

God Loves us so Much that Jesus, the Hope of the World Came to Us (meditation with the children's program 1 John 4:10)

Prepared and preached by Pastor Steve Rhodes for and at Bethel Friends Church in Poland, OH on December 18, 2022

Every year we celebrate Christmas, but what are we really celebrating? Are we celebrating Christmas?

What is the purpose of Christmas?

Theme:

Jesus came, fully God and fully man, in order to die for our sins and give us life abundantly (John 10:10).

- a. Jesus came to give God's presence with us.
- b. Jesus was born, fully God and fully man. He lived a sinless life and then He died in our place.
- c. When Jesus went to the cross, He took the wrath of God upon Himself instead of on us.
- d. Jesus came to die in our place.
- e. Jesus came and He lived, and He taught, and He gave us a good example, but His main purpose was to die on the cross for our sins.
- f. Some people think that you can be just a good person and go to Heaven. But realize that being good is not good enough. One sin separates you from God.
- g. The Bible teaches that God is too pure to look upon sin (Hab. 1:13).
- h. Psalm 66:18 teaches that if you hold sin in your heart the Lord would not hear your prayer.
- i. God is holy, that means set apart, perfectly pure.
- j. The Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The Bible says that the penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23). The Bible says that Jesus is the way the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father except by Him (John 14:6). The Bible teaches that sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2). The Bible says that God will not let the guilty go unpunished (2 Thess 1:8-9). Yet, the Bible teaches that God loves the people of the world (John 3:16). That is a dilemma. God can't tell a lie or He wouldn't be God (Numbers 23:19). God doesn't change His mind (1 Sam 15:29). That is why God sent Jesus. The guilty must go punished. Jesus took our punishment on the cross. The penalty of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus, who is the way, the truth and the life.
- k. Allow me to summarize what I just shared.
- l. The Bible can be summed up with the acronym that spells GOSPEL.
- m. God created us to be with him (Genesis 1-2).**
- n. Our sin separated us from God (Genesis 3).**

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- i. But don't think of God as this megalomaniac wanting to inflict punishment on us.
- ii. Think of it this way.
- iii. Imagine you go to the roof of the empire state building and walk off the building, what happens?
- iv. You fall and hit the ground, but why?
- v. Gravity.
- vi. Gravity is part of the created order.
- vii. There is no reason to be angry at gravity.
- viii. There is no reason to cast blame. Gravity did not want to hurt you. It is part of the created order.
- ix. Think of the wrath of God like gravity. God is holy and when we sin it is like violating the law of gravity. There is an automatic response. The response is separation from God. Hell is separation from God. But like gravity, God also does not want to hurt you. Back to the acronym.
- o. Sins cannot be removed by good deeds (Gen 4-Mal 4).**
- p. Paying the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again (Matthew - Luke).**
- q. Everyone who trusts in him alone has eternal life (John - Jude).**
- r. Life that's eternal means we will be with Jesus forever (Revelation 22:5).**
 - i. Do you know when you trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior you don't only receive eternal life, but also abundant life?**
 - ii. You are reconnected with God.**
 - iii. John 10:10: *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.***
- s. So, in a nutshell Christmas is all about Jesus' birth. God became a human being so that He could die for our sins. God brought events involving kings, common people, and shepherds in order to bring His Son into the world. Jesus lived among us for 33 years and then died in our place. He died for our sins. Do you believe that? I want to ask you a personal question: have you come to a point in your life where you have accepted Jesus into your heart for forgiveness of your sins. Jesus didn't come to earth just to live with us; He came to instruct us and to die in our place.

Whether you are part of the church or not, my question for you is: Do you Know Jesus as Lord and Savior and are you committed to him?

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The Bible uses four verbs to describe the Christian life, they are: *Believe*, *confess*, *commit* and *trust*. Let me explain:

1. The Bible teaches that we must **believe** in Jesus. We must believe that He is who the Bible says He is. The Bible teaches that He was born of a virgin; He lived a sinless life and died on the cross for our sins and He rose triumphantly over the grave (John 3:16; 14:6; 1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 5:17 and 21).
2. The Bible teaches that we must **confess** that we are in need of forgiveness. This means that we must confess that we are a sinner in need of a Savior. In other words, we have done wrong things and we need forgiven (Romans 3:23; 6:23 10:9-10). We tell God this.
3. The Bible teaches that we must **commit** to Jesus as Lord and Savior. This means we are not simply fans of Jesus, but instead we are followers of Jesus. Fans stay on the sidelines, but Jesus calls us to be on the field with Him. Jesus told them to count the cost before committing to Him (Luke 14:27-33).
4. The Bible teaches that we must **trust** Him. The belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior is not a casual belief, but a firm **trust** (1 Timothy 1:15; John 3:16).

Firmly make the decision to be with Him in order to become like Him and to learn and do all that He says and then arrange your affairs around Him.

This year, don't miss Christmas. Make Christmas your spiritual birthday. Pray to receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord.

Pray