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Winter 2024-25
Looking Forward to Christmas

Sermon Title: Christmas Gives Us the Gift of Love

To be used with session 4: Looking Forward to Love

Scripture: Romans 5:6-10; 1 John 4:9-11

Connection with Bible Study: This sermon complements the Bible study “Looking Forward to Love” by considering three things God’s love does for the believer. The focal passage for the Bible study of John 1 and 3 will be complemented by similar passages in Romans and the first epistle of John.

Introduction:

America survived the COVID-19 virus. The new question is, will we survive the newest epidemic? This new epidemic plagues one in three people in our nation. According to health researchers, thirty percent of all people experience loneliness on a regular basis. Single adults are twice as likely to feel loneliness that married adults (39 percent to 22 percent). Among those in the age group 18 to 34, thirty percent said they feel lonely every day or several times a week.

Some of this loneliness is brought on by our society’s addiction to cellphones and the internet. Relationships formed there tend to be superficial. But even more critical in our human need for love. The fast pace of our society, the hours spent on social media, trying to make ends meet in a tough economy—all these things lead to an absence of love.

Unfortunately for many people, the Christmas season only compounds loneliness and the ache for love. Ironically, Christmas is all about love. At Christmas time, love came to this earth as God Himself chose to come down to provide a remedy for our situation. This morning, we will focus on three reminders that Christmas provides.

1. Christmas reminds us of our desperate situation (Rom. 5:6-10).

Loneliness begins with alienation from God. Our acts and attitudes of disobedience have isolated us from God. We have no ability of our own to put ourselves right with God. In fact, in Romans 5, Paul used three different terms to describe the desperate situation that those without a relationship with Jesus Christ face.

First, Paul called them helpless. “While we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6). The word *helpless* speaks of being without strength, weak, feeble, unable to help oneself.

Second, Paul used the term “sinners” to describe non-believers. “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). The picture is of a person of bad character who had failed to meet God’s standard.

Third, Paul spoke of those who are alienated from Him by unbelief as being enemies. “While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son” (Rom. 5:10). Talk about a desperate situation! Before we knew God through Jesus Christ, we were helpless, we had missed God’s standard, and we were in open rebellion against Him.

But Christmas is all about remedying that situation. Look back at Romans 5:6, 8, and 10. “At the right time, Christ died for the ungodly” (verses 6); “while we were sinner, Christ died for us” (verse 8); “while we were enemies, we were reconciled . . . through the death of his Son” (verses 10). That’s what Christmas is all about!

2. Christmas reminds us of God’s rescuing love (1 John 4:9-10).

The Apostle John in his first epistle continued the same theme as Paul used in Romans 5:8. Paul said, “But God proves (demonstrates, shows) his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” John echoed that truth when he spoke of God’s love rescuing us from that predicament we were in. “God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:9-10).

Face it, without Jesus Christ as Savior, our problem wasn’t just that we were lonely. No, we were dead! Spiritually dead! But God’s love came at Christmas so that we might LIVE through Him. John was quick also to point out that love began with God; He loved us first and “sent his son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

No longer alienated; no longer spiritually dead. We are now right with God and alive spiritually for all of eternity. That’s what Christmas is all about!

3. Christmas reminds us of our continuing obligation (1 John 4:11).

God’s remedy for loneliness came in the form of His gift to us at Christmas: Jesus Christ, His Son, sent to this earth for the sole purpose of putting us back into a right relationship with Him. With that Christmas gift of love, though, comes a continuing obligation on our part. John spoke about our obligation in the very next verse there in 1 John 4:11: “Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another.” God’s love to you is not an end in itself. You are under obligation to pass that love on to others. The Christmas season is a great time to share with other people that the real reason for the celebration of Christmas is because God loved us so much that He came to free us from our desperate state and to shower us with a love relationship with Himself. That, too, is what Christmas is all about!

Conclusion

As we close this morning, the question that must resonate through each of our hearts and minds is this: how have I responded to the gift of Christmas love from God the Father? Have I made it my own by surrendering my will to His will and turning my life over to Jesus Christ? Christmas gifts are to be received – not just used for decorations. Have you received the Christmas gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ? If not, do so this morning.

Dr. Sam Crouch is retired from 52 years in ministry, but currently serves as a part-time pastor. Sam was educated at Baylor University and Southwestern Seminary. He and his wife live in Tucson, Arizona. He is the author of the book Clearing the Fog: Gaining an Understanding and Appreciation of the Old Testament.