

## Why God Came? – Part I (Savior)

ADVENT – 1) **Befriend** – love, serve, invite into your home, listen to stories, tell your stories, invite here to Summit  
2) **Advent Calendar** no Serv Sun., 25<sup>th</sup> – 3 Full Serv Sat, 24<sup>th</sup> (3,5,11), Devos- [thesummitstl.com/adventdevotionals](http://thesummitstl.com/adventdevotionals)

Christmas is ... (fill in the blank for you.) *I grew up in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas = Tx+water+Mex.*

1) **Christmas has always meant traveling A LOT.** SA, Tx - 4½ & Hope, AK - 12½ or 8 + from SA. Lots of car games (no video parents) lots of stop touching me, snacks, riding backwards in the station wagon, we're gonna have fun, and lots of fun.

2) **Christmas has always meant lots of family.** We traveled to be with family – 25+ in SA and 30+ in Hp. Otherwise no ext fam.

3) **Christmas has always meant lots of games.** Both sides loved games. Canasta in my dad's family and 84 in my mom's family.

Both were like Olympic competitions = intense, full of pride, no place for children. Little guys – we had our own games forts, pecan fights, kickball, football, & more, but we all wanted to be at the adult table. **What is Christmas to you?**

All of these things – these memories are good – nothing bad about them in & of themselves. But, if this is all we associate with Christmas – at some point Christmas becomes difficult, hard, and eventually painful. If Christmas is only about family – what happens when there is a fracture in relationships – difficult, hard. And what happens when family you love are no longer here – painful. For many this is where you are. Again – nothing wrong with family being a meaningful part of Christmas – but if it defines our meaning – you, we will all eventually end up filling in this phrase – Christmas is ... with the words difficult, hard, **painful**. There has to be more to all this than just presents, family, food, and games.

**Jesus.** ... I hear you. "Jesus is the reason for the season." I think most of us know this phrase – but for some reason many of us don't really functionally believe it or practice it. **Why?** There are many reasons but I think the main reason has something to do with the last verse we heard Brandon read to us this morning as he lit the candle. Matthew 1:23 (ESV) "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, *say it with me*) God with us). **We struggle believing God is with us.** We might have some idea that Jesus came. But we are not sure why – and ultimately, we don't believe He is with – us – now; that his "Presence" is here now – **Immanuel – God with us.**

We are going to spend the next 5 weeks – helping us all believe and live in the reality – **that God is with us.** Over this time we're going to answer 2 questions **Why Did God Come? Does God Still Come Now?**

Today – we are going to begin asking God to move us to believe and live that **God is with us**, that His presence is with us by helping us answer the question ...

### Why Did God Come? (Part I)

#### 01. Jesus is God.

Matthew 1:23 (ESV) "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

Jesus is God. You may not believe this or you may struggle believing this – but I would ask two things of you this morning. 1) You can argue with Jesus about this – but don't let it be with others who believe this – who trust our life & soul to Jesus. *Because we didn't make this claim. Jesus did. Wrestle with him on His claim.*

John 14:9 (ESV) "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." - Jesus

John 10:30 (ESV) "I and the Father are one." - Jesus

2) For today – for 30 minutes, if you are wrestling with this – lay this aside and hear God tell you why He came, why Jesus came. I think it will even help you believe – Jesus is God.

#### Why did Jesus (God) come to be with us?

Matthew 1:18 (ESV) 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way.

The Scripture tells us Jesus, the holy Son of God, created **time and space**. Because He is God, He was never hindered by time and space. And yet, He came and lived and limited himself to our time and space. **Stunning.** He who **created all things** – became a part of creation – **born through body of a woman. Staggering.** The **King of kings**, who rules over all things – **set aside His crown** and came to earth as a baby. **Why?**

- **Did He come JUST to show us an example for how to live in this life?**

- **Did He come JUST to love us and show us how to love others?**

- **Did He come JUST to give us God's law and tell us to keep the law?**

Why did Jesus come?

Matt 1:18, 21-23 (ESV) 18 ... When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

... 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for *he will save* his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

God says, "Jesus came to save." / His name, Jesus, – means God saves or rescues. WHY DID GOD COME?

**God came to rescue us** – Save or rescue us from what – and rescue us to what or whom?

*Why did he need to rescue us? What happened? Seems like there is so much more to this story.*

02. Great stories can lose all their beauty and power and become confusing and even boring if we only know one part of the story.

1) *Imagine the movie Rudy and only seeing the last scene where he makes the tackle and you don't know ...*

2) *How boring and awful Romeo and Juliet if you only know the last scene where they both take their life.*

3) *How unexciting is Star Wars – the 1<sup>st</sup> movie – if all you see is Luke blow up the death star. (1977)*

4) *How weird and boring is the Wizard of Oz if all you see is the first 20 minutes in B&W – by the way I did.*

- **For some – you really don't know much about the Christmas story – except that Jesus came:** Peace on earth and joy to the world are the phrases you have heard told and sung your whole life, but you are not really sure why, And the truth is: you don't see too much peace on the earth or joy in this world. So – there is not much beauty or power in this story to you.
- **For others – most of Christmas you are a frustrated Christian** – (That is you are upset when manger scenes are outlawed, clerks say happy holidays, and you have to attend Winter Concerts. **All this FRUSTRATION – leads you to rant, debate, and fight others.** And all this frustration has left you with little of the peace & joy that we are promised as Christ followers. We are to stand for truth – but Jesus never called us to fight for a society where everyone has to believe in Jesus. Even Jesus didn't rescue us with force.
- **For others who know the Christmas story** – the beauty and power of the story has been diminished and you have honestly grown a little bored with it. Christmas – has become so commercialized by others and busied by our own doing – that we don't feel the joy or experience much peace during this season. The story is nice – but the beauty has been dulled and the power has been stripped - so that really it is just a quaint story – that gets you more excited about family, time off work, or presents – than it does Jesus.

**Why? Why can the Christmas story become so confusing and even so ... boring.**

Christmas is one chapter or one scene of a greater story. In this greater story – Christmas – becomes beautiful and powerful and extremely engaging.

*"Xmas and Christmas are not the same. The pictures that are stamped on the Xmas-cards have nothing to do with the grand story. And even the pictures on the Christmas cards only tell a small portion of the story."*

*(CS Lewis, God in the Dock)*

03. What is The Grand Story?

The Bible is an epic story told over 66 individual books. It is a story of beauty, corruption, rescue, and healing. It is a story of great joy and a great rebellion – of great hope and a great love that conquered a rebellion and redeemed hopeless rebels. It is laid out in four parts. And all of this gives great depth and power and beauty to – **the manger scene.** *(painting) This grand story begins with great joy!*

- **Creation:** God created this earth and humans like you and I to know His joy and love he had known from eternity past. *This is the way things were supposed to be.*

*Isaiah 43:7 (ESV) everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." glory – the overwhelming presence of God that declares He is the Greatest. We were created for his glory.*

*Nehemiah 8:10 (ESV) the joy of the Lord is our strength*

- God created to give, not to get. He created to give, not to take. He created us – to share His joy and love. ***This baseball was created – for us to find some happiness and fun in playing catch or playing a game. Everything we create as humans is for our pleasure, our happiness, our benefit. Matter of fact – every creation account from other religions shows the god or gods creating for their pleasure. That is they created people to serve them like slaves and give them joy. The Great Triune-God ... the Father, Son, and the Spirit is saying something different here. I didn't create you to get joy – I created you to give joy!***

- And, in the beginning, there was perfect peace in the joy and love of God. *Then rebellion...*

• **Fall:** Then rebellion – we hopelessly broke everything choosing to find joy and love in everything but God.

- Our rebellion broke our soul & this world. Nothing works like it supposed to. You know this in your soul. Ephesians 2:1-3 (NLT) 1 Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. 2 You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.

*Our earth is physically a mess. And our society is as fractured and separated as ever – all around the globe. Our souls – we can't love the way we want to, keep commitments, be trustworthy – find a trustworthy person who you can trust yourself to. I don't even trust me to me.*

- This is not the way things are supposed to be. *In this brokenness, we will die and be separated from God forever under judgment for our rebellion against holy God.*

3 All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's wrath, just like everyone else.

**But - even during this time of rebellion – where men and women were far from God with no hope. God gave hope – a promise of joy and peace.**

- God formed a people and promised them he would fix all things – he would redeem all things himself.

*All through this book there are more than 50 individual promises that God would come. 50+ that began 8000 years ago and extended up to 300 years before Jesus / God did come. Here is one ...*

Isaiah 7:14 (ESV) Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Matt 1:23)

- In God's **justice**, He had to judge our **rebellion**.

- In God's great **love and mercy**, He could not leave us alone – hopeless. So, **He came to rescue** or save us.

- First, He came and made Himself known to a people – the Jews.

- He taught them who He was – holy. And, who they were sinful and in need of a Savior; who God would send – Immanuel; and to whom – to all people. **And God came!**

• **Redemption:** Thousands of years after God's first promise to fix the brokenness of this world and our souls – He comes to rescue.

*"Once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world." (CS Lewis, The Last Battle)*

God – came to us – Immanuel.

Matt 1:21-23 (ESV) 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

- God sent The Savior – His only Son Jesus. God came to us. He took off His crown, put on flesh, like one of his servants who worship Him, and came to rescue us by serving us with His life and death.

- By faith, in Jesus and His work, we are made completely right and acceptable before God. **We are rescued.**

Have you been rescued by the grand work of Jesus? – *This is the point of Christmas. Jesus did all the work*

*Jesus, God, lived the life we should have lived, died the death we should have died, and did what we could not do – rose from the dead conquering our sin and death. Jesus did all the work – you and I must simply believe – Jesus is God, that He came to us, and that in His life, death, and resurrection – He has done everything needed to pay for our rebellion and bring us to God. Have you been rescued by Jesus? We do this by trusting our soul to Jesus and His work. I will come back to this.*

If you have done this, how will this grand story of your rescue shape this season for you with His people?

***The story doesn't end here – because God is not just forgiving – He is healing and restoring all things.***

• **Restoration:** Through work of Jesus on the cross - God will restore things to how they were supposed to be.

Colossians 1:21-23 (ESV) 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,

- We live in a broken world - that cannot be argued.

- Jesus' rescue brings us to God. By taking our punishment, we are forgiven, never to be punished.
- But we not only receive forgiveness and acceptance – we will one day be restored, completely healed from all that we broke.
- Now, we live in the already, but not yet. Already, Christ has come – Christmas – God came to be with us and save us. In this rescue – we are already made right and acceptable and are being transformed or restored. But we are not yet fully restored. One day Christ will come again – and everything – including you and I – will be the way we were supposed to be.

**God came to rescue us – and in so doing  
restore all things to how they were supposed to be.**

**This is ADVENT. He has come to redeem. He will come again to fully restore. That is the whole story.**

*Christmas is a sliver of the story. Jesus is our hero, God showing up to save the day and fix all that is wrong.*

*The rest of the story – There is a way things are supposed to be.*

*You and I as Christ followers - can live in this grand story – through Jesus. HOW?*

**His invitation – join Him in this great story. How?**

**- Receive**

*Confess – you are broken, you are sinful – that you need a Rescuer.*

*Turn from your story – that says there is no God – or I believe in God – I just don't need a rescuer.*

*You must turn to Jesus and say – rescue me – a rebel a sinner. I want to be a part of Your Story where all things are made right in You.*

**- Worship**

**This Christmas season – make Jesus and all He has done to rescue you – the focus of your worship.**

*Not presents – but His presence – He is with us because of He has risen from the dead and the cross promises God's presence as we faith or trust our soul to Him. Worship Him and His presence with you and family and trips and games and everything else will slow down. You will give yourself to something this Christmas. Let it be the one who Gave HIMSELF to you.*

**- Follow**

**Simply said – together, let's walk after Jesus and be stunned more fully by His grand story. Look for that this Christmas and follow the Rescuer.**