

Some Real Reasons for Christmas¹

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC

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November 29, 2020

First Sunday of Advent – Expectation and Hope

Text: Luke 2:8-20

Purpose: To help us identify the real reason for Christmas. Christmas is a time of giving, a time for Good News, a time of amazing grace, a time to glorify God, and also a time to go home.

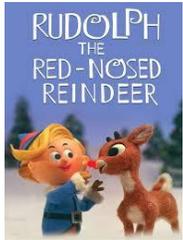
Let's face it, the Christmas season is a time that is loved by many and hated by just as many. Yet, regardless of which side of that issue you fall on, this much is true: the Christmas season is a time filled with many mixed messages and with pagan and worldly rituals. I mean, this is supposed to be the one time of the year when the world remembers the birth of Jesus Christ, and every year we muddy the waters of truth by allowing the Scriptural meaning of the season to be mingled with other messages that have their origin in the world.



I enjoy Christmas as much as the next person, but I just want you to be aware that there are some terrible misconceptions surrounding the true meaning of the season. Many individuals consider it all about money, commercialism and greed. Others see it as a time for

¹ This sermon is modified from the Sermon Notebook

parties, meals and get-togethers. Many children know Christmas only as a time for Santa, Rudolph The Red-nosed Reindeer and other stories. As a result, some children have no idea what the true meaning of Christmas is all about.



A little boy came home from Sunday School. He was so excited about learning about the Wise Men who brought gifts to the baby Jesus. He was so excited that he had to tell his mother. He said, “I learned today in Sunday School all about the first Christmas. There wasn’t a Santa Claus way back then, so these three fellows on camels had to deliver all the toys. And Rudolph the Red-Nose Reindeer with his nose so bright wasn’t there so they had to have this big spotlight in the sky to find their way around.”

Someone has compared Santa Claus and the Lord Jesus in a piece called “*Santa Versus Jesus.*”



- Santa lives at the North Pole.
Jesus lives everywhere.
- Santa rides in a sleigh.
Jesus rides on the wind and walks on the water.
- Santa comes once a year.
Jesus is an ever-present help.
- Santa comes down your chimney.
Jesus stands at the door of your heart and knocks.
- Santa fills your stockings with goodies.
Jesus supplies all your needs.

- You have to wait in line to see Santa.
Jesus is as close as the mention of His name.
- Santa lets you sit in his lap.
Jesus holds you in His hands.
- Santa has a belly like a bowl of jelly.
Jesus has a heart of love.
- Santa’s little helpers make new toys.
Jesus makes new lives.
- Santa puts gifts under your tree.
Jesus became our gift and died on a tree.

Thank God for the Bible! In the Bible, we see that God has set the record straight where Christmas is concerned! He gives us, in no uncertain terms, the true reasons for the season. Many have said, “Jesus is the reason for the season.”



And I agree that He is the main reason, but there are other reasons for the season. This morning, let me share a few of those with you.

I. CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR GIVING (v. 11)

First, It was a time for God To Give His Son To Men

When those shepherds heard the words of the angel, they were told that a Savior was coming into the world. This child who was born in Bethlehem was no ordinary baby. This is proven by the angelic announcements prior to His birth, Luke 1:26-33; Matt. 1:20-23. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He was literally God in human flesh - John 1:1; 14! All through His life, He proved His distinctiveness. He taught like no other man.



He performed miracles that nobody else could ever duplicate. He healed, He preached, He loved, He reached out. His life was one miraculous event after another.

However, none of those things qualifies Him to be Savior. It wasn't enough for God to send His Son into the world, but that same Jesus had to be "given up." When John 3:16 tells us that God "*gave His only begotten Son*", that is the precise meaning. God gave Jesus up to die on the cross for you and me so that our sin debt might be paid and so that we might have the opportunity to be saved from an eternity in Hell. Thank God for giving the greatest gift! The cradle was the first stop on a road that ended at an old rugged cross.

Secondly, It is a time for Men to Give Their Souls to God

Have you ever received a gift from someone and felt bad that you hadn't purchased a gift for them? Nobody likes to receive a gift and then give nothing from themselves in return. God gave His Son to die for sinners. If we are to give a gift to the Lord, what would it be?



During the time of Jesus' birth, there were two groups that gave of themselves to Jesus - The Shepherds, Luke 2:8-10 and Wise Men, Matt. 2:1-12

We all have that someone on our gift list who seems to have everything already. They are hard people to buy for. What do you give someone who has everything already? Think about it, what can you and I give God? He doesn't need our money. He can get by without our talents. He doesn't need a fruit basket, or a new tie, or some socks or handkerchiefs.

In fact, when you get right down to it, none of us really possesses anything anyway. You say, "I own my house!" Just stop paying the taxes for a few years and see who owns it! You say, "I own my cars!" Again, stop paying the insurance and the taxes and see who controls that car. You say, "Well, I own my money!" Just let the economy crash and then tell me what you have left.

There is only one true possession that we each have and it is our soul. I have control over it and if I want to give something to the Lord, then it must be my soul. It is the only thing I have that I can honestly give. Notice, this is the intent of Mark 8:36-37. "*For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*" Now, the question arises, have you given your heart to the Lord? If not, there is no better time than today to make that happen - 2 Corinthians 6:2. "*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*"

I. Christmas Is a Time for Giving II. CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR GOOD TIDINGS (v. 10)

Not only is Christmas a time for giving, it is also a time for good tidings! The angel came with a message of "*good tidings.*" This phrase comes from the word from which we get our word "*evangelize.*" The message of the angel was a message of salvation. He came to proclaim the glorious news that a Savior had been born in Bethlehem!

This message is a message of hope! During the time of Jesus' birth, shepherds were considered social outcasts. According to the Jewish tradition, they were considered to



be unclean. They were typically uncouth and dirty. They were the type of men that no one wanted to be around. Who would want to be around a person that had been with sheep all day? They were generally forgotten by some elements of their society. However, they hadn't been forgotten by God! How wonderful that these men who gave their lives to raising sheep for the Temple services were the first to hear the good news that the Lamb of God had come into the world. It was a message of hope! They were forbidden from seeking God in the Temple, but God brought salvation to them!

The message hasn't changed! The Gospel is still a message of hope. You may be a person that has committed some really terrible sins. You may feel that God wouldn't save you. You may feel that you have no hope. You may think that you are beyond the scope of God's saving power. Well, let me tell you this morning that the door of salvation is standing wide open and that whosoever will may come in and find salvation for their soul! Jesus said in John 6:37, *"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one that comes to Me I will by no means cast out."* Isaiah 1:18 tells us, *"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."* Notice in both of these verses there are no qualifications or prerequisites for salvation! Call upon Jesus and you will receive salvation for your soul.

Here's the deal; if you are lost and know you need a Savior, then I am here to tell you that Jesus is who you need. And, just as the message was one of hope for those shepherds that night, it is a message of hope for you this morning. It is a chance to begin life again.



It is an opportunity to have your sins washed away. It is an opportunity to come to know God and assure yourself of Heaven when you die. Thank God, there is hope in the Gospel!

- I. **Christmas Is a Time for Giving**
- II. **Christmas Is a Time for Good Tidings**
- III. **CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR AMAZING GRACE**
(v. 11)

Christmas is a time for giving. Christmas is a time for good tidings. It is also a time for amazing grace. In a very real sense, **WE** are the reason for the season!

Isaiah 9:6 says, *"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* Luke 2:11 says, *"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."*



God did this for **US**. He came to reconcile us back to the Father.

By those days' standards, these shepherds did not deserve to be the first to hear of Christ's birth, but it was God's grace that reached out to them in their need. We don't deserve forgiveness, but God has extended the offer to each of us. Grace is defined as "The unmerited love and favor of God toward sinners." We have received Grace!

Just as it was with those shepherds' in that field, if there is salvation in your life and mine, it is there by grace and grace alone! No, I did not deserve to be saved, but God in His great, matchless, marvelous, unspeakable grace reached out to me in the midst of my sins and called me to come to Him!

Salvation is not credited toward us on the basis of any good we may have done. It is not on the basis of church membership, baptism, or regular church attendance. It is by grace and grace alone - Eph. 2:8-9.

- I. **Christmas Is a Time for Giving**
- II. **Christmas Is a Time for Good Tidings**
- III. **Christmas Is a Time for Grace**
- IV. **CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR GLORIFYING GOD** (v. 14)

Christmas is a time for giving, good tidings, amazing grace, and also glorifying God. After the first angel finished his speech, he was immediately joined by a vast multitude of the heavenly host and they lifted their voices to give glory and praise to the Lord.

Notice what the angels did not say! They didn't say, "Praise the Lord, Target is having a sale!" They didn't say that televisions are half price at Wal-Mart! They said, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*" These are the things that the world cannot buy – peace and goodwill. God gives us peace and goodwill with Himself through His Son. We need to glorify God for this great news.



During Christmas and Easter, we can glorify God. Children can even demonstrate their faith in God at this time of the year. Even though Christmas has been secularized and commercialized, it is still a day set aside to commemorate the birth of the King of Kings! Through our Christmas programs, our personal conduct and family functions, we have a wonderful opportunity to show this pagan world just what this season is truly about! 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*" This world needs to know the true reason for the season!

After the shepherds met Jesus, they told everyone about the baby they saw born in Bethlehem. They went about telling others about Him and they returned to their task of keeping the sheep glorifying the Name of the Lord (Luke 2:17-20). If you have met the Savior in the manger, what are you doing to glorify the Lord this Christmas?

- I. **Christmas Is a Time for Giving**
- II. **Christmas Is a Time for Good Tidings**
- III. **Christmas Is a Time for Amazing Grace**
- IV. **Christmas Is a Time for Glorifying God**
- V. **CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR GOING HOME** (v. 4)

Christmas is a time for giving, a time for good tidings, a time for amazing grace, a time for glorifying God, and it is a time for going home.

I have become keenly aware how painful the thought of returning home can be when the someone you once loved is no longer with you this Christmas season. Over the past few weeks, I have talked with several individuals that are



still grieving. Each person's grief is unique and special. I do not have any special magic words that will enable you to move from deep grief to stabilized joy. But it is my prayer for you that you as you seek to find "home," that you find the presence of the Savior in which our eternal home is secure and waiting.

On that first Christmas, Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem to be registered for the census. If you read through the genealogy of both Mary and Joseph, you learn that both would be required to return to their ancient home of their forefather King David. For Joseph and Mary, it was time for going home.

Some of us will go to be with our parents during this holiday season. Others may have their children and grandchildren come to celebrate Christmas with them! Maybe you will have to travel a great distance to go home for the holidays. For some, spending time with family is what makes Christmas special.

There may be some of us who are gathered here today that need to go home this Christmas! We need reconciliation with our earthly family and our heavenly Father. Like the Prodigal Son, you may have wandered far from your earthly family and are currently living in a far country. Take time this season to seek forgiveness and reconciliation if your family is estranged. If you feel separated and isolated from your Heavenly Father, it is time for you to come home. He is waiting for you to turn and come to Him. If you do, you will find forgiveness and blessing in the Father's house. (I John 1:9; Luke 15:20-24)



There are others who have never met their Heavenly Father. Your greatest need is to come home for the holidays. God's offer of salvation is available to everyone who will respond in simple faith. If you will come to the Lord and give Him your heart, He will forgive you of your sins, save your soul and guarantee you a home in Heaven throughout eternity. If that is you, then God is inviting you to come home.

Invitation:

I am sure there are many other reasons for the season that we could find in the Word of God, but these stand to remind us that the greatest need this season, and for that matter, in any season, is for all people to have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.



How is your Christmas shaping up this year? If you would like to get rid of your sins, I invite you to come to Him. If you have strayed in your walk with him and need to come home, I invite you to come to Him. If there are areas in your life where you need to follow God in humble obedience, I invite you to come to Him. Whatever you need this morning, I know you will find all that you ever need in Jesus Christ. Will you come?

LET US PRAY