

Why I Love the Christmas Holiday

Text : **Luke 2: 1-20**

S#1.

A. I really enjoy the Christmas holiday season.

1. The mood of the country is more positive than at any other time of the year.
2. People are nicer to each other than at any other time of the year.

B. This is the time when the world has set aside a day to commemorate the birth of our Lord Jesus the Christ.

S#2.

1. As with all holidays, it has been grossly commercialized.
2. Even so, it is a time when more people think about our Savior than any other.

S#3.

C. Some brethren play the Scrooge taking issue with Christians celebrating it.

1. It's true that Christ was most probably not born on December 25th.
 - a. The Romans collected their taxes in early Spring **and** shepherds were in the field,
 - b. December was picked to compete with holidays honoring Greek and Roman idols.
 - c. It is at the time of the Winter solstice. (*Pagan "Yule"- sacrifice, candles, decorate*)
2. They argue the scriptures don't tell us to celebrate the birth of Christ, just His death.

- a. **There have always been those who try to reduce the Christian religion to a system of rules and rituals, but it is much more.**
(*access to relationship with God .. I .. vestibule of Heaven*)

- b. The N.T. gives the Christian the liberty to set aside a day to honor God.

Rom. 14: 5 – One person regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike*. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. **6** He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.

S#4.

- c. The intent of those who celebrate the birth of Jesus is to honor Him and that's good.

Luke 9: 49 – John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us." **50** But Jesus said to him, "Do not hinder *him*; for he who is not against you is for you."

S#5.

3. Jesus personally endorsed unauthorized expressions of adoration.

- a. **Mark 14: 1-11** ... A lady broke a vile of expensive oil and poured it on Jesus.
- b. When some objected, Jesus said she was doing a good thing.

Mark 14: 5 – For this perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they were scolding her. **6** But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me.

S#6.

4. There are some things we **must do** to express our adoration for Christ / God.

- a. We are commanded to assemble on the first day of each week.

Heb. 10: 24 – and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **25** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. S#7.

- b. We are commanded to observe the Lord's Supper when we assemble.

Acts 20: 7 – On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. S#8.

- c. We are commanded to sing God's praises and to use songs to teach.

Eph. 5: 19 – .. speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; **20** always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; S#9.

5. These commanded things do not eliminate all other forms of praise.

- a. It is not wrong to put up a sign praising God / Jesus. (e.g. **PowerPoint**)
- b. It is not wrong to have a gathering at your house to express adoration.
- c. It would be great to set a random day to glorify God for any reason. (**fed 5000**)

D. No one has the right to make rules that have not been made by God.

- 1. We cannot deny anyone the liberties that God has granted to them.
- 2. Likewise, no one has the right to bind his liberty on anyone else.

* 3. *Those who make rules attempt to usurp God's authority.*

E. My personal opinion is that Christmas is a great holiday.

- 1. It's also my opinion that Christmas is good for the church and the cause of Christ.
- 2. Like most Christians, I enjoy it.

I would like to share with you five reasons why.

S#10.

- 1. It marks the day God's plan came to fruition.
- 2. It celebrates a day of great rejoicing.
- 3. Jesus is publically honored as God.
- 4. It is an opportunity to tell people about Jesus
- 5. It reminds me about what Jesus gave up to save me.

I. Christmas marks the day when God's eternal plan came to fruition.**S#11.****A. God planned the birth of Jesus before He created the world.****S#12.**

1. Speaking of Jesus, the Apostle Peter encouraged all us with these words :

I Pet. 1: 20 – For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you

2. In his first sermon, Peter told us that the life and the death of Jesus was planned :

Acts 2: 23 – this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.

S#13.**B. The coming of the Christ was the theme of the entire Old Testament.****S#14.**

1. All of the Old Testament prophets spoke of Jesus.

Acts 10: 43 – Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.

2. God Himself makes the first prophecy of the birth of Jesus in Genesis chapter 3.

Gen. 3: 15 – And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.

S#15.

3. God then narrowed the prophecy specifying the Christ would be Abraham's seed:

Gen. 12: 2 – And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; **3** and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

S#16.

4. Through Isaiah God gave us the circumstances of Christ's birth, born of a virgin :

Isa. 7: 14 – Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

S#17.

5. God even told us the place where the Christ would be born :

Micah 5: 2 – But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity. **3** Therefore He will give them *up* until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren will return to the sons of Israel.

S#18.**II. Christmas marks an event for which Heaven and earth rejoiced.****S#19.****A. The angels which appeared from Heaven said :**

1. **Luke 2:8** – In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone

S#20.

around them; and they were terribly frightened. **10** But the angel said to them, " Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; **11** for today in the city of David there has been **born** for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

2. The scrooges might say because God didn't say I have to, so I'm not going to, but the Angels from Heaven proclaimed it to be a time of rejoicing for the world.

3. The angels started the custom of singing Christmas carols.

- a. **Luke 2: 13** – suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, S#21.

14 "Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

- * b. Christmas carols glorify God.

* *Those who sing Christmas carols emulate the actions of Heaven's inhabitants.*

B. When the Magi saw the star of Jesus, they came to worship Him.

1. The Magi traveled a great distance. (*Most believe from Persia*)

Matt. 2: 1 – Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, S#22.

2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

- * 2. We're told little about the Magi, but they were important enough to be given an audience by King Herod.

- a. The text does not say that there were three wise men.

- b. There were three different classes of gifts given.

3. When the Magi saw the star resting over the house, they rejoiced.

Matt. 2: 10 – When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

4. Vs. **11** ... They gave royal gifts to Jesus. (*He was given the respect due a king.*)

- a. Gold ... A tribute paid to kings

- b. Frankincense .. very expensive fragrance .. usually a powder (from bark like cinn.)

- c. Myrrh ... Fragrant gum ... mixed with the oil of anointing

* *The gifts were indicative of His status, NOT the number of Magi.*

III. Christmas honors Jesus as the Only Begotten Son of the one true God.

S#23.

A. Most of the world doesn't know Christ. (*More know famous sports figures.*)

1. The percentage of Americans who claim to be Christian is dwindling.

2. Those who oppose Christianity are gaining increasing power. (*P.C. culture*)

B. The story of Christ's birth introduces people to the gospel, to redemption.

1. Christmas espouses the deity of Christ. (**Why did He come to earth – salvation**)
2. The Christmas story demonstrates to the world the love of God. (**The gospel**)

C. Christmas presents Christ in a totally positive light.

1. There is little negative for those who oppose Christianity to say about the birth of a child.
2. People can empathize with the struggles of Mary and Joseph. (**It's inspiring.**)

D. Christmas gives Christ more public exposure than anything else.

1. The songs of the birth of Christ are played on the radio.
2. Public programs at schools, organizations, etc. teach the events of His birth.
3. There are more movies with "Christian" themes at Christmas than the rest of the year.
4. Even the debate over saying "Merry Christmas" causes some to start searching.

S#24.

IV. Christmas is great because it gives Christians an opportunity to tell about Jesus.

A. Our culture is increasingly anti-Christian and anti-religion / God.

1. Ever fewer people are willing to speak up in the face of this opposition.
2. Today even many Christians seek to blend in rather than to stand for godliness
3. This is a long holiday season ... **don't miss the opportunity,**

S#25.

B. Unchurched people are more open to hear about Jesus at Christmas time.

1. People who want nothing to do with religion are more open to at Christmas.
2. People are more friendly and approachable during the Christmas season.
3. It is easier to bring up the subject of Christ at Christmas than at any other time.

C. Christian ... you should feel comfortable to tell people about Jesus at Christmas.

V. Christmas reminds us what Jesus gave up to come save us.

S#26.

A. Jesus had a glorious existence in Heaven before He came to earth.

John 1: 1 – In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God.

S#27.

14 – And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

B. Because of love for me, Jesus gave up His glorious position and became a man.

Phil. 2: 5 – Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, **S#28.**
6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

C. Jesus chose to grow up among the common people.

1. While on earth, He enjoyed none of His previous glorious existence in Heaven.
2. He didn't have any of our modern conveniences or even the comforts of wealth.
3. He had none of our modern medicines to give relief from suffering.
4. Jesus could've been anything He chose, but He chose to be one of the common folks.
5. When Jesus ascended back to Heaven He did so in a resurrected body. (**intercedes**)

CONCLUSION :

A. Yes, I am deeply grateful for the event commemorated by Christmas.

B. Even more, I am grateful for the sacrifice Jesus made when he came to earth.

C. Do no waste this opportunity ... *TELL PEOPLE ABOUT JESUS* **S#29.**

D. No, Christmas isn't commanded, and no one is required to observe it, **S#30.
but I love it and will continue to celebrate it because :**

1. It marks a day which God planned from all eternity, from before the earth existed.
2. It commemorates an event for which both Heaven and earth rejoice.
3. It's a time when Jesus is widely acknowledged as Lord, as Christ, as God's Son.
4. It's a time when I have more opportunities to tell people about what Jesus did.
5. It's a time when I am reminded of just how much Jesus loves me.

INVITATION :

**Jesus loves you too. He left Heaven for you. He died for you.
He wants to save you. He came to earth just for that reason.**

S#31. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**Luke 2:1-20**

1 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. **2** This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. **3** And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. **4** Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, **5** in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. **6** While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. **7** And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. **10** But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; **11** for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. **12** "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." **13** And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

15 When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." **16** So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. **17** When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. **18** And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. **19** But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. **20** The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.