is not simply an event that took place long ago, but that it is something that happens on Lark Street. Jesus came not only to Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago, he can come to Lark Street in 1960.

## A. What is more the church must, by its life, witness to the fact that the world is different because Jesus came.

## 1. Religion does have something to say to us as individuals

## 2. But it also has something to say to the issues in the areas where our daily life is lived.

## 3. We must look at Lark Street, we must look at Albany through the lens provided by the coming of Jesus.

## B. I heard Bishop Kennedy, a few days ago, tell how he visited Athens last summer. He went to the Acropolis where some of the most beautiful buildings man has ever built were located. Then he went down into the slums of Athens. He said that as he was walking through all the dirt and evil and sordidness of these slums he thought: "To these people ever look up to the Acropolis (which could be seen very plainly) and think what their fathers did?"

## 1. During this season of Advent we visit some of the most beautiful things which have ever happened to mankind

## 2. So we, on Lark Street, ever look up and think what God has done for us?

## IV. We read about it, in the Gospel According to St. John "For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

## A. Sometimes Christianity has gone off the track and has talked only about the evil of the world--and has indicated that the world should be destroyed

## B. God sent Jesus that the world might be saved through him

1. That means Lark Street  
2. Or State Street, or Clinton Avenue, or Dana Avenue, or New Scotland, or the street on which you live.

## C. Paul Tillich says: "GOD IS MANIFEST IN A PERSONAL LIVE-PROCESS AS A SAVING PARTICIPANT IN THE HUMAN FREDIGAMENT."

## 1. Our street is part of the human predicament

## 2. Jesus came to a street in Palestine

## a. Jesus, the essential man

## b. Jesus became a part, a saving part of his environment

## 3. Jesus is God's gift to man, that man might become what God intended him to become.

## D. God intends our cities, not to be hell but heaven.

## 1. In order to make them so we ought to be as interested as God

## 2. We must become concerned about the city.

## V. What does this all mean?

## A. We must subject our lives and the life of the city to the judgment of Christ

## B. We must have faith in the possibility of Christ first transforming our own lives and second in the possibility of Him transforming the lives of others.

## C. Then we must consciously face our problems, not seeking refuge in self-pity, or in the establishment of a little self-sufficient community within the larger community but we as a church must participate in creative and redemptive activity.

## D. Does this not do something to you?

## 1.