

FORGIVEN

CHURCH

FORGIVEN CHURCH THOUGHTS..

Merry Christmas to all our friends, family and those we have yet to meet!! (And we will!) We are so excited for this time of year, as we know so many of you are too! And who wouldn't be? (well, Scrooge, I guess). It's a season all about giving (yay!!)... giving gifts, giving love, giving hope, giving joy. It's a time where we all really 'try' to put aside the cares of our own life for a brief moment in time, and focus on those who mean the most to us. After all.. Isn't that what Christmas is really all about? Others? Yes? Of course it's yes! (Scrooge's opinion doesn't matter here).

It's an amazing feeling when you can stop thinking about yourself for a second (let's admit it, we love thinking about ourselves), and just go all out for someone else. Maybe a loved one, maybe a friend, or maybe someone you have never even met, because you just can't help yourself!! AH! It's the most wonderful time of the year! (Love that song). Something just happens on the inside of us and we wanna give, give, give!! It's so beautiful, completely unexplainable and totally entertaining all at the same time! (Just admit it! Who doesn't love to shop and spend money while listening to Christmas music?? Huh?)

It's a beautiful thing, right? Knowing you are able to be the source of someone else's joy? Knowing you can give a gift that might change everything? Knowing you can be the reason they feel celebrated this season. Knowing you can be the very one who makes them feel like someone notices them, and sees them, and loves them for who they really are. There's no better feeling in the world!!! (Can I get an amen? Well, except for the shopping part; that's a great feeling too!)

So, this time of year it's not unusual to hear this phrase.. "Jesus is the reason for the season." (especially if you hang around church folk for a while or read our church signs or go to our church Christmas programs. Oh, you'll hear it!) We love that phrase, (us church folk) and it sounds so legit and Christmas'y". And we guess, in part, it might be true. But, really, that only tells 1/2 of the story. It causes us to feel so tingly and humble inside, but ultimately, misses the mark in the end. It's catchy, and churchy but, is it accurate? We're not so sure..

- **In Luke 2:11** God says, "For unto YOU is born this day in the City of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord..."~ Did you notice that it says unto YOU is given?
- **Isaiah 9:6** says "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given."
~ Did you notice that it says unto US is given?

The whole message in these verses (that we base our Christmas(y) saying on), is about something GOD gave us. You and me and us! It's not only about Jesus (even though we make it that way and forget all about what God has to say about it). Matter of fact, He's not really the main focus in these verses at all.. You are, and we all

are and GOD wrote it that way for a reason (Well there goes our Christmas(y) saying...).

God so wanted you and I to know that we are the reason that Jesus came, that's why He worded it like He did. (God knows how to write and He says what He means and He means what He says). We are the reason Jesus was born. We are the reason this whole season exists. We are the reason God gave JESUS as a gift. If it weren't for God's love for us... Jesus never would have come in the first place. That's so beautiful!! "Oh how He loves you and me" (an old hymn right there). Everything about this time of year is about you. It's about a Savior who came for YOU. It's about a love from a Heavenly Father for YOU. It's about the most perfect gift in the whole world, given to YOU. Jesus was thinking about YOU when He came. He is GOD'S gift to you. TALK ABOUT BEING THE ULTIMATE GIFT GIVER!!

And we know it's probably not popular but we think it should be 'YOU are the reason for the season.' It's a much more accurate Christmas(y) phrase (that is, if you asked Jesus about it). Jesus loves you so much that He gave Himself to you, for you, because of you. For unto YOU Jesus came. We wanted to remind you of that as you head out into this season of giving.(and if you're one who loves the old Christmas(y) saying, remember, change is good. You'll be alright.)

God gave Jesus to you. That's the best gift there is. He wanted you to feel joyful, hopeful, noticed, and loved so He gave a GIFT... to you. So, while you are out and about, shopping away, spending that money, and looking to put a smile on someone else's face this season, remember... You have ALREADY put a smile on God's face. You did that before you were ever born (You're so awesome!!). So, slap a smile on yours, turn the Christmas music on, let the giving begin, make someone else feel amazing...

*and have a very MERRY CHRISTMAS from
our home to yours!*

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SERVICE TIMES

Bluffton: Sundays at 9am & Thursdays at 7pm • Fort Wayne: Sundays at 11am