

12-7-2013, COTR Texarkana

Title: A Christless Christmas

Purpose: Explain why much of America wants a Christless Christmas and provoke Christians to respond in a Biblical way.

Spiritual Truth: Christians celebrate Christmas because Christ, our Savior was born.

Text: John 5:14-16

Topic: Christmas, Evangelism, Culture, the World

A Christless Christmas

I. Introduction

A. Pics lights Garvin Gardens. These were the most beautiful Christmas lights I have ever seen but it dawned on me, something was missing. There was no manger or mention of Jesus, the reason for Christmas. They entertained me with a Christless Christmas.

A. Today I want to help you understand why much of America wants a Christless Christmas and how Christians should respond.

B. Title: A Christless Christmas

C. Purpose: Explain why much of America wants a Christless Christmas and provoke Christians to respond in a Biblical way.

D. Sp. Truth: Christians celebrate Christmas because Christ, our Savior was born.

II. America's Christless Christmas

A. Examples: Video Bill O'Reilly. Some believe there is no war on Christmas. I disagree

A.1. Christmas carols are banned in schools, nativity scenes are banned in public places, Christmas trees are banned in nursing homes, kids can't wear red and green to school, the word Christmas, (Christ-mas, the worship of Christ/ Messiah, God's Anointed One) is replaced with winter holiday, (the root is holy-day).

A.2. AFA has a retailer's naughty list who won't mention Christmas: Family Dollar, Foot Locker, Office Depot, Pet Smart, Radio Shack and Victoria's Secret.

A.3. Several years ago Wal-Mart wouldn't let cashiers say Merry Christmas. So some people took their goods back. The next year Wal-Mart said they were going to mention Christmas early and often.

A.4. Texas Governor Perry signed a law specifically saying it was ok to say and celebrate Christmas. In defiance the Frisco ISD PTA sent an email outlining "Winter Party

Rules." Among them: "No reference to Christmas or any other religious holiday" and "no red/green or Christmas trees."

A.5. Wikipedia defines the true meaning of Christmas: "In pop culture usage, overt religious references are mostly avoided, and the 'true meaning' is taken to be a sort of introspective and benevolent attitude. There's more to Christmas than that.

III. Why does the world want to take Christ out of Christmas?

A. Cultural reasons: They don't want Jesus or The Bible to be a part of society.

- A.1. Many teachers, professors and textbooks in our public education system teach that there is no God or all religions are the same. Jesus is taboo.
- A.2. They don't want God or the Bible telling them what to do; therefore they have removed His commandments from schools and public places and attempt to forbid prayer especially in Jesus name. Ironically, Congress prays daily and has a chaplain; the Supreme Court has the 10 cmdts. etched in stone in their chambers.
- A.3. Evolution, advocated by Charles Darwin in 1859 became a way to explain life without God. Instead of Genesis 1:1, they have a theory that says nothing created everything and life has no eternal purpose. They belittle those who disagree.
- A.4. Science has tools to explain God's creation but has lost the wonder and awe of the Heavenly Designer, e.g. newborn baby, rainbow, warmth of the sun, DNA, etc.
- A.5. Government has become God to many, e.g. cradle to grave care. An all-powerful state has no room for a God to whom we must obey and give account.

B. Biblical reasons

- B.1. John 15:18–21 (ESV) "If the world hates you, know that **it has hated me before it hated you...** 21 But all these things (*persecution*) they will do to you on account of my name, because **they do not know him who sent me.**
- B.2. 2 Corinthians 4:4 (ESV) In their case **the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers**, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel...
- B.3. Romans 2: 4-5 (NLT) Can't you see that his (*God's*) kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? 5 But **because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin**, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself...
- B.4. Romans 10:3 (ESV) For, **being ignorant of the righteousness of God**, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

B.5. 2 Thessalonians 2:9–11 (ESV) — 9 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan...10 and with all **wicked deception** for those who are perishing, because **they refused to love the truth and so be saved.** 11 Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may **believe what is false,**

C. Christians want Christ in Christmas for a very simple reason...

C.1. 1 Pet 1:8 (ESV)**Though you have not seen him (Jesus), you love him.** Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible ...

C.1.a. We know God because He awakened us spiritually when we were born again. Our “eyes were opened” and the HS lives inside us giving us a God consciousness that people who don’t know Christ don’t have. That’s why we celebrate Christmas...Jesus Christ our Savior was born.

IV. How should we respond to a world that wants a Christless Christmas?

A. Mt 5:14–16 (NIV) You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl; they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, **let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**

A.1. A light is meant to show people the way to God as a lighthouse guides a ship to the harbor. E.g. barn light hunting in the sleet and fog.

A.2. A Christian’s life, like a light is supposed to be noticed, not to call attention to our self but to Jesus. That’s why we don’t isolate our self from scrooges at Christmas.

A.3. Philippians 2:15 (NCV)...you are living with crooked and mean people all around you, among whom **you shine like stars in the dark world.**

B. Care about people

B.1. 2 Tim. 2:23–26 (NLT)...don’t get involved in...arguments that only start fights. 24 ...and be patient with difficult people. 25 Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. **Perhaps God will change those people’s hearts, and they will learn the truth.** 26 Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil’s trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.

B.2. I must care enough to try to reach them. I’m not trying to win an argument. I’m going to, “**speak the truth in love**” Eph. 4:15 (ESV) because I care about their soul.

C. Show compassion for the needy.

C.1. Mt. 25:34–40 (NIV) Then the King will say to those on his right...take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 **For I was hungry** and you gave me something to eat, **I was thirsty** and you gave me something to drink, **I was a stranger** and you invited me in, 36 **I needed clothes** and you clothed me, **I was sick** and you looked after me, **I was in prison** and you came to visit me... 40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

C.1.a. Jesus cares about people in need; so should I.

C.2. This is why we do Christmas outreaches, Pictures from last year

D. Seek to convert those who don’t now Christ.

D.1. Acts 26:28–29 (NIV)... Then (*King*) Agrippa said to Paul, “**Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?**” 29 Paul replied, “**Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am**, except for these chains.”

D.2. Telling people about Jesus is the #1 job of Christians. Some people will mock and reject our witness. Others are like ripe fruit ready to be picked, e.g. Gideon and me.

D.3. The bottom line is that those who want a Christless Christmas are in need of a Savior. It’s our job to let our light shine and seek to lead them to Christ. When they become Christians, they’ll understand that there’s no such thing as a Christless Christmas.

D.3.a. Use the Invite cards. Hand them out wherever you go.

V. Conclusion: Linus knew what secular America has forgotten.

A. Video: Charlie Brown Christmas. Christmas is more than presents, trees, lights and parties. It’s about the birth of the Savior of the world and nobody can change that.

B. Prayer: be a light at Christmas bringing Jesus to a world in darkness. Souls