



A Time for Celebration

Read Luke 2: 8-10

For many people this time of year it is not a time for celebration. There are many factors that influence this for some:

[Begin Power Point here](#)

I don't want to make light of the fact that Christmas time can be a hard and desperate time instead of a time of peace and joy. Christmas time can be a reminder of someone we love that has passed away. It can be a huge financial strain that unto itself brings great pressure and stress. Many in our community will not have jobs this Christmas and will have this burden to deal with. Some will not have enough food or even shelter. Some will have loved ones that are away and can't make it home for Christmas. Some will have soldiers in their family that will be serving our country in faraway lands this Christmas. But even with all this, with all the hardships that we will face this Christmas season we still have many things to be thankful for we still can make this season just as the angels said a time for great joy a Time for Celebration.

Christmas is a time for celebration!

We learn this from the angel's opening statement to the shepherds of Bethlehem. God had wonderful news for us that would cause us all to rejoice and celebrate.

"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."

The good news of Christmas is worth celebrating for three reasons.

1. It is personal: "I bring You."
2. It is positive: "Good news of great joy."
3. It is universal: "for ALL the people."

It doesn't matter who you are, what you've done, where you've been, or where you're headed –this news is for you.

There are three important facts I wanted to remind us of this Christmas that will remind us why Christmas is a time of celebration.

First: Christmas Is A Time to Celebrate that God Loves You!

The most famous statement in the Bible is Jesus' explanation of why God sent him to earth:

“God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

The entire reason for Christmas is the love of God. God loves you so much that he came to earth as a human so you could get to know him and learn to trust him and love him back. Theologians call this the Incarnation. God became one of us, a human being, so we could understand what he is really like.

Until Jesus arrived, our understanding of God's love was limited. So God invaded earth! It was the greatest invasion in history, and nothing has been the same since. God could have chosen thousands of ways to communicate with us, but since he designed us, he knew the best way to communicate with us would be face-to-face.

He didn't send an angel or a prophet or a politician or an ambassador. He came Himself. If you really want people to know how much you love them, you can't send a representative to communicate it. You have to say it personally. That's what God did at Christmas.

Speaking of God's love; and why it's a reason to celebrate.

God's love for you and me is unconditional; he loves us on our bad days as much as on our good days. He loves us regardless of our performance, our moods, our actions, or our thoughts. His love for us is unchanging. Everything else will change during our lifetime, but God's love for us is constant, steady, and continuous.

There is nothing we can do that will make God stop loving us. We could try, but we'd fail-because God's love for us is based on His character, not our conduct. It's based on who He is, not what we've done.

The Bible says in Eph. 3:19 “Christ's love is greater than anyone can ever know....”

One potential problem of our Christmas celebrations is that many people only think of Jesus as a baby! Their conception of him is only as a helpless newborn in his mother's arms. If Jesus had never grown up to do what he did, he'd have no power to transform our lives.

But the baby born in Bethlehem did not stay a baby. Jesus grew to manhood, modeled for us the kind of life that pleases God, taught us the truth, paid for every sin we commit by dying on a cross, then proved that he was God and could save us by coming back to life. This is the Good News!

Secondly Christmas is a Time to Celebrate That God is With You!

As I mentioned, many people often feel alone at Christmas. Right now, you may not feel like God is with you. But God's presence in your life has nothing to do with your feelings.

God came to earth at Christmas to remind you that he is always with you, no matter where you are. That's a fact, whether you feel it or not.

The Bible says, "I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence!" Psalms 139:7

But you must connect or "tune in" to his presence on a moment-by-moment basis. We talked about this several Wednesday nights ago.

One of Jesus' names is Immanuel. It means God is with us. It's no wonder the angel told the shepherds, "Do not be afraid!" you lose your fear when God is near. God's presence trumps all of our fears.

You may have been abandoned in life-by a spouse, by your parents, by your children, or by people you thought were friends. Everyone has faced the pain and heartache of rejection in some way. I am sorry for this. But remember God has not abandoned you! He never will!

God has said ***"I will never leave you; I will never abandon you."*** Hebrews 13:9

That is a reason to celebrate this Christmas

Finally Christmas is a Time to Celebrate That God is for You!

When Jesus instituted communion he said, ***"This is my body, which is given for you."*** Paul said, ***"If God is for us, who can be against us?"*** when you're facing a personal attack, it is great to have God with you, but it is even greater to know he is for you!

Many people feel that God is secretly out to "get" them-that he is constantly playing a game of "Gotcha!" and just waiting for them to mess up and fail so he can say, "I told you so!" They imagine God as some kind of sadistic cosmic Grinch who enjoys frustrating our plans and is always looking for ways to criticize, judge, or get even with us. But God himself says otherwise:

"I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. 'They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.'" Jeremiah 29:11

No one wants what's best for you more than God. No one knows better what will make you truly happy! God doesn't want you to be afraid of him. He wants you to run to him, not from him. So what are you afraid of? None of us knows what we'll face this next year, but we can know that God loves us, God is with us, and God is for us. ***Now that's a reason to Celebrate!***