



CANYON HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH

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The Christmas Truth

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Today, we're going to talk about the birth of Jesus. That's what Christmas is all about. That's obvious. But what I want to do for a couple of minutes before we leave is focus our attention on why Jesus came and why Jesus was born. You see, knowing the answer to the question of why Jesus was born makes all the difference in the world.

It makes the difference between Christmas being simply a gift-giving holiday and Christmas being a celebration of the eternal hope and peace we have with Jesus Christ. There is a big difference between it just being a little holiday when we have fun and it actually being something that gives our lives hope and meaning.

To find out why Jesus actually came and why he was born, I want us to turn to Jesus. At the very end of his life, Jesus said some words where he reveals the purpose of him coming. Listen to Jesus. He said, "For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

Although those words were spoken by Jesus while he was on trial before Pontius Pilate at the end of his life, they really are Christmas words, aren't they? "For this reason I was born..." Christmas exists because Jesus came to testify to the truth. Now, think about the implications of that statement alone. Christmas means there is truth. There is such a thing as truth.

You know, we hear today a lot about fake news. Have you heard a lot about fake news in the last year or so? Probably more than we care to. It's all around us. I want to tell you there's something that has been around a lot longer than fake news. It's fake truth. Fake truth has existed much longer.

See, we live in a world that tries to preach to us that the individual decides what is true. You and I, on our own, can determine what is true. We live in a world that says all beliefs are valid and true if you want them to be. It doesn't matter if those truths are contradictory or harmful. The only thing that matters is if you want it to be true, that means it's true.

Listen. I'll give you a real truth. If everything can be true, then logic tells us that nothing is true. If we can determine whatever we want to be true, that would logically mean that really, there is no such thing as truth. Christmas means, first and foremost, there is a truth. Christmas also means Jesus came to reveal the truth. Here's the most important part. We don't create truth. Jesus divinely revealed the truth that has always been true for always, for all people, for all time, forever. It was Jesus who said, "When you know this truth, this truth will set you free."

So, what is that truth? What is the truth about which Jesus said, "For this reason I was born: to testify to the truth"? What are those truths?

1. *God is real.* What we can surmise is that every single human being wants to know if God is real. In fact, it's safe to say that every human being is born with an innate desire to know God. You might say, "Whoa, wait a minute. How do you know that? How do you know every single human being is born with a desire to know God?"

Well, I think, first of all, we can realize that anthropology itself proves this out. Anthropology has told us that there are at least 24,000 different people groups in the world. There are 24,000 known cultures of people that exist or have existed in the world. There are probably some we still don't know about.

Every single one of those people groups, anthropology tells us, has one thing in common. They all have one thing in common. They all worship. Every single people group in the world worships someone or something. That should be no surprise to us who have a Bible, because God has told us something about that.

In the Bible, it says God has set eternity in the heart of every man. Think about that. That means in the DNA of every one of us is an eternal space in our heart that can only be occupied by God, the eternal one. In other words, in every single heart, God has put a still, small voice that continually whispers to us that this isn't all there is.

This explains the invention of things like philosophy, doesn't it? Philosophy is man's attempt (without God, of course) to answer the three nagging eternal questions in the heart of every person. Where did I come from? Why am I here? What happens after all this? Philosophy is a man-made invention to try and figure that out without God. You see, when we eliminate God from our lives, all we're left with, you guys, is the bottomless desperation of man-made fake truths. It's all that's left.

Listen to the real truth from Jesus once again, when he talks about why he came. He said, "For I have come down from heaven to do the will of him who sent me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God. Only he has seen the Father." When Jesus said those words, people started asking him, "Well, how do we see the Father? How can we see God? If you've seen him, we want to see him!"

Jesus answered them, and he said these words: "**Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.**" That is the truth. Jesus came to reveal the one true God by what he said, how he lived,

and by the miracles he did. Christmas truth number one is this: Jesus came to testify to the truth. God is real. Jesus has seen God. Jesus was with God, and Jesus was sent by God.

It doesn't matter, you guys, how many atheists in the world continue to try to convince us that they have proven God doesn't exist. The one who exists forever is seated at the right hand of the throne of God and he has come to testify that he has seen God and that God exists.

If you want to see God, look at Jesus. If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus. If you want to know what God's desire, plan, and purpose for your life is, listen to Jesus. Christmas truth number one: *God is real*. Don't doubt that.

2. *We are lost without God*. I don't know about you, but there are very few things in my life that are more frustrating than being lost. I believe I could say this with all truthfulness. I am the most directionally challenged person who has ever walked the face of the earth in all of human history, ever. None of you can convince me that you get lost and have more trouble with directions than I do.

I know I'm in the Guinness Book of World Records for most U-turns just on the way to the mall and back. I know that. Tammi has been telling me I make her sick for years. Most of the time it's when we're in the car, so I think she's referring to my driving. In fact, I'm pretty sure she validates what I'm telling you.

In spite of the silliness of that, something way more frustrating and much more serious than being directionally lost is being spiritually lost. Listen to me now. When you think you're on some kind of a spiritual path, trying to get the answers to those questions, and you realize your path is really leading you to that bridge to nowhere, or worse than that, your spiritual path is leading you right back to where you started, there's nothing more humbling and frustrating than that.

Listen to the testimony of Jesus again, regarding the truth. He said, "**For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.**" We're lost without God. In a real sense, the birth of Jesus is bad news, but it's true news. You see, without God, we're like lost sheep without a shepherd, trying to find our way, trying to find the answers to those questions. Who am I? What am I doing here? What happens after all this?

The truth is, without God, all we're left with is an endless pursuit of happiness, security, success, or self-worth. If we were to be honest, if some of us were to come up here on this stage, grab a microphone, and be honest, we would say we remember those times in our lives when these things (success, happiness, security, and worth) felt like they were just around the next corner.

Every time, right when we got around that corner, the fake truth kept telling us again, "No, no, no. There's just one more corner. You're not quite there. It's just one more corner." The fake truth just kept telling us, "All you need is a little bit more education. All you need is a little more exciting of a marriage. All you need is a better financial statement, a more fulfilling career, or a more successful business. All you need is a better body. All you need is just one more thing."

Jesus is saying, "Listen. I have come to save you from all of that craziness, from running yourselves ragged chasing rabbits down holes only to find out that the rabbit just disappears every time." Jesus said, "I came to seek and to save those who are lost in the endless pursuit of trying to figure out how to be happy and stay happy, how to be successful and stay successful, how to be secure and stay secure, and how to feel like their lives mean something and keep meaning something. I've come to save you from all that fake truth."

3. *God made a way through Jesus.* The Christmas story points to the core human need and how God would meet that need. Jesus said the truth is, "**I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**" Stare at those words for a minute, will you? Just for a minute. Spiritually speaking, walking in darkness... That little phrase right there represents all the places we end up when we go far enough and long enough without God. That's what Jesus means about walking in darkness.

It's when we make life all about us. It's when we try to live life as though God really doesn't exist. For some of us, by keeping God out of our lives, we ended up in some pretty dark places. For some of us, we ended up just chasing the almighty dollar, didn't we? Maybe we just ended up exhausted and empty workaholics or shopaholics or alcoholics, heavily drinking.

For some, pushing God out of life leads us to those dark places and maybe ones even more serious than any of those. For some of you in this room, when you were pushing God out of your life, you can recall where it led. It led to dysfunctional relationships. It led to anger. It may have led to sadness, loneliness, anxiousness, fear, shame, or whatever dark path your pursuit of life without God led you on.

Jesus comes and says, "Here's the good news." In all of this, the light Jesus is talking about is not medication. It's not more money and success. It's not financial security for the future. It's not a better marriage or another relationship. It's not more self-awareness or self-esteem. The light Jesus is talking about is not perfectly happy kids. It's not even a religion. When Jesus says you will have the light of life, that light is not a thing. That light at the end of the tunnel is a person. It is Jesus Christ himself.

Think about this. God chose to enter the darkness of our lives trying to live without him. In order to bring us hope and salvation, he knew the only thing that could rescue us from ourselves and repair the horrendous damage that all the fake truths and sin in the world has caused us and caused the world was not another thing but a person, his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Like a gigantic spotlight, Jesus shows us the way back to the one true God, the real God. He reveals the life we were created to live, a life of knowing God, of enjoying him, worshiping him, and having peace with him forever. Jesus says, "I am that light of the world that will point you back to the one true God.

Here's the conclusion of that. The way back to God must first go by the cross of Jesus. You see, it's only at the cross of Jesus that we find and receive God's gift of grace and forgiveness. It's

only at the cross of Jesus where all of our sin is punished and paid for by the blood of Jesus. Jesus came with a very loving but very truthful statement, a truthful warning. He said these words: "Unless you repent, you too will perish." Wow!

Perish to what? Perish to an eternal darkness, separation, and lostness without God. Repent of what? Repent of living as though we're our own god. Repent of living as though God doesn't exist. You see, God sent his Son to testify to the truth and to provide rescue and forgiveness for those who have ignored his existence in their lives.

The rescue is really from ourselves and from the coming judgment of God, and the forgiveness is for our sin. Jesus said these words: "For God so loved the world, you and me, that he sent his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." That is the amazing story of Christmas.

I want to ask you right now to do something you probably haven't had two seconds to do in the last week. You may not have two seconds to do it in the next day or two, but I'm going to ask you to do something right now. I'm going to ask you to just close your eyes. Just close your eyes and bow your head as we just take a moment before the end here.

With your eyes closed, just sit still for a minute. I wonder how many of you are sitting here right now and you would honestly say, "I realize, Steve, that's me. I hear that still, small voice on occasion. I do wonder what's after all this. What is the meaning of my life? Will it ever really count for anything? I hear that voice."

I wonder how many of you who are sitting here with your heads bowed and your eyes closed right now would be honest enough to just say, "I realize, Steve, that's me. I've been trying to fill that space in my heart that only God can occupy. I've been chasing rabbits and false truths down holes and around every corner, only to find out, once I get there, it disappears."

I have good news for you. God would say to you right now, "Trust in Jesus. Repent of your sin. Put your faith in my Son, Jesus Christ. He testified to the truth. I am real and you will always be lost without me in that place in your heart that is only reserved for me." In just a few minutes, church, we're going to stand and sing a traditional ending of our services and light candles, but before we do that, I want you to know that at the end of the service, there are going to be people standing all across the front of this room.

If you are ready to take that step of faith, to put all of your trust and hope in Jesus Christ once and for all, forever, they're going to be up front to help you take that step. They want to give you something to go home with, something that will help you get started in what a real relationship with a real God is like. Oh, I hope you'll do that before you go.

Father in heaven, I pray in the name of Jesus now. I thank you that there is no doubt in all of the universe that you love us and you were willing to go to the farthest corner of the universe by sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us. God, I pray that you are pleased today that we have remembered and celebrated him, that he is alive and has testified to everything that is true.

God, I praise you that you knew a trillion years ago who would be sitting in this room right at this moment. You knew who would be sitting around them. You knew who wouldn't be with them today. I pray today, God, that you will give them courage and faith to surrender once and for all, to put their eternity in your hands. I pray, God, they would repent of their sin and receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior forever. May today be the day of their salvation. In the name of Christ we have gathered, prayed, and sung all these songs. To him be the glory forever, amen.