

Non Anxious Christmas | Part 4 | Christmas Eve

ONLINE RECORDING

Merry Christmas/Eve!!

NOTES ARE IN APP - Not on screen - Download

- <https://theelement.church/app>

Connect with us - Next Steps Form

- Text "Element" to 97000

21 Days of Prayer

- Date/Time: Jan. 10th - 28th 2022 | M-F | 7-8 am est
- Location: Zoom: your computer from wherever you are
- Meeting ID: 830 9349 2677
- Passcode: element
- Short invite link: <https://bit.ly/3EUUM0U>

Christmas Giving

Non Anxious Christmas

So much to **CELEBRATE/REFLECT UPON** this season:

- Gifts & generosity
- Cookies & Eggnog
- Candles & Christmas Trees
- Sledding, Singing & Dancing
- Evergreen, peppermint
- These all **CONTRIBUTE** to the season but none of that is really what the season is **BUILT** upon
 - Not called Egg Nog-Mas
 - Not called Evergreen-Mas
 - Called **CHRIST-MAS**
 - **Built on - Jesus Christ**

Celebration, Gratitude, Remembering God = Reduces Anxiety

- "Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions" - Zig Zilger

"Anxiety and gratitude can't live in the same head" - James Altucher

4 anxiety reducing reflections from the Biblical Christmas Story:

Matthew 1:21-23

21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet 23 “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

God is with us

(vs. 23)

God saves us

(vs. 21)

God loves us

(vs.22)

God wants to know us

(vs.22)

#1.) God is with us

- **Vs. 23** - “**Immanuel**...= God *with us*
- God is not content to be **a concept** to be believed
- God is not content to be **a powerful force** you bow to

God wants to KNOW US PERSONALLY

God BEFORE JESUS - revealed as a powerful force

- OLD TESTAMENT - a general experience OF God
 - Pillar of fire/Moses
 - whirlwind/Job
 - Smoking Furnace moving through the air/Abraham

God AS JESUS - a personal: person

- NEW TESTAMENT - A personal experience WITH God
 - God becomes a human being
 - He is with us
 - He talks with us

- He speaks with us
- **God has become a human being - to be *with us***

ILL. Skeptical man's Barn & the Birds

- Skeptical man regarding "Jesus Story" = Incarnation/Christmas
- **Peering out the window on a windy Cold Night**
- **Birds out in the snow**
 - Birds huddled miserably
 - no shelter
- **Barn = warm shelter**
- **If only he could direct the birds to it**
 - Opened the door - lights on
 - no birds came
 - Dropped bread crumbs inside
 - no birds came
 - Tried catching them
 - they scattered
 - Tried waving arms & shoo-ing them at the barn
 - scattered them more
 - **They frenzied in every direction except the barn**
- **He realized they were afraid of him**
 - They saw him as a strange and terrifying creature
 - something utterly different than them
- **"How could I let them know they can trust me?"**
- **"If only I could be a bird," he thought**
 - I could tell them not to be afraid
 - I could speak their language
 - I could mingle with them
 - I could show them the way to the safe, warm barn.
- **But I would have to be one of them so they could see, and hear and understand."**
- **It hit him in his soul. It's exactly what God did.**

**If Jesus didn't come
WE ARE ALONE AND ON OUR OWN**

(but) CHRISTMAS = Immanuel: God with us

Every moment of every hour of everyday

"I am never alone"

ILL. John Wesley (founder Methodist den.) died on March 2nd, 1791

- Last words reportedly: "the best of all, is God with us."
- John Wesley **died with it on his lips**
- We should **live with it on our hearts**

God is *with* us...

#2.) God saves us

- **Vs. 21 - "Jesus...= Save people from their sins"**
- 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

"I'm not religious... What matters is that you live a good life!"

- That is a religion - there is a name for it
- It is called "RELIGION"
 - The "doctrine of works"
 - It is the **BASIS** for **ALL religion**
- All Religions =
 - A sage/teacher that comes to show us the way to God
 - "Do this or that and reach God or attain enlightenment..."
 - "I just try to be a good person..."
 - "Works" life marked by devastation, self loathing & fear
 - "Works" life marked by pride

Christianity offers a different (unique) concept entirely

ILL. You are feeling sick & go to several doctors...

- 4 docs say - no big deal, you need rest & fluids & you will be fine.
- 5th doctor says, you are terminal - **unless you take this specific medication you are a dead man.**
 - Would NEVER say - you are so narrow minded
 - You would say - you have a *different* (unique) diagnosis
 - **You have to figure out if the 5th doctor is RIGHT or WRONG**

All worldviews say **we** are the solution to our own problems.

(work harder - do better)

Christianity says we are the problem, Jesus is our solution

- “All world views/religions say you are the answer to your problems. Christianity is the only one that says you are the problem and the answer has to come from outside you.” - Abdu Murray

Christianity

Not a sage to show us the way

A God who pays our debt

ILL. Judge & Father

There's a story about a judge whose own son was brought before him for a crime he had committed. The judge felt a deep grief that his son would violate the laws upon which he based his entire life. Tears welled in his eyes as he listened painfully as the evidence against his son was presented. The courtroom sat in silence wondering how the judge would rule. Would he just give him a reprimand in an act of mercy? Would he give him the minimum penalty for the offense? Much to their surprise, he handed down the maximum fine, upholding the law to its fullest degree. The son was in shock, for he knew that he couldn't pay the fine and was anguished at the thought of imprisonment. He looked up at him in disbelief.

But then something happened that nobody expected. He stepped down from the bench, took off his judge's robe, told his son how much he loved him and then paid, out of his own pocket, the fine he had just handed down. Not everyone understood what he had done. As a judge, he showed his commitment to honor the law to its fullest, but he then stepped down from that seat of honor and showed his love for his child. His son never understood the depth of his father's commitment to the law until that moment, and, until that moment, he never knew the depth of his father's love for him. He felt deep sorrow for the pain he had caused him and for those he had hurt by his act of crime. With his head bowed, and his tears flowing freely, he asked for his father's forgiveness, which he willingly and freely gave to him.

We don't need religion - to show us a new way

We need a Debt Payer.

We need a Saviour.

Christmas is not an invitation to work your way to God.

Christmas is an invitation to *personally* know the God

who worked His way to you.

God is *with* us...

God saves us...

#3.) **God loves us** [Worship Up Music/Keyboard]

- **Vs. 22 - “to fulfill what God said... [in the past]”**
- 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet

“What God has spoken...??”

The ENTIRE Bible

The ENTIRE Birth of Jesus

The ENTIRE Burial & Resurrection

The ENTIRE CHRISTMAS story is super UNCOMPLICATED...

It is a rescue mission. It is a love story.

God's is madly in love *with you*

ILL. “with”, “saves”, “loves”

- My cat is *with* me often - but often seems indifferent
- My brake lights *save* my life from accidents - they don't care
- My cat & brake lights don't LOVE me.

God is *with* me

God *saves* me

God **LOVES** me

ILL. Try it like this...

- If God had a fridge - you would be on it
- If God had a tree in his yard - you would be carved in the trunk
- If God had a Christmas Tree - your funky looking little school made christmas ornament would be hung near the top of it.

God loves me?

Scott, that is highly unlikely...

- “God loves *some* people, but you don't know me”
- I know the *kind of people* He loves
- I know the *kind of people* God chooses to use

Matt. 1 - Christmas Story starts with the Genealogy of Jesus

- **Matt. 1:1-4:** This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminidab. Amminidab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon...

ILL. Scandalous Family Line of Jesus (the first Christmas story):

- Matthew 1 - the Christmas Story opens with a Genealogy
 - Original audience: devout, religious Jews
- The *kind of people* it highlights are not exactly a highlight reel of heroism...
- Abraham
 - Disbelieving about what God said
 - A liar to save himself
- Jacob
 - Name means “deceiver”
 - Tricked his brother Esau out of his birthright
- Judah
 - sold his brother into slavery
 - sought out prostitutes
- 14 kings mentioned by Matthew
 - 2 - Hezekiah and Josiah are obedient & faithful
 - 12 - faltering & unfaithful
- Inclusion of women in Matthew’s genealogy
 - Uncommon
- Type of women included in Matthew’s genealogy
 - More uncommon
- Tamar
 - slept with her father-in-law
- Rahab
 - a lying prostitute
- Ruth
 - the result of incest
- Bathsheba
 - committed adultery with King David
- Mary
 - unwed mother

Christmas reminds us =
God loves imperfect people
God loves you

Simple Message of Christmas

God is *with* us
God saves us
God *loves* us

=

God wants to know us

#4.) God wants to know us

Immanuel - God with us

- **John 1:14** “And God became flesh & dwelt among us”
- **Matt. 1:22-23** 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet 23 “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

He came in the Old Testament as **impersonal** & **terrifying** things:

- Pillar of fire/Moses
- whirlwind/Job
- Smoking Furnace moving through the air/Abraham

He came in the New Testament as the **MOST non-threatening & personal** thing imaginable:

- **a baby** (not a warrior or ruler)
- **in a stable** (not a tank or in a palace)
- **sleeping** (not dictating or making demands)
- **in an animal's feeding trough** (world He created rejecting Him)

He has done so much to be “with us”

Let's not let anything keep us from being “with Him”?