

A SAVIOR IS BORN

Don't Miss Christmas

Part 3

There is such a push in society to make Christmas
More and more about things
Than about a savior of the world

But God always has a way to draw attention back to Himself
And He always uses man –
We will not see God splitting the sky and revealing Himself
At least not at this time....
But He does know the pressures of the time
And He knows the pull towards commercialism

But God in His infinite plan for humanity
Also knew that before he returned
It would be nothing like it was when He first came
He knew that man and societies would be basically Godless
And in pursuit of money and fame

That is why one of the end-time prophecies that is drawing
A lot of attention at this time is the one about the
Wealth transfer.....
God knew it would take great wealth in these last days
to promote the Good News
and He has prepared many
who know how to be a good steward of His wealth
for this transfer of wealth...
And I must tell you
God is giving knowledge of witty inventions as it says in
Proverbs 8:12 to many who are open to it

I was talking recently with some other pastors
And they too are feeling the draw to start businesses
To get involved in areas they have avoided
Because now is the season for preparation for wealth
And I want to encourage you –
Anyone listening that has a desire to be truly used by God
That if you step out into the unknown waters
You will see what many have hoped for
But refused to listen – many will be passed over
But many will see the provision of the Lord in greater ways
Than we could have ever dreamed.

That's why, I now believe
that me transitioning out of construction was a God set-up
and I believe the Lord showed me a few different things
to get involved with.
So, do not be surprised to see me promoting a few businesses
That will not consume my time
But that will give me more freedom and ability to continue
To share the good news in even more creative ways.

How many here are tired of trading your time for money?
Well that's what 93% of the world does
That's right only 7% of people are self employed
Now its no condemnation if you do
But I believe that God is trying to encourage some
To move our into deeper waters....
Because in the coming months,
God wants an army of believers – well armed with the Word
And well established and funded
To storm the gates of Hell – and set the captives free
So please pray for me

And for those who will come along side me
As we endeavor to be a part of this end-time Gideon type army
That will overcome amazing odds and see many saved
And set free by the power of the Gospel

So, we are 1 week from Christmas
And still many are not yet prepared
And I'm not talking about having gifts ready

One of the things I love most about Christmas
Are the looks of Kids this time of year
And in watching people run around doing
But yet not really understanding why....

Recently, was reading an article
about how some of the pro-sports teams
are going to have to travel on Christmas day.

Football

- The Green Bay Packers play at the Miami Dolphins.
- The Denver Broncos play at the Los Angeles Rams.
- The Tampa Bay Buccaneers play at the Arizona Cardinals.

Basketball

- Milwaukee Bucks v. Boston Celtics.
- Philadelphia 76ers v. New York Knicks.
- Phoenix Suns v. Denver Nuggets.
- Los Angeles Lakers v. Dallas Mavericks.
- Memphis Grizzlies v. Golden State Warriors.

So, all these teams had made advance preparation
And one of the quotes was “Don't miss Christmas.”

I wondered – how is it possible to miss Christmas

Christmas is the most advertised and commercialized holiday in the world. It is the most anticipated and celebrated holiday of the year.

How in the world could anybody miss Christmas in this day and age?

Well, you can miss it for the same three reasons most people missed the very first one

So, what I want to do today is look at the three most common reasons people still miss Christmas.

These three reasons are found in the first Christmas story.

1. BUSYNESS (The Innkeeper)

The first one is busyness.

Busyness is the first reason that we can miss Christmas. This by the way was the innkeeper's mistake at the very first Christmas.

You know the story.

In the last week of her pregnancy

Mary and Joseph have to go to their hometown of Bethlehem.

They live in a city called Nazareth in Israel

and they have to go to their hometown called Bethlehem.

A little tiny town

where they are going to be involved in a census for taxation with the Roman government.

As they get to Bethlehem, Mary goes into labor.
Her water breaks. She's ready to deliver.
And Joseph tries to check her into the local Holiday Inn.
The innkeeper comes out and says,
"Sorry – no vacancies. We're all filled up.
There's no room in the inn. We're all filled up."

Luke 2:7 tells it like this: "*So Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths [or clothes] and placed him in a manger,*

by the way, what's a manger?

A manger is simply an old English word for a feed trough.
That's all it is. It's a bucket or a basket or a box,
a wooden box that you would put grain in
for cows and donkeys and other livestock.

She places him in a manger...]
because there was no room for them in the inn."

From the innkeeper's perspective
this is actually a good thing because his business is booming.
If you own a motel you want it sold out. You want no vacancy.
The point is this:
Busyness with his own business
caused him to miss the greatest opportunity in his life.

Are you too busy with your business
to make room for Jesus this Christmas?

I'm talking about your schedule.
I'm talking about your thoughts.

I'm talking about your time, your budget, your plans.
Are you so busy with everything else you don't have any room?

That's the first reason people miss Christmas – busyness.

The second reason people miss Christmas is

2. FAMILIARITY (The Religious Leaders)

Familiarity. What I mean by that is
you're so familiar with the Christmas story
that it doesn't inspire you anymore.

It doesn't amaze you anymore.

You've heard it all before.

You have celebrated Christmas your entire life.

You know the story of Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus.

You know the story of the shepherds and the wise men.

You know the story of the angels singing
glory to God in the highest.

You've been there, done that.

I know the story; I know the songs, I know the traditions.

You can become so familiar with something
it doesn't amaze you anymore.

It is interesting to me that God has come to earth in human form,
the Son of God is being born,
and not a single religious person is invited.
Was God making a point?

Not one religious authority. Not one priest, or one scribe,

None of them are invited to the party.
They all missed it because they're so familiar with the story.

So, these wise men on this long journey
from some far place arrive in Jerusalem
and they go and they ask for a meeting with the king
They walk in and the first question they ask is,
“Where is this Savior of the world, the Messiah,
Where is this baby supposed to be born?”

Herod, hasn't the foggiest idea.
The king of Israel. He knows nothing about this
So, he calls in, in the middle of the night,
all of the religious leaders and scholars of Jerusalem.

The religious scholars knew exactly what he was talking about.
They'd been waiting for this for hundreds of years.

And the Bible says it like this in Matthew 2:
*“King Herod called a meeting of all the leading priests and
teachers of the law and asked them where the Christ would be
born. They answered, ‘In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The
prophet (Micah) wrote about this in the Scriptures.’”*

I want you to notice some interesting things about that passage.
A lot of people in Israel at this time
were familiar with what was about to happen. They knew.

They had been waiting for hundreds of years
But here's the astounding thing:
Foreign dignitaries come a long distance.
Maybe from all the way from China. To Israel

and then they ask for a private meeting with the king.
And the king calls you up as a religious scholar
in the middle of the night and says, Get in here!
You figure something is going on here.
So, the dignitaries show up.
There's an unusual star in the sky.
The king calls them in for an emergency meeting.
Yet none of the religious scholars
cared enough to even go to Bethlehem and check it out.

Do you know how far Bethlehem is from Jerusalem?
Five miles. They wouldn't even go five miles to check it out.

Yet, this can happen to you
if you've grown up in church all your life.
You've studied the Bible all your life.
You've gone to church all your life.
You went to mass all your life.
You've heard the story of Christmas over and over.
You're jaded and you can miss it.
You can miss it.
Because you think, "I've seen it all."

For centuries they'd been waiting for the Savior
What had happened is that over the centuries
as they kept waiting for the Savior of the world to show up
they started adding all of these traditions on.

We have so many traditions around Christmas now.
And they keep adding on.
There's Santa Claus and there's
Rudolph the red nosed reindeer

and there's Frosty the snowman
and now there's Elf on the Shelf.
They keep adding new traditions, new traditions,
They're just piling on!

Today a lot of intelligent people
will participate in every one of the Christmas traditions.
Yet, show no concern at all
for checking out why we do all this stuff in the first place.

Look at this verse:

Ephesians 4:18,

Their minds are in the dark, and they are stubborn so they have missed out on the life that comes from God."

Their minds are in the dark.
They just don't get it. Why? Busyness and familiarity.

There's a third reason why most people miss Christmas.
The day after Jesus was born it was not a headline.
It was in no paper. Nobody announced it.
Most people missed it 2,000 years ago.
The third reason they missed it was because of

3. FEAR (King Herod)

Fear is the third thing
that will cause you to miss the true meaning of Christmas

It is a sad fact - that some people actually fear Christmas!
They're afraid of it. That's why they fight it.
They fight Christmas. They fight the nativity scene.
It's why they oppose it.

It's why they do lawsuits against it.
Because they're afraid of the message of Christmas.

This by the way was not the innkeeper's problem,
not the religious people's problems.
It was King Herod's problem.

Herod was a crazy guy. He's the king of Israel.
But he's actually a Roman citizen.
And he's of Arab decent. So, he's not Jewish.
He had come in and taken over the city of Jerusalem
and appointed himself king.
And the Jews hated Herod.
He was given the title king of the Jews

The background of Herod is this. He was paranoid.
He was literally a crazy, sick man.
He was afraid of this baby
because he was afraid of *anybody*
who might threaten his kingdom,
who might threaten his reign,
who might depose him as king of the Jews.

He was so paranoid –
anybody who got close to him he thought might overthrow him,
he had that person killed.
He had his wife killed
because he thought she might overthrow him.
He had his mother killed
because he thought she might overthrow him.
He had two of his sons killed early on in life
because he thought they might.

He had his brother-in-law killed.
Five days before Herod died
he had the rest of his children who were in the area killed
because he didn't want any of them to succeed him.
And he had all kinds of prominent Jews in the nation of Israel
rounded up and put in prison.
And he said the moment I die
I want you to kill all of them
because I know that when I die
nobody's going to weep over my death.
But when they die people will weep
so at least somebody will be weeping on the day I die.
He was nuts!

When the wise men show up and say,
"Where is this baby born to be king of the Jews?"
Herod goes ballistic. We've got to find this guy
because I'm not letting anybody take my place.
So, in an attempt to wipe out all of the competition
Herod makes a rule that says
every baby boy born in Bethlehem
two years and under must be murdered.
And it was called the Massacre of the Innocents.
He was that deranged
He was very, very afraid of what might happen
The Christmas message – A Savior Born – Frightened him!

You don't have that kind of fear.
But I know a lot of people who are afraid to get to know God.
They have three fundamental fears in their heart.
If I really open up my life to Christ
I will lose my freedom

and I can't do all the things I want to do.
I will lose my fun; I won't get to do anything fun anymore.
And I will **become a fanatic;**
I will walk around in polyester pants
and act like some religious nut case.

When you invite Christ into your life
he doesn't make you more religious.
He makes you more human.

The only reason you're alive
is that God made you to love you.
He wants you to learn to love him back.
That's why he came to earth in human form
So, he says I want you to get rid of your fear.

Herod's deepest fear was this:
He didn't want anyone else in control but him

Does that sound vaguely familiar?
I don't want anybody to be in control except me.

And that's why a lot of people fear God
because the bottom line is they want to be God.

The Bible says in

1 Timothy 6,

*"Some people have missed the most important thing in life –
they don't know God!"*

So how do I not miss Christmas?
If busyness, familiarity, apathy and unconcern

and fear or anxiety over what's going to happen
if these things keep me from knowing Christ,
from understanding the true meaning of Christmas
how do I **not** miss Christmas?

Let me give you a little formula.
Do you remember when you were a kid,
they taught you safety rules.
One of them is if you're standing at a street corner
you're supposed to Stop, Look, and Listen
before you step into the street to see if there's any traffic.

I want to take that same little formula
and I want you to remember it
because that's the key
to not missing the true meaning of Christmas.

- **STOP filling my life with less important things.**

That's the first thing you've got to do.
Stop filling my life with less important things.
Don't let busyness keep me from knowing God.

The antidote is to stop running and slow down.
That's the first way you really get to know
the meaning of Christmas.
You've got to stop running and slow down.

The Bible says it like this.
Psalm 46:10, "*Be still and know that I am God.*"

Proverbs 10:27 says this:

Reverence for God adds hours to each day.

In other words if you need more time,
you need to give some to God.

Whatever you need more of you give to God.

You need more money? Give some to God.

You need more energy? Give some to God
and you'll get more energy.

You need more talent?

If you use your talent for God, God will give you more talent.

Whatever you give to God he gives you more of.

So, you've got to stop filling your life with less important things.

The second thing you've got to do is

LOOK

What do I mean by that?

Look closely at why Jesus came.

Make the effort to check it out, to investigate Jesus.

Who was he, what did he say? What did he claim?

Why does he matter?

And what difference does it make to my life today?

Do an investigation.

This is by the way what Herod told the wise men to do.

It's one thing Herod did right.

In Matthew 2:8, Herod tells the wise men,

"Go and make a careful search for the child."

We don't really know what they saw in the sky.

People said a comet. People said a star.
We don't really know what it was.
But we do know that only a few came to check it out

If you want something different this year
If you want the good life. a better life.

Jeremiah 29:13.

"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

I want to challenge you
to not be like one of those people
who celebrate all the traditions of Christmas
year after year after year after year
with zero curiosity about why we actually celebrate it.

You can come to God and say I want to believe;
help me with my doubts.

The only thing that would hold you back
is ego, pride or fear.

I'm saying you need to stop, you need to look.

Then the third thing you need to do

• **LISTEN**

Listen to the good news of Christmas.

Don't be afraid of good news.

Why would anybody be afraid of good news?

The Bible says *"I bring you good news of great joy."*

Why would anybody be afraid of that?

Luke 2 says, *"The angel said, 'Fear not;*

I bring you good news of great joy...]

...a Savior has been born for you - he is Christ the Lord!"

It is good news.

What is this good news?

John 10:10,

Jesus said, 'I have come so that you may have life, and have it to the fullest!'"

Look at this verse:

John 3:17

"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save the world through him."

So, no matter what you're going through here's my advice.

I did it. I suggest you do it too.

When things get really, really bad don't run from God.

Run to him.

Because you don't get any comfort running away.

You just get more fear, more anxiety, more misery, more pain.

When you run to God you get the comfort of God.

So don't miss Christmas

Don't allow

Busyness- Indifference & Familiarity

Cause you to miss the greatest blessing of your life

And of course close the door on fear

And we can be successful just remember

STOP!

STOP living for sin and START living for what is right.

LOOK!

The Bible says, *“Let all the world LOOK to me for salvation!
For I am God and there is no other!”*

And LISTEN!

Listen to what God says. Do what God says.

THIS is the hour to receive God's favor!

TODAY is the day to be saved!”

Not tomorrow, not next week, not next year, not in ten years.

Why? Because you're not guaranteed ten years.

You're not guaranteed next week nor even tomorrow

Today is the day to trust him with your life.

The whole reason we give gifts at Christmas
is because the wise men started this tradition.

They brought gifts to give to the baby Jesus.

Can you imagine going to somebody's birthday
where everybody gives gifts to each
other except to the birthday boy?

What kind of party is that?

You get gifts. Everybody else gets gifts.

But nobody gives gifts to the birthday boy.

What are you giving Jesus for his birthday?

You're going to give gifts to everybody else

and you're going to get gifts from everybody else.

What are you going to give Jesus for his birthday?

What do you give the guy who's got everything?

You give him what he doesn't have.

What does Jesus not have?
He doesn't have your loveunless you give it to him.
He doesn't have your trustunless you give it to him.
He doesn't have your lifeunless you give it to him.
And he's not going to force it.
It's a matter of love.
He gave his life for you.
Will you give your life to him?

Before we close, I want you to watch this

If only we could have that kind of passion for Christ
Especially during Christmas

ABC's

Close in Prayer

Altar Call