

Christmas. Jesus. Simple. – Various Scriptures

Glad you've chosen to worship and celebrate the birth of Christ with us this morning
Trust you'll be encouraged, edified, and maybe even challenged as we open the Word of God (John 1)

I've titled the message – Christmas. Jesus. Simple. (**Intro**)

Meaning that the point of *Christmas* is *Jesus*, and the point of Jesus, is *simple*

The point of Christmas is Jesus b/c if it weren't for his birth some 2000 years ago, we wouldn't even be talking about this, let alone celebrating it
And the point of Jesus is *simple*, b/c of the simple reasons for which he came

All of which leads us to a simple choice – the choice to trust him with our lives, and live for him as Lord . . . or not
It may not be easy, but it's simple

And that simple choice starts with the understanding, that at Christmas . . .

God took on flesh – something we believe (John 1:14)

Followers of Jesus Christ *believe* that God became flesh that first Christmas, based on the testimony of those who saw him, and walked with him, and knew him
People like the apostles who wrote the NT, and had nothing to gain by doing so

They had nothing to gain by fabricating something so outlandish – think of it
If the incarnation of Christ wasn't true, it's the last thing they would've said or wrote
Especially in their Jewish culture, where it was near heresy to advocate such a thing

They had nothing to gain, and *everything* to lose – including their reputations and lives
And yet they said it, which leads us to believe it as well
That God indeed became man, and lived among us

- It's something the Apostle John made crystal clear in the first few verses of his gospel, his account of Christ's life, where he says in v1-2 . . .
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.
All we know at this point, is that the Word, whoever that is – *is* God, and was *with* God from eternity past

And it's not until v14 that we find out who that Word is, when John says . . .
And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
The Son referring to Jesus – the Son of God; the Son from the Father
Who, as God, became flesh, dwelt among us, and revealed his glory, his nature
Something the other NT writers also say

- So based on the testimony of those who saw him, knew him, and walked with him – the point of Christmas is that God took on flesh
He became man for all to see, and all to believe

But that's not where it stops; He took on flesh . . .

To take on our sin – something we have (1 Peter 2:24)

1 Pet 2:24 – *He himself* [referring to Jesus] *bore our sins in his body on the tree* [the cross]

And the Bible says that – *For our sake* [God] *made him to be sin who knew no sin* (2 Cor 5:21)

And *laid on him the iniquity of us all* (Is 53:6)

He took on our sin*****

- The implication being that we *have* it in the first place
Made explicit elsewhere, like in 1 John 1:8 – *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*
And Is 64:6 which says that even *our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.*

We *have* sin due to the many wrongs things we've done . . .

And, we have a sin *nature*, due to the fact that we're descendants of Adam

The Bible says it was through his disobedience that you and I were made sinners – that we were given a sin nature (Rom 5:19)

- All of which Jesus took on himself when he died on the cross
Wounded for our transgressions [and] *crushed for our iniquities* (Is 53:5) . . .
He bore the weight of, and carried the guilt of, and took the punishment for – *our* sin and *our* sin nature, when he laid down his life on our behalf

You know what that is? That's love

In that while we were still sinners [still unlovable, still reprehensible, still at fault],
Christ died for us (Rom 5:8)

Do you see it?

As unlovable as we are in our sin, God became flesh, and took it on – to pay the price of death for it, so we wouldn't have to . . .

So we could be forgiven – something we need (Eph 1:7)

It's the third part of the point of Jesus at Christmas

God took on flesh – something we believe . . .

To eventually take on our sin – something we have . . .

So we could be *forgiven* – something we *need* (Eph 2)

The word forgive means to excuse someone for a wrong they've done

Or release them from punishment, and the obligation to make reparations or repayment

And sinners that we are – we need it; *desperately*

- I was talking with a guy the other day, who was telling me that he grew up in a God-fearing home, as part of a Bible-believing, Bible-preaching, Christ-exalting church
And much to the credit of his parents, never really went off the deep end in terms of rebellion or sin

But it wasn't until age 17 that he came to Christ

And when I asked him why it took so long if he grew up in such a solid home/church . . .

He replied, "B/c I didn't think I needed to; I thought I was good enough"

He didn't think he needed forgiveness b/c he was well behaved

His sin nature was lost on him

And just in case you're in the same boat, I want to give you . . .

5 Reasons We Need Forgiveness

5 Reasons that every single one of us needs God's forgiveness, no matter *how* good we are
[List them without explanation]

1. Our sin separates us from God

Forgiveness is something we need b/c our sin separates us from God

Eph 2:13 – *In Christ Jesus you who once were far off* [i.e. separated from God] *have been brought near by the blood of Christ*

IOW apart from a relationship with Jesus Christ, and the forgiveness of sin that comes with him – you're as far from God as you can be

And Isaiah tells the people in his day, that their *iniquities have made a separation* between them and God . . .

And their *sins have hidden his face* from them, so that *he does not hear* (Is 59:2)

In our sin, we are separated from God – that's the first reason we need forgiveness

2. Our sin alienates us from God

Forgiveness is something we need b/c our sin alienates us from God

In fact, the Bible says that in our sin, we are *hostile* in mind toward God – alienated and hostile (Col 1:21)

That means, we are enemies with our own creator

The only cure for which is forgiveness – forgiveness from God, toward us

3. Our sin enslaves us to more sin

Jesus himself said that – *everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin*. (Jn 8:34)

Which leads to more sin, or at least the desire for it . . .

And causes our hearts to become increasingly hardened by its deceit . . .

And gives Satan an opening in our lives, to make it even worse – to tempt and influence and enslave us even more

Sin is enslaving, and we need God's forgiveness if we're going to have any hope at all of breaking its bondage

4. Our sin renders us dead

Spiritually dead; Lifeless; Look at Eph 2:1-2

Paul is speaking to believers here, those who have *already* been forgiven, and says . . .

You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

Apart from God's forgiveness of our sins, we're *dead*, spiritually dead

Unable to *live up* to God's standard of righteousness . . .

And completely cut off from any link with God himself, or the life he offers

Our sin renders us helpless and hopeless without God's forgiveness

5. Our sin makes us objects of God's wrath

Paul goes on in Eph 2:3, saying that before Christ in our lives, *we all once lived in the passions of our flesh* [our sin nature], *carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind*

IOW in our sin, we are all objects of God's wrath – his righteous anger toward our unrighteous sin

Not good; B/c the wrath of God is every bit as real as the love of God

That's why there's a heaven *and* a hell

And the only escape from the latter, is God's forgiveness – God's forgiveness of our sin *****

- And the only way that can happen, is through the shed blood of a perfect sacrifice on our behalf

The only escape from God's wrath, and the consequences of hell, is the shed blood of a perfect sacrifice on our behalf – that's the way God made it

In fact, that's one of the main messages of the OT – that it *takes* a life, to *redeem* a life

That is, it *takes* a life to *deliver* a life – to deliver someone from the bondage of sin

It *takes* a life to *release* a life – to release someone from the punishment for sin

It *takes* a life to *restore* a life – to restore someone to wholeness

It *takes* a life to *reconcile* a life – to God

It takes a life to *forgive* a life

But it wasn't until God himself became flesh, and died in our place – that a perfect life, a perfect sacrifice, was offered to do that

To redeem us and forgive us of our sins, once and for all time

Which is why Paul says in **Eph 1:7** – *In him* [Christ] *we have redemption* [deliverance from sin; release from bondage; reconciliation; life;] *through his blood* [his death], *the forgiveness of our trespasses* [sins]

God took on flesh – something we believe . . .*****

To take on our sin – something we have; So we could be *forgiven* – something we need

And fourth . . .

And saved from death – something we face (1 Tim 1:15)

*I realize by the way, that this isn't your typical feel-good Christmas message

Where you walk in here out of guilt, and walk out feeling tingly all over

These are heavy truths, I know; That quite possibly make you feel uncomfortable

But I'd rather you be uncomfortable for a moment b/c you heard and received the truth . . .

Than miserable for eternity b/c you didn't

- So not only does sin alienate us, separate us, and enslave us . . .
But as objects of God's wrath, it leads to death, destruction, and eternal punishment

Death, as in– *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.*
(Prov 14:12)

And *the wages of sin is death* (Rom 6:23)

There's no getting around it – we face death

And not just physical death, but *eternal* death

What the Bible calls the *second death* (Rev 20:6) – referring to the everlasting separation from God, in the conscious, physical, torment of hell*

*What the Apostle Paul calls *eternal destruction*

In **2 Thess 1:8-9**, he says that when Jesus returns . . .

[He will come] *inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction [i.e. destruction that goes on and on] away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.* *****

We face death, destruction, and *punishment*

If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev 20:15)

That's punishment – something we all face as objects of God's wrath, b/c we're all sinners

- That's the *bad* news – we're sinners who face death
The *good* news is that there's a solution – and his name is Jesus
Who Paul says in **1 Tim 1:15** – *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*
Save them from what? Death

That's the point of Jesus at Christmas – he became flesh, and died in your place, so you wouldn't have to
So that whoever believes in him should *not* perish – should *not* suffer the second death, should *not* suffer eternal destruction, should *not* suffer eternal punishment . . .
But enjoy eternal *life*, and have it to the full, starting right now (Jn 3:16; 10:10)*****

That's the point of Jesus at Christmas

He took on flesh – something we believe; To take on our sin – something we have . . .
So we could be forgiven – something we need; And saved fr death – something we face

In order . . .

To live for him – something we choose (2 Cor 5:15)

2 Cor 5:15 – [Christ] *died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

Christ died for you, for your sake, that you might no longer live for yourself, but for *him*
No longer your way, but his way
No more for your glory, or your advancement, or your renown – but his*****

- You see, Jesus didn't take on flesh and die for your sin, so you could have a convenient “get out of hell free” card
So that you could live like the devil, and still go to heaven
That's not a life in Christ; That's not the life to which he saves you and calls you

He died for *you*, so that *you*, would *live* for him

That you would love him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength
That whatever you do, you would do it for *his* glory and *his* purposes

- Salvation is free, yes – a free gift of God offered and given to you by *his* grace, and received through *your* faith
It's free – Jesus paid it all; He paid the entire price for your salvation
There's nothing more you can do to earn it or deserve it

But with that gift comes discipleship – i.e. *following* Christ, and *living* his way, and *wanting* to do so; it's a duty of delight

And *that* may cost you everything

Salvation is free, but discipleship may cost you everything

- And if it does, it will be your greatest joy, and best decision ever
B/c “he is no fool to give what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose” (Jim Elliot)

IOW you're no fool to give up the life you can't keep anyway – the life that will end in death and destruction . . .

You're no fool to give that up, to gain what you can never lose – which is life to the full, and life forever, no matter *what* the cost

Life filled with the glory and goodness of the one who saved you, and the fellowship of others just like you

- But it's your choice – the most important one you'll make your whole life (**Summary**)
Your choice to *believe* the testimony of Scripture that God took on flesh
Your choice to admit that you're a *sinner* and *need* a Savior
Your choice to humble yourself and *ask* forgiveness
Your choice to call on the name of the Lord to be *saved* (Rom 10:13)
And your choice to live for him

It's your choice, and you can make it right now

And I would urge you do so if you're ready – and experience the point of Jesus at Christmas like you never have before

Let's pray (Prayer of salvation; Show of hands; Pray for them)

From our family to yours – Merry Christmas