

Christmas Day

Text: John 1:14 (NIV)

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.



Theme: Christ Makes this the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

You have probably all hear the Andy Williams song,
 It's the most wonderful time of the year
 With the kids jingle belling
 And everyone telling you "Be of good cheer"
 It's the most wonderful time of the year.

Christmas is a wonderful time of the year. I love the day when we put up the Christmas tree and cherish every minute that I see it in our living room. I enjoy watching my LGB train go around the tree. We look forward to both giving and receiving Christmas gifts. One of my favorite parts of Christmas is the Christmas meal. My mother always makes a perfect prime rib roast. My wife makes twice backed potatoes, and this year my mother-in-law is making Black Forest Cherry Cake. I enjoy singing the Christmas carols and try to pack our services full of them. There are so many things that make this season special. Today I would like to look at how it is Christ that makes this the most wonderful time of the year.

I. Imagine what this season would be like without Christmas.

It would be absolutely horrible. It is the darkest time of the year. It snows a lot. Then it seems like a cold snap always follows the snow. We end a year and go into a new year, which only makes us feel another year older. If you were to take away all the trimmings of Christmas, this would be the most horrible time of the year. Today many people wish a generic "Happy Holiday," but any holiday will not brighten up this time of year. Imagine sitting outside for a parade or fireworks at this time of year. Would just another day off of work, such as Labor Day, make this into such a special time of year? It is Christmas which rescues this from being the most horrible time of the year to being the most wonderful time of the year.

Without Christ this world would be like this season without Christmas. In Genesis 1:2 it says that before God began His work of creation, the world was formless and empty. Those words are my favorite Hebrew phrase. In Hebrew it is "Tohu wabohu." No one knows the actual meaning of "tohu" or "bohu" today, but the same phrase is used in Jeremiah 4:23,24 where Jeremiah writes, "*My people are foolish; they not me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding, They are 'wise' – in doing evil! But how to do good they know not.*" I look on the earth, and behold, it was **without form and void.**" Sin and God's judgement of sin makes this world a lot like it was before God began His work of creation. It is a chaotic mess.

As Jeremiah wrote, we have become wise is doing evil. When God created this world, everything, including the people, were good. But we have brought sin into this world. Our sin has brought

suffering, pain, and death. Imagine if Jesus were never born in Bethlehem. Imagine if God had said, "Let them get what they deserve." We would never speak of the forgiveness of sins. There would be no hope of everlasting life. Each person would have to fend for themselves because God wouldn't care about us. The Golden Rule "Do unto others as you would have them to do unto you," would have no effect. Each generation would get all that they could out of life with little thought for the next generation. Eventually God would have enough, and His judgement would come. The world would go back to its chaotic primeval state. It would be *tohu wabohu* again.

II. But Christ is the One who brings grace and truth back into this world.

It began on that first Christmas. John tells us that all things were created through Him. He is the one who changed "*tohu wabohu*" into a beautiful garden. He brought light into the world. He created life. Everything was good. When He was born on Christmas, He brought that light and life into the world again. We were living in the darkness of sin, but Christ came to give us a rebirth as the children of God.

The holiday that we celebrate at this time of year celebrates God's gift of a Savior to us. It is dark outside, but we have lights on our trees and in our homes to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. We put evergreen trees in our homes to remind us of the everlasting life that Christ gives to us. We exchange gifts as an example of how God has given us the greatest gift of all in Christ. Christ is what gives every part of Christmas its meaning.

Our joy on this day centers on God's gift of a Savior to us. John writes that the word became Flesh and dwelt among us. In the beginning God created the world, but when Christ was conceived in Mary's womb, God became one of us. He took on our flesh in order to save this world. Then John writes that He was full of grace and truth. In the Old Testament these two words are often linked. There they mean unfailing love and faithfulness. They mean much the same thing. They mean that there is love that we can always depend on.

There is an interesting parallel to this in the Old Testament. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, He saw the sin of the people as they were worshiping the golden calf. There was also a great feast. They were singing and dancing and taking part in all kinds of immoral acts as they worshiped the calf. However, the camp had turned into "*tohu wabohu*" and was ripe for the judgement of God. In his anger, Moses smashed the tablets with the 10 Commandments to the ground. But God renewed His covenant with Israel. It was remade with the blood of bulls. (Ex 24) Then God told Moses to make two new tablets. God descended to the mountain and said, "*The LORD, the LORD...abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.*" (Ex 34:6) That is the same phrase that is used with regard to Christ in this verse, "*He was full of grace and truth.*" These words describe God's loyalty and faithfulness to His people, even when they sinned against Him. He loved us so much that He gave His only Son to save us from our sin. We can always depend on God and His love for us. He loved us so much that He could not bear to see us perish in our sins, so He gave His Son as our Savior. As God forgave the people of Israel when they rebelled against Him at Mount Sinai, He has forgiven all of our sins in Christ. Christ came to bear our sins, so that He could take them away. Because of Him God's grace is always there for us. He can count on His love throughout our lives. He will never leave us or forsake us until He brings us to our everlasting life with Him in heaven.

As Christians we share the love of Christ with our world. We love because God first loved us. We forgive as God has forgiven us in Christ. All of our love and generosity at this time of year is simply a reflection of the love that God gave to us in that manger.

It is the most wonderful time of the year, but there is just one thing that makes it wonderful. That is our Savior Jesus Christ. He turns it from a cold and dreary season to one that is filled with grace and truth. May that love that God has shown to you in Christ, also fill your life with the light and life that He has come to bring.

Amen.

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December 25, 2009*