

Christmas Is for Everyone

Christmas and the birth of Jesus quietly and radically changes everything for the people on planet Earth. What I mean to say is the birth of Jesus changes everything, because through his birth, we see that Christmas is not just for one nation, or a certain group of people. Christmas is for everyone.

In the United States, Christmas is considered a national holiday. This upsets some who believe it's strictly a holiday for Christians. But, from a Christian perspective, Christmas is not only a national holiday, it is an international holiday. So, let's be happy when Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and atheists celebrate Christmas, because in reality Christmas is for them too.

What do I mean by this? Well, we learn from Matthew 1:23, that when Jesus was born, he would be called, "Emmanuel", which means, "God with us". Wrap your mind around that statement. Jesus is God with us. Certainly, we do not mean just a few of us. We mean all of us. Right? We mean the whole human race. Through Jesus Christ, God is with all of us. You know, like children sing, "He's got the whole world in his hands."

If there is still doubt in your mind, please remember one of the most famous New Testament passages, John 3:16:

**For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish
but may have eternal life.**

Again, certainly, we do not mean that God loved just a few of us or gave Jesus to just a few of us in on this planet. Presumably, God loves every person in the world, every person who has ever been born. Indeed, it is because of that love for all of us, that God gave Jesus to save every one of us, from sin, evil, and death.

Not long ago, I met with a man from central Africa, Congo, in my office. We had a very pleasant conversation about Christian faith and life. He spoke of his Pentecostal faith and upbringing in Africa. He spoke of the horrors of war that he and his family experienced there. He spoke of his gratefulness now to be free, productive, and enjoying his life and work in America.

I was really struck by how two totally different people, people from such different places and cultures, one being a white man, me, from European descent, and the other being a black man from African descent, could share a such a priceless moment of oneness here in America. We even held hands and prayed to the Lord. For that short time, we were so obviously one in Jesus Christ, brothers in the Lord. How could this be?

Well, perhaps because Christmas and the Lord Jesus Christ are for everyone! If you need further evidence this is true, then let's look in the Gospel of John 1:14, where we hear these words:

**The Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory, the glory of a father's only son,
full of grace and truth.**

This is called the incarnation. It's a fancy way of saying that God became visible in human flesh. In other words, Jesus is God in the flesh. Maybe that sounds a little blunt to you. Maybe it seems a little hard for you to believe. But that's what it means. Jesus is God incarnate, God in the flesh.

So, why would God do this? Well, God did this because he wanted to reach every one of us. God left the glory of heaven, and taking on human flesh, he lived and experienced the everyday life and challenge of a human being. He did this to show us how much he loves us, how much cares for us, and how much he desires to save us. Again, not just a few of us, but all of us.

Now, perhaps it is clearer, what the angel meant when he spoke to shepherds in a field one dark night. He said:

**To you is born this day in the city of David,
a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord.**

Certainly, the angel was talking to those shepherds in the fields that night, poor, and low in socio-economic status. Yet, he was also talking to rich wise men from the east, to King Herod and peasants in Israel, to Caesar and every last Roman citizen, to a black man from Congo, to a white man from America, and of course, to the whole world, the whole human race.

In fact, it has been true since the very first Christmas, since the very night Jesus was born, that Christmas is for everyone, and that Jesus Christ was born into this world for everyone. Besides, who would you leave out?

It's a scary question. Is there someone or some people you would leave out? Are there people in the world who you believe that Christmas and the birth of Jesus are not for, who were never meant to be loved by God, or saved by Jesus? Who in the world, the world that God so loves, would God leave out? When Jesus is proclaimed "Savior of the World" in John 4, or "Light of the World" in John 8, who does this exclude? And, what about John 12, when Jesus says:

**When I am lifted up from the earth,
I will draw all people to myself.**

Does he really mean all people? I for one believe he does. In fact, as our Savior, Jesus draws the whole world, including us, to himself this very night, as well as through these difficult days of the coronavirus pandemic, and our struggle with Covid19.

So, if you are sad because of personal problems, if you are lonely because no one is coming for Christmas, if you are hurting financially because you are without work, if your heart is broken because someone you love has died, if you are anxious because you are facing death, go to Jesus who has been born for you, born to live in your heart, born to help and save you through a time such as this, and through whatever challenge you face in your life.

And as you go to Jesus, as you run into his outstretched arms, remember that Christmas is for everyone, which means Christmas is also for you, my friends in Christ. Jesus is born for you. He is not only "God with us", but he is also "God with you", and he has come to save you in every way you need to be saved. In fact, not only does the Lord have the whole world in his hands, but he also has you, yes you, in his hands too.

That means you can ask him this very night to fill your heart with his presence, and he will gently and lovingly care for you. Ask him for his help tonight, and your Savior Jesus Christ, born for you, no longer in a manger but in your heart, will grant you whatever you truly need (whatever you truly need), even forgiveness and grace, peace and love, hope and healing, salvation and eternal life.

All these and more much are for you and anyone in the world who desires them, because Christmas is for everyone.

In fact, Jesus is for everyone.

Amen.