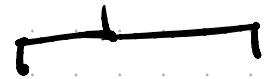


Introduction

1. Christmas is a festival or a carnival

(1) Carnival - think mardi gras
"Fat Tuesday"
Rio De Janeiro

"Come" (meat) "Leave" (put away)



(2) Festival - Zach's graduation dinner at HOPR

"Festivus" (Feast) Latin "Festo" (Holy Day) Old French



(3) Is it :

Carnival 1. Entertainment - gifts, the movies, the lights, the parties, the gatherings

Festival 2. Celebration - these things are "langage"

3. Carnivals are for consumers, festivals are for participants.

I. Christmas reminds us God is ALWAYS near (v. 6a)

1. Carnival Mindset

- (1) Then it's almost over
.. season / Experience
- (2) People are more lonely / sad at Xmas
- (3) You come to church once, maybe twice, a year as part of that experience
- (4) Trying to get closer to God, goes against Christmas narrative

2. Festival Mindset

- (1) God moves towards us
- (2) Christmas isn't an experience
 1. Anniversary - "oh yeah, we're married"
- (3) God is always near, not just when you remember... true all year long
- (4) Take some time to remember that, sing about that, & celebrate that.

II. Christmas reminds us God is ALWAYS in control (Jbb, Fa)

1. Carnival Mindset

(1) You're in control

1. of your experience - what we need to do to have a happy Christmas
2. Which means, if you're in control of your experience, then...
3. of your problems - how they affect you and your happiness

(2) How's that going for you?
Goes against Christmas narrative

2. Festival Mindset

(1) But we're not here to cultivate an experience like everyone else, we're here to celebrate a reality

(2) The arrival of Jesus in the manger is a reminder that He takes everything on His shoulders. You shoulder nothing.

(3) True all year long.

III. Christmas reminds us God is ALWAYS enough (v.6c)

1. Carnival Mindset

(1) The emphasis is on "enough"

1. Taste (Food, Drink)
2. Touch (Activities)
3. See (Performer, Art)
4. Hear (Band)

* Mexico Trip - overwhelmed with doing enough in a short window... not waste

(2) This mindset at Christmas can be exhausting:

1. Enough presents, food, family
2. Goes against the Christmas narrative

2. Festival Mindset

(1) We gather tonight to remember that Jesus is enough.

(2) We don't derive joy from having enough of something or someone

(3) True all year long

Conclusion

1. How to ensure a "festive" Christmas?

(1) A festive Christmas looks to contribute to happiness, rather than consume it.

Acts 20:35 - And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: "It is more blessed to give

than to receive."

1. How can I add to their joy, rather than how they're adding to mine
2. Is what I'm giving about them or me?

(2) A festive Christmas looks to exalt God, rather than experience religion.

John 4:21, 23 - Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem... But the time is coming - indeed it's here now - when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way."

1. To both Christians & non:
2. Are you just hanging verses on your wall, attending church, singing songs as part of your "experience"?

(3) A festive Christmas looks to celebrate the reason, rather than celebrate a season.

Hebrews 13:8 - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

1. All year long festival, not a once a year carnival
2. You can't have a festive holiday if you have nothing to celebrate