

# A Time for Celebration

Luke 2:8-10 NIV

## Preface

Today we begin a three week sermon series titled “What is Christmas?” We all know about the traditions of Christmas. We decorate trees, enjoy family meals and exchange gifts.

For every believer, Christmas should be personal and special. This sermon series is intended to look beyond the traditions of Christmas to the real meaning and purpose of Christmas.

We begin with the first of three sermons; Christmas is a Time to Celebrate.

## Scripture

<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”  
Luke 2:8-10 NIV

## Introduction

The birth of Jesus Christ is by far the most significant event in the history of mankind. History is split into BC and AD because of the impact of Jesus Christ.

The birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection of Christ mark the turning points in world history. **Absolutely nothing compares in importance in the life of God’s people as the life of Jesus Christ.**

Christmas was God’s idea. God planned when it would happen, how it would happen, where it would happen and most importantly why it would happen.

It is important that we comprehend God’s purpose for Christmas. We need to understand “the why” behind Christmas.

On the night Jesus Christ was born, God sent an angel to announce his arrival. The announcement was good news and when we fully understand that good news, we realize **Christmas is a Time for Celebration.**

## 1. God Loves You

Christmas is a time to celebrate God’s love. Christmas is all about the love of God for you and for me.

God’s word tells us, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”* John 3:16 NIV

God’s love isn’t just for the world, it is for you. God loves you individually and that is truly something to celebrate.

Illus: I recall my college years very vividly although there are a few things I wish I didn’t remember so well. One thing I remember the most is the professors I had. In some classes there would be as many as 150 students packed into a large lecture room. The professor would lecture for an hour and perhaps have a brief question and answer time. Such classes were completely impersonal. The lectures were shot out across the room like a shotgun pattern. Each student was responsible for grasping the material and passing the class. If some could stay caught up, it was just too bad, you failed and had to take the class over.

I had other classes that were very small; some with as little as 10 students. In those classes, the professor knew everyone of us by name and we conversed openly about the material and how we could apply it to our lives or our ministries. In such classes we had as much personal attention from the professor as we needed. In those small classes, we were motivated and inspired to do our absolute best. We had a personal relationship with the professor.

God doesn’t just love the world, **He Loves You!**

**Christmas is God saying to you, “I love you.”**

The angels said, *“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”* This includes you and me.

God sent His son because of His great love for us.

I’ll give up trying to find the words to properly convey to you how much God loves you. Perhaps a child said it best when trying to explain that God loves you; **“If God has a refrigerator, your picture is on it.”**

Christmas is a time to celebrate God’s love for you. Let every symbol of Christmas be a reminder that God loves you.

## 2. God is with You

Not only is the good news that God loves you but also God is with you.

Isaiah prophesied that a child would be born of a virgin and his name would be “Immanuel” meaning “God with us.” God was faithful to his promise and Jesus was born.

Immanuel is a holy word, a Christmas word, a word of reassurance and comfort that God is with us daily. Deuteronomy 31:6 and Hebrews 13:5 say, “...the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.” NIV

His name reveals who he is. Jesus is God’s living promise that we are not alone in the universe but that **God is with us in big moments and bad moments and everyday moments.**

Christmas is a time to celebrate God’s presence in our lives. Just as God loves you personally, God is with you personally.

The Psalmist writes, *“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? <sup>8</sup>If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. <sup>9</sup>If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, <sup>10</sup>even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.” Psalm 139:7-10 NIV*

*“<sup>4</sup> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” Psalm 23:4 KJV*

Paul writes in Romans 8:38, *“<sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” NIV*

Illus: I read a story about two elderly widowed sisters who lived together on the old family farm. They were striving to hang on to the place by living on it and keeping things up. They were in their 80s and were struggling to maintain things. The house was run down and the barn and other buildings were in desperate need of repair. But the two women remained tough and worked hard to keep things going.

When a nephew came to visit, he took their picture with them standing in front of the battered chicken coup. The sisters liked the picture so much that they sent out Christmas cards with the

picture in it. The Christmas card had the picture of them standing in front of the worn out chicken coup. Below the picture in bold letters was the inscription, **“God is with us ... in our mess.”**

That is the essence of Christmas, “God is with us ... in our messes.” God is with you. **Regardless of your circumstance and regardless of what life has dealt you, God is with you.**

Celebrate Christmas for God is with you.

## 3. God is For You

God could have sent many things into the world. God could have sent anything and anyone he desired into the world. He could have sent a teacher, a prophet or a judge into the world. Instead, God chose to send His son; a Savior into the world.

God is not against you, He is on your side. He desires to bring joy and peace into your life. God is for you.

John 3:16 tells us that God’s love is the motivation for Christ coming to earth. But verse 17 tells us the purpose for His coming, *“<sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” NIV*

Christmas is a time to celebrate the fact that God is on our side. God isn’t out to condemn you but to save you.

Illus: Do you remember when you were a child and you would be about to play a game like football or baseball. Usually two captains would be appointed and the process of picking a team would begin. Whoever won the coin toss would get the treasured first pick. Inevitably there would be one person who was the prize pick. If you could get that guy on your team, you were almost guaranteed to win. If you had the star athlete working on your team, it didn’t matter who else you had, you were going to win the game.

Christmas means you won the coin toss. You get the star player working for you in life and in eternity.

Whatever you have done and regardless of what lies before you, God is for you. He will guide you and make your life victorious if you will trust in Him and allow Him to be Lord of your life.

*“If God is for us, who can be against us?” Romans 8:31 NIV*

Celebrate Christmas for God is for you.

## **Conclusion**

What is Christmas? Christmas is a Time for Celebration.

The God who created the universe, and who set the stars in their places and the world on its axis says,

I love you.

I am with you.

I am for you.

This is the good news of Christmas. And that is worth celebrating.

Illus: When my children were small, we used to play a game. One of them would jump in my lap and say, "I love you Daddy." I would respond by saying, "I love you more." Then they would say something like, "I love you as big as this room." I would respond by saying something like, "I love you as big as the car." The process would continue to bigger items like the house, the mall, the city, the world and even the universes until we couldn't think of anything bigger.

God's love for you is bigger than anything you can think up or anything I can imagine.

**God is crazy about you; hence Christmas.**

Will you celebrate His love and His Presence your life?