

The Meaning of Christmas

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- [0 : 0 0] Today is Christmas and the children are in our midst in the church hall worshipping us.
- Children, you are here. I want to ask you a question. So pay attention, children. If you go to the shopping malls during Christmas season, what will you see?
- Tell your answers to your daddy and mommy. Don't have to tell me. Tell your daddy and mommy. What will you see when you go to shopping malls like Eon Mall, River City, The Spring?
- What will you see? You will see beautiful Christmas decoration. You will see Christmas trees like the one on my right. Christmas lights.
- You will see men dressed like who? Men dressed like who? Santa Claus. And women dressed like who? Santorina.
- [0 : 5 6] In the midst of this celebration, can you tell what Christmas is all about?
- What is the meaning of Christmas? What does Christmas mean? Does Christmas mean Santa Claus and his red-nosed reindeer?
- Does Christmas mean shopping malls, Christmas trees, and blinking lights? Does Christmas mean giving and receiving of gifts?
- Good. You know the answer. Okay, let me tell you a story first. In the country of India, there is a magnificent building.
- There is a beautiful building called the Taj Mahal. There are many different stories about this beautiful building. One of them is as follows.
- [1 : 5 8] A king, they called him emperor. A king or an emperor had a favorite wife. He has got a favorite wife.
- But the wife died. The emperor loved this wife very much. So he wanted to build a monument in memory of the wife.
- He wanted this magnificent building to be a resting place for his beloved wife. He placed the coffin.
- Look here. Children, look here. All of us are children of God anyway. All of us are children of God. Look here. He placed the coffin in the center. in the center of a piece of land.
- A piece of land and he built the building around the coffin. As the construction was in progress, days turned into weeks.
- [3 : 0 3] Weeks turned into months. Months turned into years. And soon, the king's grief was overtaken by his passion for this building project.
- He no longer grieved for his wife. The construction of the building consumed him. One day, while he was walking, was walking on the construction site.
- So he walked, he walked, and accidentally, he kicked the coffin. Of course, not so hard, so the coffin would not fly.
- And he kicked so hard, and was so annoyed, he was so angry. And he called his workers to take the coffin away and throw it away. Anyway, he's thrown away already.

Unknowingly, unknowingly, he has thrown away the coffin of his beloved wife. The person whom the monument, the person whom the monument was intended to honor was forgotten.

[4 : 21] The monument has become more important than the person. This can happen to Christmas.

If we are not careful, we may forget the one this holiday was intended to honor. We can be so caught up with the parties, with the presents, with the likes.

We can be so caught up with all these activities and forget the reason of Christmas. This morning, we are going to talk about what Christmas really means.

Christmas means God became a man to help us. Hebrews chapter 2 verses 16 to 17 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants, Abraham's children.

for this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way. God becomes a human being to dwell among us, to live among us, to help us.

[5 : 29] This statement alone should amaze us. In the Old Testament, very often when someone encounters God, it is a very terrifying experience.

God appears to Abraham as a smoking fire pot. God appears to Israel as a pillar of fire. God appears to Job as a storm.

When Moses requested to see the face of God, God told Moses, God told him, you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.

The moment you see my face, you die. God will die. Can you imagine, if Moses were here, if Moses were here today, and listen to the message of Christmas, God became a man and dwell among us, we have seen his glory.

Moses would cry out, Moses would say, I wanted to see God in my own time, but my request was denied. But, you can meet up with God.

[6 : 40] You can meet up with God through Jesus Christ. You can meet up with God through Jesus Christ. What a privilege. What a joy. What joy should fill your heart.

Yes, what joy should fill our hearts. On the first Christmas, when God came down to earth, he did not come as a pillar of fire.

He did not come as a storm. He came as a baby, a helpless baby. Young children, young children, if you understand me, young children, when you don't like some uncle and aunties, you can run away from them.

But babies, babies stay where they are. They cannot run away from you. The little babies can be picked up hard and kissed.

If they don't want your kiss, they can cry. They can only cry. They cannot run away from you. Why would God in this time come as a helpless baby, rather than a pillar of fire, rather than a storm?

[8 : 00] Because this time, he has not come to bring judgment. He has come to bring us help. How does Jesus help us?

He helps us by dying for us. You can say, Jesus was born on Christmas day to die for us, to die for our sins. And this death is not an ordinary death.

It is a death that has cosmic significance. Firstly, in Christ, we can have forgiveness of our sins. Christ's death brought us forgiveness.

Verse 17, for this reason, he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful, merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

This is good news. We need this good news because none of us are perfect. All of us have sinned against God. One little boy wrote this letter to Santa Claus.

[9 : 18] Or children, you can write letter to Santa Claus. Or this little boy write letter to Santa Claus. He wrote, Dear Santa, there are three little boys living in our house.

There's Jeffrey, he's two years old. There's David, he's four years old. And there's Norman, he's seven years old. Jeffrey is good some of the time.

David, David is good some of the time. Norman, Norman is good all of the time.

And I am Norman. Is anyone here like Norman, good all of the time?

None of us are like Norman. None of us are good all of the time. Our sins need to be dealt with because of our sins.

[10 : 19] We cannot approach the holy god. We cannot draw near to the holy god. We need a high priest to represent us. A high priest to stand between god and us.

And that's why in verse 17, Jesus had to be made like us, fully human in every way. Fully human like us.

That means he eats and drinks like us. He needs to sleep like us. He can even cry like us.

Jesus is fully human. So he can represent us before God. The mystery of Christmas is this. The infinite has become finite.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, chose to come down to earth to become our high priest. What does this high priest do?

[11 : 20] He makes atonement for the sins of the people. Usually high priest sacrifices animals to make atonement for our sins.

But our great high priest sacrificed himself, sacrificed his life to make atonement for our sins. You see, Jesus is fully human in every way.

So he experienced every temptation that we have ever faced. Verse 18 tells us that Jesus was tempted but unlike us, unlike us, Jesus never gave in to temptation.

Jesus never sinned. So he didn't have to die. But Jesus died. He died on the cross so that our sins can be forgiven.

The penalty of our sins was laid on him. He became our substitute. He took our place. Now we can approach the holy God through our high priest.

[12 : 32] Our high priest is merciful. Our high priest is faithful. He is merciful. He will not reject us. He will not reject us no matter how sinful we are.

We can go to him and he will cleanse us of our sins. Our sins there are many. His mercy is more. He is faithful.

We can depend on him as our savior and he will never give up on us. If we put our trust in him, he will never disappoint us.

Yes, Jesus is our merciful and faithful high priest. Firstly, in Christ, we can have forgiveness of our sins.

Secondly, in Christ, we can have victory over death and the devil. The death of Christ not only brought us forgiveness, it also defeated two great enemies, death and the devil.

[13 : 38] The first enemy, death. death is a harsh reality. In our culture, when someone starts to talk about death, we usually want to change the subject.

Death freaks us out. We don't want to talk about it. We don't want to think about it. Yet, no matter how much we try to ignore the reality of death, it is inevitable.

All of us are going to die one day. If the gospel is not true, then death, then death is a very horrifying reality.

Death is the most frightening thing we can ever face without the gospel. And we are completely helpless against it.

That's why death is so scary. Death is inevitable and we cannot do anything to avoid it. But Christ offers us the hope of life in the face of death.

- [14 : 56] Verse 15. Verse 15 tells us that Christ achieves victory over death so that he can set free, he can set free, he can give freedom to all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.

Jesus frees us from the fear of death. If you do not know Jesus, then the thought that one day you will die should cause you to fear.

If you do not believe in the gospel, your death will be a terrifying experience for you. death not only brings the end of this life, but the beginning of God's judgment against sinners.

But the good news is this, whoever believes in Jesus Christ will never perish but have eternal life.

Jesus also says, I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live. even though they die. And whoever lives by believing in me will never die.

- [16 : 12] Christians no longer need to be paralyzed by the fear of death. It is simply one more step toward resurrection.

The moment when we die, the moment when we die, we will be absent from this earthly body. And be present with the Lord. We will be in the presence of the Lord.

The first enemy is death. The second enemy is the devil. The Bible says that the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

The devil delights in perverting the gospel. devil delights in preventing the gospel from being preached.

The devil is a liar. He lies about the things of God. The devil is a tempter. He tempts us to sin. The devil is an accuser.

- [17 : 17] He makes accusation against God's people. The devil is always against God's purposes. Always against God's people and against God's glory.

Hebrews chapter 2 verse 14 tells us that Christ destroyed the devil. Your Bible in NIV will say Christ has broken the power of the devil.

ESV will say Christ destroyed the devil. The one who holds the power of death. This destruction does not refer to Satan's ultimate destruction.

Satan still remains a real and active enemy of the church. Instead, Christ destroyed the devil in such a way that Satan can no longer do any ultimate spiritual damage to God's people.

You see, when Jesus died on the cross, Jesus took away the weapons of Satan. Satan is the accuser.

- [18 : 28] He likes to accuse people before God. But now, he can no longer accuse us of our guilt because Jesus has declared we are no longer guilty.

Satan is a great liar. He tells us that God doesn't care about us. but Jesus shows that God cares so much about us that he sent his son to die on the cross for us.

Satan does not have the final say about our destiny. Only God has the last word about our destiny. Firstly, in Christ, we can have forgiveness of our sins.

Secondly, in Christ, we can have victory over death and the devil. Thirdly, we can find comfort and strength. Jesus, as our great high priest, died for our sins, but he did not remain dead on the third day.

He rose from the dead and now he is alive. He can continue to help us in our journey of life on earth.

- [19 : 43] Hebrews 2 verse 18. Because he himself, he himself suffered when he was tempted. He is able to help those who have been tempted. Since Jesus has gone through suffering and triumph over it, he can bring help and comfort to those who are suffering, to those who are going through suffering and temptation.

Are you going through suffering now? Are you desperate for help now? Are you facing death? the Bible says that Jesus has been to all the places you have been.

He has been in the darkness you are experiencing now. He has been in the valleys of your life. You can trust him. You can rely on him because he knows the situation you are in.

And he has the power to comfort you. He has power to strengthen you. He has power to bring you through even in your darkest time. Christmas tells us Jesus doesn't merely say hear this carefully Christmas tells us Jesus doesn't merely say I'm so sorry you're in this mess.

I've been there myself full stop. Jesus doesn't merely say that. Instead Jesus says this I'm so sorry you are in this mess.

- [21 : 12] I've been there myself and you know what? I can get you out of this mess. I don't just sympathize. I can truly help.

Let me close with this story. There was a boy named Billy. Billy took part in a Christmas play.

He was one of the actors. He wanted to be a shepherd but because he was big size, he was huge, he was given the role as an innkeeper.

He played the part of an innkeeper. So when Mary and Joseph came to the inn and knocked on the door, Billy opened it and when they asked for a place to stay, Billy said harshly, there's no place for you to stay.

There's no room in the inn. Joseph said, but my wife, my wife is very tired and she is expecting soon.

- [22 : 26] isn't there just a small room somewhere, somewhere where we can rest? Once again, Billy said with roughness in his voice, you have to find a place somewhere else, there's no room in the inn.

Joseph pleaded, please, please, just one room for us. then there was a long pause.

Everybody was quiet. Billy had forgotten his next line. So behind the stage, behind the stage, someone prompted Billy to say, no, get lost, no, get lost.

That's what his next line, that's what his next line. Finally, Billy said, no, get lost. Mary and Joseph sadly turned to leave.

Billy was a good boy. His heart broke when he said those harsh words. His heart broke when he said those harsh words to Mary and Joseph.

- [23 : 43] So suddenly, he yelled out, wait a minute, wait a minute, come back, come back. You can have my room. And I sleep in the shed.

The other actors were stunned and thought that the play was ruined. Billy has spoiled everything.

What Billy said was not in the script. It was not how it happened at Christmas. It's not the original Christmas plot. But on second thought, Billy had communicated the real meaning of Christmas.

No, you can stay in my room and I will sleep in the shed. Isn't that what Jesus did for all of us? No, Claire, you do not have to die for a sin.

No, Joshua, there are many Joshuas in our church, you don't have to die for sins. No, Ronald, you don't have to die for sins.

[24 : 54] I will take your place on the cross. You can enter the heavenly room. I have prepared a place for you there. The hotels may be fully booked this holiday season.

No more available room. But there's always room in heaven. For anyone who believes in Jesus, there's always one more room.

Christmas makes the difference. God became man to die for us. Jesus has victory over sin, over death, and over the devil.

In Christ, we have forgiveness for our sins. We can find comfort in times of trouble. God wrap up this victory. God wrap up this forgiveness and wrap up this comfort as a gift in Jesus and give him to us.

Now, he stands back to see what we will do. Will we receive this gift with joy or will we ignore and reject it?

[26 : 12] This morning, God offers this gift to us again. What will you do? I hope all of us will receive him with open arms.

Let's pray. and the musicians can come up. Our Heavenly Father, thank you for the good news of Christmas. God became man to die for us sinners.

Thank you that in Christ we can have forgiveness of our sin. We can have victory over death and the devil. We can have comfort and strength.

And for those who still do not know you, in our midst, we pray that their eyes will be opened to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. And for those who know you, we pray that we will increase in our knowledge of Christ and grow in love for you.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.