

Lighthouse Bible Church

December 16th, 2012

Luke 1: 26 – 38

scripture reading Philippians 2: 5 - 11

‘It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas’

We are going to take a short break from the book of John and look at some passages of scripture, especially in Luke, as we move closer to the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ that we know as Christmas.

For the last few weeks we have been hearing more and more Christmas songs, both secular and Christian. I, quite frankly, enjoy them all but many of them do not convey the true meaning of Christmas.

As a matter of fact, the music and songs do much to draw people away from the true meaning of Christmas and draw them toward a type of holiday sentimentalism and commercialism under the guise or heading of ‘the spirit of Christmas’ or what Christmas should look like.

One of those secular, non Christian, songs is titled ‘its beginning to look a lot like Christmas’. Most of us have heard it over and over again. That song portrays the meaning of Christmas, the look of Christmas, the spirit of Christmas to be: the toys in every store and holly on the front door.

This is the time of year we hear songs about Santa Clause, Jingle Bells, Christmas Lights and Trees, Mistletoe, Presents and Reindeer that do little to nothing to share the true meaning and look and spirit of Christmas. I recently attended a community Christmas vocal program and there was a reading in between some of the music. The reading went like this “Christmas is for love, joy, giving, sharing, laughing, tinsel, brightly covered packages, reuniting with family and friends, gaiety, mirth,, song, and wonderful gifts”.

Is that what the spirit of Christmas really looks like? Well, if you drive downtown or go to the mall or most stores or watch any number of Christmas programs on television, that is exactly what Christmas looks like.

You see, the look and the spirit of Christmas to most of the world is nothing more than mere sentimentality expressed through the acts of kindness and giving and helping and sacrificing and serving others because this is the season to do that.

Well, as good as all of those acts may be, when they are generated from a **temporary** sense of duty and obligation because that is what you do in the spirit of Christmas, that is not what Christmas looks like at all.

The look and the spirit of Christmas to most of the world is nothing more than the buying and exchanging of gifts, going into debt to please someone else with that 'perfect' gift. It is the physical trappings of presents, decorations, lights, trees, music and TV specials, and all of that.

By the way, most of us are aware that Christ was probably not born on December 25th and that the Christmas season celebrated today by the world is rooted in unbiblical practices that were later Christianized.

The exchange of gifts, the lights, the Christmas trees that we see today have a history of both the pagan and religious. Emperor Constantine and even Martin Luther tried to Christianize much of what the world of that time celebrated, in order to bring attention to Christ and not Saturnalia or some other pagan celebrations.

What we all experience today, as Christmas, is the season that we can celebrate the birth of Christ. This is the only time of the year that the world at least acknowledges a baby named Jesus was born. But just understand that Christmas is a man-made tradition and not a biblical celebration and His birth is something that we can celebrate all year, not just one day or one season.

As I have said before, we are never commanded in scripture to celebrate or in some way recognize His birth (*and we're not commanded not to*), but we are told to acknowledge His **death, burial and resurrection and return.**

When we come to the Lord's table, in **1st Corinthians 11: 23 - 26** we are told **remember His body given and His blood shed until He returns.** We are to set aside, as **Acts 20: 7** says, to **come and worship Him** because He rose from the grave **Luke 24: 1** says, **on the first day of the week.** But nothing about His birth is mentioned by way of celebration or remembrance. It is a biblical truth that you can choose to celebrate or not.

So some people may say, well we shouldn't celebrate Christmas then, we shouldn't exchange gifts or have trees or lights or any of that. Well, that has to be your own conviction from your own conscience. *If these become objects of worship to you, like it did the pagans, then...* It may be well to use a guide from **Romans 14: 1 – 13** Read

So what should Christmas look like and what is truly the spirit of Christmas from a biblical perspective. Well, I can share it with you from what Christmas not only should look like but what it SOUNDS like by the songs we sing.

Singing is such a part of Christmas and our worship; does it reflect what Christmas really looks like and the true spirit of Christmas? Well,

We sing 'O Holy Night' and one of the verses in that says **the world was in sin and error pining till He appeared**. That is a true statement. **Romans 5: 12** says for as by one man sin entered the world and death through sin, so death passed upon all men because all have sinned. **Galatians 4: 3** says that we were **in bondage to the elements of the world, to the sin of the world**. 'Till He appeared' 'this was the night of our dear Savior's birth'.

But the very next verse in Galatians 4 says **but, when the fullness of time had come, God sent for His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, the law of sin and death**. **1st Peter 1: 18** says we were redeemed from our sin by the precious blood of **Jesus Christ**. That is why we celebrate Christmas.

We sing *God Rest ye Merry Gentlemen* and in that song it says **remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas day (why) to save us all from Satan's power, for we have gone astray**.

That is one of the reasons why Christ was born; to save us from the power of the evil one, Satan. **Hebrews 2: 14** says **In as much as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil**. **1st John 3: 8** says **He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. FOR THIS PURPOSE the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil**.

We sing *Hark the Hearld Angels Sing* and in that song it says **peace on earth and mercy mild (what) God and sinners RECONCILED**. Jesus came to this earth to reconcile sinners to God. That is what **2nd Corinthians 5: 19** says ...**God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself not accounting their sins against them**.

We sing *The First Noel* and the last verse says **then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord, that hath made heaven and earth of naught and with His blood mankind has bought.** The God who created everything out of nothing came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ and bought us back from sin and death with His own blood.

Isn't that what **Philippians 2: 6** says? That **Christ, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in the appearance of a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.** He came to die by shedding His blood as the price that needed to be paid for our sin.

1st Corinthians 6: 20 says that **you were bought at a price, therefore glorify God with your body** and that price was His life's blood shed for you.

Galatians 3: 13 says that **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law having become a curse for us...**and **1st Peter 1: 18 – 19** says that that redemption was only possible with the **precious blood** of Jesus Christ.

You see there are some 'Christmas songs' which are really Christian songs, that do tell about the real meaning of Christmas. We have been hearing them and singing them as of late. But when we do, do we listen to them and sing them with a true understanding of the words and lyrics and how they pertain to the Christ of Christmas and how they pertain to our lives?

I can tell you this, most of the secular unbelieving musicians at this time of year sing about the birth of Christ and have no idea what they are singing about. Unfortunately, sometimes Christians sing these wonderful songs and have no idea or thought about the profound truths coming from the words, that come right out of scripture.

So the spirit of Christmas can look and sound much like what the Bible says the true birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus was meant to portray and that is that Christ was born and He lived a perfect, sinless life and He willingly suffered the punishment for your sin and mine while on the cross. He died and was buried and rose 3 days later and He becomes the resurrection and the life and the only way to heaven, all because He was born.

However you choose to celebrate Christmas this year, just remember what **1st Corinthians 10: 31** says **whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do (what) all to the glory of God.** Does that Christmas tree remind you of our Savior Jesus Christ dying on a tree for our sins? Do the lights remind you that Jesus is the light of the world? Do the exchanging of gifts remind you that God gave us His greatest gift that wasn't put under a tree but on a tree so that we can have eternal life. Do the songs bring you to a place of true worship as you sing about all that Christ did for us, because He was born.

Listen, Christmas can be a wonderful time of year to share the gospel in word and in song. Because without the gospel, we become just like any other group or organization or religion that shows an extra benevolence at this time of year.

All the giving and sharing and kindness and sacrifice for others, especially those in need, is a wonderful gesture that we are called to be a part of. But, if we don't share the Christ of Christmas, through the gospel, then nothing separates us from the unbelieving world when they show their kindness and sharing and sacrifice for others.

We have a unique opportunity every year, at this time of year, to share with family and friends and others about what the birth of Christ really means through our actions, but more importantly, through the sharing of the gospel, so take advantage of that.

Closing Prayer

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Introduction:

What we are to Celebrate and Recognize:

1st Corinthians 11: 23 – 26, Acts 20: 7
Luke 24: 1

Who should Celebrate Christmas:

Romans 14: 1 – 13

Songs that Celebrate Christ’s birth and more:

Romans 5: 12, Galatians 4: 3
1st Peter 1: 18, Hebrews 2: 14, 1st John 3: 8
2nd Corinthians 5: 19, Philippians 2: 6
1st Corinthians 6: 20, Galatians 3: 13
1st Peter 1: 18 – 19, 1st Corinthians 10: 31

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